

Announcement of Year of Collaboration for the Vincentian Family

Rome, 30 January 2015

Dear Leaders of the international Vincentian Family,

Each year, we invite the Vincentian Family to focus on a special theme allowing us to deepen an understanding of our shared Vincentian charism. We wish to make 2015 the “*Year of Vincentian Collaboration.*” Our theme will be “*Together in Christ we Vincentians make a Difference.*”

During the course of the year, we ask that the local, regional, and international levels the Vincentian Family explore ways to celebrate, connect, learn, and serve together. Our efforts will be coordinated by the Vincentian Family Collaboration Commission (the VFCC). The Year of Collaboration will begin on the Feast of Pentecost, May 24, 2015, and end on the Feast of Pentecost, May 15, 2016.

We all know how collaboration is rooted in our charism as a Vincentian Family, especially in the example of the lives of our Founders. We also know that we will most effectively serve those who live in poverty only as we collaborate with them and one another in this ministry. We are offering three objectives to guide the events for this year.

1. ***Celebrate:*** a letter to the Vincentian Family which will be published soon will include suggestions for celebrations, on the two Feasts of Pentecost and around Vincentian Family feast days. There would be no international gatherings. The celebrations will take place on the local and regional levels.

We also plan to include under this objective the creation of a world-wide Day of Prayer on Sunday, September 27, 2015. The Vincentian Family will be invited to post their photos and prayers on the *Vincentian Collaboration* Facebook page as well as in *Famvin.org*.

2. ***Connect and Learn:*** we also plan to collect and share stories of collaboration in service posting them on Facebook and on *Famvin.org*. Vincentian Family Collaboration Commission members will also invite specific groups to post their work.

We will take this opportunity to learn more about each other, highlighting weekly a different branch of the Vincentian Family.

3. **Serve:** The testimony by Eli Chavez dos Santos, CM on collaboration will be posted. Family members will be invited to share their own stories of collaboration in service.

The previously mentioned VFCC oversaw the development of a formation experience on collaboration. The Vincentian Family Collaborative Action Program (or VFCAP) was held in Paris in 2013 and 2014. Over 70 members of the Vincentian Family participated. They will also be asked to offer their own follow up or feedback (on video) regarding both their personal and their branch's efforts at collaboration. These will be posted online to help promote collaboration.

As you can see, we have a wealth of activities planned to mark this special year for the Vincentian Family. Thank you, in advance, for your assistance in promoting these activities among your branches and with your collaborators. And thank you, most especially, for the ways in which you model this virtue which gives our charism its special nature and impact.

As we continue our preparations for this yearlong celebration, I would also like to invite you to offer your reflection on collaboration. If you wish to participate, please send me a brief reflection on the following questions:

- a) What is your feeling about collaboration in the Vincentian Family?
- b) How are you collaborating with other branches of the Vincentian Family?
- c) What is your dream of the future for Vincentian Family Collaboration?

Please send me your thoughts by May 1, 2015. I also hope to invite national Vincentian Family leaders to make the same reflections and share them with their VF membership.

Sincerely,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General