

Rome, January 25, 2000

To the members of the Vincentian Family throughout the world

My very dear brothers and sisters,

Welcome to the web page of the Vincentian Family. Service of the poor is the ultimate goal of this page. With that in view, I hope that it can be a facile instrument of communication for exchanging information about our life and works on various continents, for providing formation materials for our members, for channeling our energies toward common projects, and for enabling the voice of the poor to be heard clearly and rapidly.

This web page is now entering a new phase in its history. On January 17-19, 2000, a Commission for the Use of Internet met here in Rome. In my opening words to the Commission, I asked it to focus especially on the *use* of the page. There are many sites that we look at once but never go back to again. They are static, unchanging. We may admire them, like objects in a museum, but we will rarely return to visit them. I am convinced that the key to its being used is that our web page would change frequently and that its format would be attractive to the members of our family. In response to my appeal, the Commission has, as a first step, determined to place new materials on the page at least every Monday. Gradually, as more persons and more branches of our family become involved in contributing materials to the page, our site will change much more frequently, perhaps even every day (like the daily newspaper!).

This page aims at bringing together in one place all the information and resources related to the Vincentian Family that are presently available on various sites throughout the World Wide Web. Our family is very large. It has millions of members and exists in more than 135 countries. It includes huge groups of volunteer lay men and women and very numerous communities of priests, brothers, and sisters.

Of course, the Commission needs help. The creation of the page involves an enormous amount of work. If you are interested in volunteering your services and have some experience in working with web pages, I encourage you to contact one of the Commission members or one of the persons responsible for your branch of the family.

If you have information that you want to appear on the web page, please do not hesitate to transmit that too to the appropriate Commission member. The same is true for suggestions about the content and format of the page. The page is yours. We are eager to have your comments.

I encourage you to make our web site your home page, so that when you go online, you will immediately find the latest news about our Vincentian Family. You will find lots of other interesting things too, like postcards to send to friends, fellow workers, parishioners, and students. You will also find, as a help to those working in distant lands, a convenient link to newspapers in your home country and in other countries throughout the world.

I hope that, through greater connectedness, we can be more effective servants of the poor. In a very spontaneous moment during a council meeting of the Daughters of Charity, St. Vincent once exclaimed: “O, my God, how necessary abundant communication with one another is.... There is nothing more necessary” (SV XIII, 641). I hope that our web page can be an active, engaging channel of communication that unites our worldwide Vincentian Family in the service of the poor.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General