

Letter of His Holiness the Pope Benedict XVI



To Reverend Father Gregory Gay,
Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission
and to Reverend Evelyne Franc,
Superioress General of the Company of the Daughters of Charity

“Whoever loves God, must also love his brother” (1 Jn 4:21). With these words of the Apostle John, I would like to join in thought and prayer the entire Vincentian Family, as it celebrates in thanksgiving the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of Saint Louise de Marillac and of Saint Vincent de Paul. These words were lived out in a luminous way in the lives of your Founders.

It is because they believed in love that they put themselves at the service of their brothers and sisters. May this same faith be your light and strength in your ways of service to the most abandoned and lowly in our so often heartless societies!

By placing this jubilee under the motto **“Charity and Mission,”** you have indeed wished to indicate what is at the heart of the heritage which you have received. As I wrote in my first encyclical, saints like Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac **“remain distinguished models of social charity for all people of good will. The saints truly enlighten history, because they are men and women of faith, hope and love”** (*Deus caritas est*, n. 40). This is what I encourage you to be in a daring way amongst the men and women of our time, so that your involvements in favour of the

human person be in fact a revelation of the love of God and not simply the expression of humanism or philanthropy.

The intuition of Vincent de Paul in getting priests, consecrated persons and laity to work together is a precious good that the Vincentian family rightly engages itself to develop for a better service of the Church's mission. So you will be ever more effective in proclaiming the Gospel to all, so that each person might recover their dignity as children of God in the world, in unity and solidarity. May God help you to remain always faithful to the heritage you have received and to live it out with faith and generosity!

Entrusting you to the intercession of Saint Vincent de Paul, of Saint Louise de Marillac and of all the saints and blessed of the Vincentian Family, I give you all with a full heart an affectionate Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 14 June 2010

Benedict XVI