Vincentian Marian Youth (JMV)

"To Jesus with Mary"

Brief History

We are an International Association of young Catholics, born from the wish of the Blessed Virgin Mary as manifested on 18 July 1830 to St. Catherine Labouré in Paris (France). From 1830-1847, Fr. Jean-Marie Aladel, C.M., established the first 15 centers in Paris and its surrounding area. Then Pope Pius IX gave us legal recognition in the Church through the rescripts issued on 20 June 1847 (for the female branch) and on 19 July 1850 (for the masculine branch) under the name, *Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate.* The Pope entrusted the care of the Association to the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity, who would henceforth become its Director General. From 1848-1879, an expansion took place outside France: the Association reached America, Asia and Africa. In 1931, Pope Pius XI conceded to the Association the faculty to establish itself in the parishes, with the permission of the bishops, and to set up its Seat in the Chapel of the Apparitions at 140, Rue du Bac (Paris).

Based on the guidelines of Vatican Council II, the Association revised its structures, combined the boys and girls into a single entity, reinforced its socio-charitable commitment and updated its name. Thus, the "Vincentian Marian Youth" was born. In 1997, the Association got off the ground on the international level through a Leaders' Forum in Paris during the XII World Youth Day. On 2 February 1999, the Holy See approved the new International Statutes and recognized the change of name, yet retaining the same identity. In February of that same year, Fr. Robert Maloney established the seat of the VMY International Secretariat in Madrid (Spain). In August 2000, we held the 1st International Assembly in Rome, on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Youth. Five years later, to mark the 175th Anniversary of the Apparitions at the Rue du Bac, we celebrated our 2nd General Assembly in Paris from 7-13 August 2005 with the theme, *"With a Lay Spirituality, We Share the Mission: Challenges."*

Charism and Objectives

The Vincentian charism and the Apparitions to St. Catherine Labouré in 1830 made it possible for VMY to be born as a response of the Church and the Vincentian Family to the poor and marginalized young people.

The contemplation of Christ and attention to the example of Mary shall be the driving force that will allow the Association to attain the following ends:

1. *to form* the members to live a solid faith in the following of Jesus Christ, the Evangelizer of the poor;
2. *to live and pray* like Mary in simplicity and humility assuming the spirituality of the Magnificat;
3. *to foster, animate and maintain* the missionary spirit in the Association, especially through missionary experiences, in particular, among the poor and the young;
4. *to prepare* the members of the Association individually and communally to collaborate in the Church and society with other pastoral workers, according to the directives of the hierarchy of the universal and local Church (cf. International Statutes, Art. 9).

With all the above VMY has its own physiognomy, with some marks that characterize it as an Association:

- *ECCLESIAL:* The members of the Association commit themselves to live and work actively and responsibly in communion with the members of the Church and its pastors on the local and world level as well as to collaborate with all the other associations and apostolic movements in the dioceses and parishes.
- *LAY:* Since VMY is an Association mainly of young lay people who try to live the Gospel in the midst of society, its point of reference is the Lay International Associations of the Faithful (cf. Canons 298-329).
- *MARIAN:* The members of VMY learn to follow Christ in the school of Mary. They take the Blessed Virgin as model of dedication to God and service to her brothers and sisters. Likewise, especially in the song of the Magnificat, they see in Mary, Mother of the Lord, the inspiration that helps them, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk through life in faith and with an effective charity that generates justice.
- *VINCENTIAN:* Through its birth in the Family of St. Vincent de Paul, VMY is inspired by the Vincentian charism and makes of evangelization and service of the poor

distinctive characteristics of its presence in the Church and in the world. Its members commit themselves to be missionaries, witnessing to the love of Christ by word and work.

Apostolic Commitments Today

We, the members of VMY, carry out different apostolic activities from our own centers, in coordination with parishes or other branches of the Vincentian Family. Among them we would like to emphasize the three fundamental aspects:

***a*) Socio-charitable service:**

- Collaboration and support in the social work of the Daughters of Charity
- Regular support in diverse services: hospitals, homes for the aged, psychiatric wards, prison cells, tutorial or educational assistance, etc.
- Regular visits to the sick and the poor in their respective homes
- Work in the marginalized and rural areas with disadvantaged groups: children, young people with adaptation concerns, women and immigrants, etc.
- Service experiences during the summer
- Permanent service communities, where the young people commit themselves to carry out a service project, living together for a specific period of time (months or, at times, years)
- Different programs of the "Campaign against Hunger" and the "Campaign against Malaria"

***b*) Evangelization:**

- Support in parish catechism: for children, young people and adults
- Activities for the evangelization of young people: workshops, gatherings, etc.
- Support in the popular missions organized by the Congregation of the Mission
- Mission experiences for a specific period of time in rural and indigenous areas

c*) Missions *Ad Gentes:

- Periodic sending of "young missionaries" to developing countries

– Some countries keep Permanent Mission Communities where the young people are sent for a specific period of time to collaborate in the missionary work of the Vincentian Family (Mozambique, Bolivia, Honduras).

Number of Members

Today we are approximately 110,000 members in 65 countries on five continents. Forty-eight countries already have approved National Statutes. We are now in an expansion and consolidation phase.

Continent	Number of Countries	Approved Statutes	Number of Members	%
Africa	20	11	5.292	4,27
America	22	22	21.876	17,66
Asia	8	6	64.996	52,48
Europe	13	6	31.637	25,54
Oceania	1	—	30	0,11
Total	**64**	**45**	**123.831**	**100,00**

COUNTRIES IN WHICH WE ARE PRESENT:

EUROPE

Albania, Belarus, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine.

AFRICA

Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda and Togo.

AMERICA

Argentina-Uruguay-Paraguay, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, United States of America and Venezuela.

ASIA

India, Indonesia, Japan, Lebanon, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Syria and Vietnam.

OCEANIA

Solomon Islands.

CHALLENGES AND DREAMS FOR VMY

After nine years of journeying at the international level and with the experience of two General Assemblies, these are the challenges that VMY International has for the coming years:

- To motivate our members in the following of Christ especially through an adequate **pedagogy of prayer** that may lead us to discover "Christ in the poor and the poor in Christ";
- To organize and revise our **formation programs and alternative "endways"** that we offer to our members so that they may become adult Christians, strongly committed to the local Church and society, through the Vincentian charism;
- To come up with a **work methodology in the form of projects** as a way of assuring the quality and continuity of our service to the poor;
- To work towards **auto-financing our activities,** promoting financial self-management at all levels, as well as handling economic resources with transparency, responsibility and gratuity;
- To live with greater awareness the **internationality of and co-responsibility within** the running of the Association;
- To promote **working together** with the other branches of the **Vincentian Family** especially in service projects and formation.

We dream of an Association,
which lives the Spirituality
of the Magnificat intensely,
works for a young Church,
servant of the poor,
and which is more and more
of young people for young people.

SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS FOR 2006

Our international theme for 2006 is ***"Committed to the Mission with Those Most Needy."*** This expresses our desire to continue sharing the unique mission of the Church and the Association's own mission with the Vincentian Priests and Brothers and the Daughters of Charity, to focus our spirituality on Christ and on the Gospel and to work in collaboration with the Vincentian Family in favor of the most needy and those persons who do not know Christ.

Our work in 2006 is essentially inspired by the Lines of Action contained in the **Final Document of the 2nd General Assembly.** The following five objectives will mark our activities this year:

1) To improve the initial *formation process* which we offer to our members:

- Update the inventory of existing formation materials in the different countries
- Exchange formation materials with the other branches of the Vincentian Family
- Update our international website, so that it may be livelier and more interactive and may allow an exchange of testimonies, experiences and materials
- Disseminate the document *"Formation Processes and Endways in VMY"* and promote Formation Commissions in each of the member countries
- Promote *visits to countries* as an instrument that may encourage personal contact with the National Councils, formation and motivation of leaders.

2) To advance in *auto-financing* and the *presentation of projects* that may allow us to obtain economic resources for our activities:

- Encourage countries to maintain the international structure through the payment of the annual membership dues
- Promote *"twinnings"* among countries
- Present project proposals and look for subsidies from different international organizations
- Publish an orientation document for member countries concerning some financial aspects (accounting, patrimonial fund, presentation of project proposals, soliciting for subsidies on the international level, etc.)
- Obtain definite legal recognition of the International Secretariat.

3) To strengthen *collaboration with the other branches of the Vincentian Family:*

- Disseminate the triptych of the Vincentian Family used during the WYD in Cologne 2005
- Encourage the participation of VMY in the "Vincentian Family Councils" in each country
- Publish, on the website, a pamphlet containing the sharing during the Roundtable Discussion of the Vincentian Family on the occasion of GA II Paris 2005.

4) To welcome a *new group of volunteers* in the International Secretariat:

- Facilitate processing of visa/travel documents
- Living and working together with the outgoing group.

5) To come up with a *Vincentian Youth Pastoral Course,* for the formation of Advisors:

- Organize a Latin American Meeting, together with CLAPVI, on 21-29 October 2006, in Caracas, Venezuela. This is open to all advisors of the youth groups of the Vincentian Family branches
- Publish, on the website, an **interactive course for advisors and officers/leaders of the VMY** using materials from this meeting.

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