

# 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly (2010)

## Creative Fidelity to the Mission Consultation Document

### *Organization:*

1. A Look at the Past: Evaluation of the Journey from the 2004 General Assembly to Today
2. A Look at the Present: The “Signs of the Times” which Challenge the Congregation of the Mission Today
3. A Look at the Future: Fidelity to the Mission
  - a) Creative Ministries
  - b) Methodology of Systemic Change
  - c) Ongoing Formation
  - d) Reconfiguration
  - e) Dialogue with the Poor and the Vincentian Family

### *Presentation:*

The Preparatory Commission for the 2010 General Assembly composed the present document from the responses to the “Reflection Questions” which were sent to every province of the Congregation of the Mission. These responses were developed by the Provinces during their Assemblies.

The current document is not a *Documentum laboris* but a *Consultation Document* sent to all the participants in the General Assembly, which will take place in Paris from 28 of June to 16 of July 2010, so that they can adequately prepare themselves for the conversation of the Assembly.

The Assembly will certainly involve moments of a juridical character, such as the revision of the Statutes and the voting on the Postulata, but over all it will be an occasion for the participants to dialogue and to exchange experiences on the themes of the Assembly itself.

The present Consultation Document does not contain a list of all the things that have been sent from the Provincial Assemblies, but a synthesis of the central ideas gathered together around some foci that will be expanded upon during the General Assembly using various methodologies: presentations, round tables, discussion groups, and discussions in the aula. This document is not intended to say everything but only wishes to stimulate the reflection, the research, and the study which each member of the Assembly is called to make before and during the Assembly itself.

The General Assembly of 2010 will unfold in three logically connected movements. The first will be a *look at the past* and will consist of an evaluation of the journey made from the 2004 General Assembly to today. An entire day is dedicated to this movement with discussions in groups and in the aula. The second movement will be a *look at the present*. The members of the Assembly are invited to focus their attention on the “signs of the times” and on their challenges. A round table presentation will be followed by discussion in groups and in the aula. The third movement will be a *look at the future* to solidify that which is the theme of the Assembly itself: creative fidelity to the mission. The members of the Assembly will speak, always with a round table presentation and discussions in groups and in the aula, on the questions that have been at the center of attention for the domestic and provincial assemblies: creative ministries, ongoing formation, reconfiguration (among the provinces and within a province itself), the Vincentian Family, and the poor. The star to which we must look continually, so as not to be led astray in long discussions, will be creative fidelity to the mission.

On the occasion of the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of St. Vincent and St. Louise, we commend ourselves to their intercession so that the Spirit of Christ, which animated their hearts giving them an eternal youthfulness, may pour out on us in this year of grace, the light, the wisdom, and the strength to be faithful to the past, creative in the present, and prophetic witnesses for the future.

We entrust the success of the 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission to the maternal and supportive care of the Virgin Mary, our mother and queen of the world.

## **1. A Look at the Past: Evaluation of Journey from 2004 General Assembly to Today**

### *Context:*

The responses made by the Provinces indicate that the commitments given by the 2004 General Assembly have been received quite well by the confreres, local communities and Provinces, but these did not produce a significant change of mentality and action.

As we bring out those more significant elements that were indicated as a source of revitalization of our vocation, of strengthening our apostolic life and of renewing our community life, we also put side by side the shadows that still persist.

### *Synthesis of Provincial Assemblies*

#### *The Revitalization of our Vocation:*

- through the encounter with God in personal and community prayer;
- through living faithfully the vows and Vincentian virtues;
- through the effort to live the graced moments of our vocation through confession, spiritual accompaniment, retreats;
- through fraternal relations and mutual support especially during difficult moments and generous interprovincial collaboration;
- through active participation in celebrations, anniversaries and moments of permanent formation.

However, the Provinces have also indicated some shadows:

- caused by individualism;
- caused by a routine and mechanical life;
- caused by a lack of enthusiasm in living one's own vocation;
- caused by a weak missionary and Vincentian character in living one's vocation.

#### *Strengthening our Apostolic Life:*

- through a greater resolve and decision to do direct ministry to the poor;
- through the revival of a more missionary spirit in our works;
- through a greater emphasis on the theological, pastoral, spiritual and human preparation for our apostolate;
- through fidelity to the local community project and openness to the pastoral projects and directions of the Church;

- through a closer collaboration with the laity and with the Vincentian Family;
- through a greater community discernment and revision of our ministries and a clearer option in opening works in poorer sectors which are not evangelized;
- through the inclusion of the laity and young people in the initial formation for the apostolic and missionary activities.

In spite of these lights the Provinces have also indicated some shadows:

- caused by a lack of vigor in the revision of works in accordance with the actual criteria;
- caused by a certain resistance in the elaboration of vigorous and audacious programs in favor of the poor;
- caused by an insufficient appreciation of the laity.

*Renewal of Community Life:*

- through the cultivation of friendship and fraternity in spite of individual differences;
- through the strengthening of the spirit of service and enthusiasm in the participation at intercommunity and interprovincial gatherings;
- through attentiveness to the old, the sick, and confreres in difficult situations;
- through the transition from an authoritarian community model to a model in which more dialogue has opened new forms of co-responsibility and mutual assistance;
- through the strengthening of moments of interchange and dialogue in the human, spiritual, pastoral and cultural spheres;
- through a greater attention to the details/particulars of fraternal life (birthdays, feast days, anniversaries, etc.);
- through a greater recourse to the human sciences for the personal and professional formation of the confreres.

In spite of the lights, however, the Provinces also indicated some shadows:

- caused by the impoverishment of community due to individualism;
- caused by destructive criticism that destroys community life;
- caused by the case of confreres and communities who for reasons of the apostolate live alone/apart and do not participate regularly in the life of the Province.

## 2. A Look at the Present: The “Signs of the Times” which Challenge the Congregation of the Mission Today

*Context:*

There are varied *Signs of the Times* at the different national and international levels of our world. Every Continent, has its own challenges and difficulties to face. The same can be said about the challenges and opportunities of the worldwide Catholic Church. The world in its turn is divided, generally speaking, into two: developed and developing countries. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find common challenges and possible solution for both at the same time. Following the lead of the provinces, some of the challenges and opportunities for each “world” are mentioned below.

### *Synthesis of Provincial Assemblies*

*The positive and negative “signs of times” of the developed countries:*

- The positive “signs of the times” are:
  - globalization and very fast communication;
  - solidarity;
  - a generous welcome of refugees;
  - a call for cultural understanding and religious pluralism due to the rapid spread of non-Christian religions and sects.
- The negative “signs of the times” are:
  - consumerism;
  - relativism;
  - silent secularism;
  - loss of meaning (that is, the meaninglessness of life);
  - lack of vocations;
  - mass immigration as a matter of concern in some countries.

*The positive and negative “signs of times” in the developing countries:*

- The positive “signs of the times” are:
  - the Catholic Church is experiencing rapid growth with a good number of vocations to the priesthood and to consecrated life (Africa-Asia and Latin America);
  - people are much more interested in faith and thirsty for the Word of God;
  - an eager longing for peace, justice and evangelical freedom.

- The negative “sign of the times” are:
  - youth are forced to flee their countries and illegally immigrate with appalling consequences of exhaustion, death, hiding out, stress and uncertainty of every kind; the refugee crises is a major phenomenon today;
  - an unclear political life, lawlessness, human rights’ abuses, and the reality of so many prisoners, tortures, mass killings, and disappearance of citizens;
  - the rapid spread of sects especially in Africa and Latin America;
  - in some places, no peace or security, no legal recourse; only corruption, bribery, and nepotism;
  - weak social services especially in the areas of education and health care;
  - people come to know ethnic and tribal violence, religious fundamentalism (Islamic, Hindu, Christian), cultural and linguistic clashes and superstition.

*Meeting these challenges and difficulties in a creative and innovative way demands that the Congregation of the Mission acts:*

- to ensure a sound and solid formation for its incoming candidates, and, through ongoing formation programs, updates its member and encourages them to be skilled evangelizers;
- to provide an effective and creative response to the refugee crises;
- to be creative in building upon the good of the past which remains effective in the present — some of our ministries and institutions are powerful resources which must be properly valued and employed and re-oriented;
- to develop concrete national and international networks of cooperation among the CM Provinces — internal and inter-provincial reconfiguration is one form of this exercise;
- to respond as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century community to the needs of the poor while avoiding the over-structured reality of the Congregation which can discourage creativity;
- to promote alternative education which emphasizes character building;
- to promote creative leadership wherever it can be found;
- this leadership can, for example, collaborate effectively with NGO’s to eradicate diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, HIV, etc;

- to be open, sensitive, and responsive to new contexts and situations, and to plan, execute, evaluate and celebrate with people whom we serve and collaborate with;
- to make “organized charity” the target of an effective and creative ministry to promote justice, peace, and the integrity of all creation;
- to empower the poor as masters of their own destiny.

### **3. A Look at the Future: Fidelity to the Mission**

#### *a) Creative Ministries*

##### *Context:*

Vincent reminded us that “love is creative unto infinity.” The ministries which we carry out for love of God and one another invite us to be creative. Everything changes and so must the Congregation and the confreres in responding to the needs of the Church and world of our time. To be creative is to be life-giving — our ministries should be life-giving for ourselves as well as for the people whom we serve.

#### *Synthesis of Provincial Assemblies*

##### *Characteristics of our Ministry:*

- focusing upon those who are not served;
- developing a people-based strategic pastoral program which empowers the people to take responsibility and give direction for any “service”;
- sharing our Vincentian charism with our co-workers in the mission through mutual formation and collaboration in all areas of the mission at the local and international levels;
- developing diversified forms of community life and prayer appropriate to the current apostolate; for example, establishing prayer groups in our ministries, integrating spirituality into our programs;
- encouraging Vincentian Spirituality;
- collaborating with the Vincentian Family.

##### *Whom should we serve with creativity:*

- the immigrant populations;
- the marginalized persons: prisoners, migrants, etc.;

- the “new poor”: refugees, displaced persons, those suffering from psychological trauma as a result of violence and armed conflict, street children, etc.;
- those of other religious backgrounds, particularly the Muslims; there is a need to promote dialogue with Islam.

*How should we minister creatively:*

- making reflection a motivating and empowering element in ministry:
  - use the “pastoral cycle” (“pastoral discernment”) as a methodology in renewing pastoral ministries: situation analysis, theological reflection, judgment, response;
- using information and communication technology as effective means of mission;
- developing new forms of apostolate through audiovisual means for evangelization and catechesis; for example, making short films on the persons and passages of the Gospel;
- learning the language of those to/with whom we minister;
- dealing creatively and well with the process of moving on from certain works and ministries;
- developing dynamic apostolates;
- reinventing traditional pastoral engagements, for example with migrants, the elderly, differently-abled, poor students, slum dwellers;
- asking ourselves: where do we put our most energetic men;
- exploring new works of evangelization, such as interreligious dialogue, care for the environment, disaster intervention, human rights, etc;
- valuing the past but letting go of what holds us back;
- developing creative leadership both in the Congregation and in lay leadership;
- establishing lay missionary programs;
- maintaining safe environments for children;
- using new means of evangelization and catechesis which respond to the contexts and are inventive; creating ministry on behalf of the poor adjusted to the current time and place as St. Vincent did;
- collaborating with organizations which, in some areas, have the same goal as we do (for example, faith-based groups, UN, EU, NGO’s, GO’s);
- learning from successful organizations both within the Congregation and outside the Congregation.

## b) *Methodology of Systemic Change*

### *Context:*

“Systemic change focuses on assisting the needy to change the overall structures within which they live and helps them develop strategies by which they can emerge from poverty.... Systemic change aims at transforming a complete series of interacting elements, rather than just an individual element. It also inevitably involves changing attitudes that have caused the problems which a group hopes to solve.... It provides tools focusing on the relationship among a system’s elements, interprets a group’s experience of that system, and promotes structural changes within it” (ROBERT P. MALONEY et alii, *Seeds of Hope*, p. 3).

The concept of “social sin” recognizes that some situations in which people are oppressed arise not from personal wrongdoing but from the very structuring of a society. Systemic change is a way to respond to this sinful condition. In the description above one can discern three elements which promote effective systemic change: first, that it empowers the needy in changing the structures which oppress them; second, that it involves a changing of attitudes which cause the problem; and third, that it emerges from an understanding of the system itself. To bring about systemic change, all these elements need to be addressed by collaboration. Our Provinces have recognized this reality in many ways.

### *Synthesis of Provincial Assemblies*

- A holistic and inclusive approach should be sought in our social and developmental activities. Community animation, awareness building, formation of critical consciousness of the people, legal literacy, mediations and community based organizations are proven tools of development of the marginalized.
- Priority should be given to works that promote a structural change in the society: strengthening of local self governments, formation of self-help groups, indigenous micro credit schemes, etc.
- Collaboration with governments and other developmental agencies can be very effective in seeking to eradicate some diseases which oppress the poor, such as tuberculosis, malaria, chickenpox, HIV, etc.
- Attention to social-economic realities, to means of giving social structures a gospel orientation, and to focusing the attention of governments/political parties on the plight of the poor is very

much in keeping with the style of Vincent de Paul in his time and place.

- Establishing linkages with non-governmental organizations (NGO's), governmental organizations (GO's), and other organizations working for the poor can consolidate initiatives and have a greater impact bringing about systemic change.

One can also work with the United Nations and the European Union for change. There is a Vincentian Mission at the UN.

- Cooperating with the Vincentian Family in the focused service of the poor is a natural strength for us since we share a common vision and spirituality of action. A more institutional movement in confronting poverty can be carried out by organizing conferences of the SSVP, the AIC, and other Vincentian groups.
- Working with church-based organizations, with advocacy groups, and even with corporations on matters of our common cause multiplies the effort in the bringing about of systemic change.
- The call is for the Congregation to be courageous and inventive in the defense of the poor: train confreres with the different skills which are necessary for the service of the poor; provide legal recourse for the defense of the poor and the promotion of justice.
- Should we establish (at the Congregation level or that of the Vincentian Family) an **“Observatoire de la Charité”** which takes an international and contemporary Vincentian point-of-view? This organization would be charged with studying the problems of the world (particularly where Vincentians are present) with the eyes and method of St. Vincent. One would proceed to resolve these issues using a systemic change approach.
- Cooperation with “Project Dream” in dealing with the problem of AIDS in Africa is a powerful means of bringing about systemic change in cooperation with the Daughters of Charity, the Vincentian Family, and other organizations (for example, the Sant Egidio Community). The same could be said regarding the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Pilot Project in Haiti which involves exploring the context of the country, identifying possible partnerships, and including the poor in the process.
- Areas in which the Congregation can use a systemic change approach to the problems of our world and society are numerous: the promotion of life, the care of the environment, the plight of women, the rights of immigrants, the enslavement of children, violence against the defenseless, and many more.

### c) *Ongoing Formation*

#### *Context:*

No creative ministry remains such for a long time without ongoing formation of the confreres and of the communities. The necessity of an ongoing formation is indispensable for assuring creative fidelity to our mission in the Church and in the world.

#### *Synthesis of Provincial Assemblies*

#### *The Normative Texts:*

The normative texts (the Constitutions, Statutes, Provincial Norms, etc.) are fundamental resources for our Vincentian identity and indispensable instruments for our formation.

- Such texts have value:
  - both at the community level and the personal level;
  - as a guide for the development of community projects and pastoral plans.
- These texts, however, are sometimes used inappropriately:
  - they are used as texts to provide simple answers, without a personal and deep knowledge of them;
  - they are transformed into juridical instruments, in place of being a rule of life;
  - they are not embodied in projects for which we are responsible.

#### *How to establish a process of ongoing formation:*

To establish a personal process of ongoing formation, one must have a passion for formation and one must find the time to do it.

- Such a process requires:
  - knowledge and love for the Christian and Vincentian way of life and of holiness;
  - continued updating at the biblical, theological, magisterial, and Vincentian level, as envisioned in the various *Rationes formationis*;
  - preparation for and acquisition of specific competencies in the various ministries;
  - openness to the great cultural changes of the present world which is characterized by an intercultural milieu;

- contact and solidarity with the poor;
- collaboration with the laity (Vincentian and non-Vincentian).
- The realization of a process of ongoing formation in our life has to be measured against some circumstances which represent for us true and appropriate challenges:
  - the lack of preparation for some ministries that also make up part of our activities (finance, education, formation of our own, etc.);
  - the risk that ongoing formation should be left to personal initiative and not included in the community or provincial plan that makes it more concrete;
  - the risk of succumbing to the complexity of the world in which we live, submitting to changes without having the strength and the capacity to exert some influence over them;
  - the risk of taking upon ourselves such a great burden of apostolic work, that we do not find time and energy for an effective formation of our own life.

*Ideas and Suggestions:*

The imagination and inventiveness for sustaining and strengthening the ongoing formation in the confreres and in the communities are not lacking. This truth suggest a deep desire for formation in the confreres and a great expectation of those who have the responsibility to provide for it. Ideas and suggestions lead to occasions and means which are continually being adapted to diverse circumstances and local necessity.

- At the personal level:
  - biblical and Vincentian readings;
  - personal study.
- At the Community level:
  - opportunities for formation conversation;
  - creativity in prayer.
- At the intercommunity level:
  - seminars or days of formation, also with the help of experts, on specific themes (such as, the dynamics of the fraternal life, the documents of the Church, new forms of proclamation and of charity, and so on).
- At the Provincial Level:
  - a provincial plan for ongoing formation;
  - formation projects for those at particular generational stages;

- formation opportunities for young confreres in the first year of ministry;
- formation courses for specific needs on the pastoral order (missions and charity);
- specialized programs for some confreres in various types of activity.
- At the Interprovincial Level:
  - interprovincial collaboration for the internal seminary and for the major seminary;
  - creation of a center for ongoing formation;
  - sharing confreres.
- At the Congregational Level:
  - CIF;
  - Vincentian Heritage;
  - creation at the Curia of a Secretariat for Vincentian Spirituality;
  - revision and updating of the various *Rationes formationis*;
  - creation of a *Practical Guide for Formation*.

Today, a major creativity in the formation field is sought at the level of methodology. Systemic change does not apply only to external structures, but also to our mental structures. We have available today some formidable instruments of communication and formation, but we are not always able to adopt them, though some do. Among the new methodologies:

- utilization of some modern information technologies (computers, the web, etc.) for the spread of ideas and experiences;
- a dynamic and creative approach to the Vincentian sources;
- creation of some mechanisms for the analysis of ongoing formation.

#### d) *Reconfiguration*

*Context:*

“No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak. If he does, its fullness pulls away, the new from the old, and the tear gets worse. Likewise, no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins are ruined. Rather, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins” (Mk 2:21-22).

The resources of the Congregation are the patrimony of the poor, and the Congregation has an obligation to make sure that these resources are used well and wisely in their service. The Congregation, living in the midst of billions of marginalized people, is challenged urgently to reconfigure itself in order to give an “effective and affective” response. The theme of “reconfiguration” invites the confreres to think about the ways in which we organize ourselves for this effort of responding to the spiritual and material needs of the poor. Are we making the best use of our manpower? Are we unnecessarily duplicating structures? Are we clinging to old ministries when we are being summoned to new ones? Are we making the best decisions with our (limited) financial resources? Are we sharing with one another in providing the best ministry?

In the Provincial Assemblies, the question of reconfiguration was considered on several levels: the reorganization within a province; the collaboration of several provinces around a particular work; the shared responsibility of the Conferences; the unification of several provinces into one; the Congregation as an international entity.

### *Synthesis from the Provincial Assemblies*

*At the Provincial level, reconfiguration has been experienced as:*

- reorganization;
- strategic planning, re-defining priorities, re-alignment of administrative tasks and responsibilities, rotation of confreres into different ministries;
- greater transparency in making known the reality of the province clearly;
- the creation of new ministries and structures;
- better communication;
- inviting confreres from other Provinces to aid with a ministry;
- greater participation and collaboration with laity, Vincentian Family & Dioceses.

*At the Interprovincial level, reconfiguration has been experienced as a notable increase of collaboration in:*

- formation (a common internal seminary, cooperating in formation of formators);
- sharing of resources (personnel, institutions, expertise, and finances);

- common pastoral action (e.g., care of migrants, popular missions, new missions);
- joint meetings of Provincial Councils.

*At the Conference level (APVC, CEVIM, CLAPVI, COVIAM, NCV), reconfiguration has resulted in:*

- common projects in a country (e.g., Solomon Islands, Bolivia, Amazonia);
- common formation (e.g., seminary formators, novices, centers of formation);
- coordination of ministries (e.g., education, parishes, human promotion);
- common apostolates.

*At the Level of the Unification of Several Provinces into one:*

Several Provinces, faced with ageing and a dwindling number of confreres, have voluntarily chosen to unite themselves into one Province in order to strengthen their mission of evangelization and the service to the poor. With their sight on Christ as the evangelizer of the poor, with great courage and humility, with no certainties of the future, they embarked on the difficult path of making the best use of their combined resources. This process of reconfiguration was made possible by:

- intensive consultation and dialogue;
- transparency in the presentation of the provinces;
- trust in the goodwill of others;
- letting go of agendas;
- participation and ownership of all the confreres.

*At the International level, reconfiguration has been seen in:*

- undertaking numerous international missions, upon the invitation of the local churches, with the participation of Conferences and Provinces;
- the efforts of the Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO) which has increased the number and the amount of its assistance to the different Provinces.

On this international level, recommendations have been made for a further reconfiguration that the Congregation may respond faster and more effectively to the situations on different continents:

- that a more efficient financial system at the international level be established so that it would respond to the great economic needs of the international missions;
- that the Congregation sets clear and dynamic priorities for the next 6 years;
- that the different conferences be represented in the general Council.

At the end of his life, St. Vincent had one big regret, “that he had not done enough for the poor!” We are indeed very happy to note that substantial reconfigurations have transpired since the last General Assembly. But, at the end of the day, in the midst of the sea of suffering humanity, the question that keeps coming back again and again is, “have we really done enough?” Have we used our resources wisely and organized ourselves well for action?

e) *Dialogue with the Poor and the Vincentian Family*

*Context:*

A sincere dialogue and concrete pastoral plan is very important and useful among the members of the worldwide Vincentian Family. This dialogue helps to identify the real need of the poor and to make plans to serve them with respect and love. The poor are often powerless and without hope. Frequently, they are the victims of unjust social structures and the bad policies of government. Since a Vincentian is a friend of the poor, he needs to have a personal encounter with the poor, even as he is identified with them. This can be done by a true dialogue:

- An essential element of the dialogue is ***Listening***. We listen to each other to learn from each other, to unite our hearts and “***Be with the poor***” who are our “***lords and masters***” (St. Vincent).
- The poor want to be the ***subjects not objects*** of our ministry. For this to happen, a personal conversion is needed. We need to listen humbly and carefully with a willingness to learn and be converted. Our emphasis should be not on “***doing more***” but on “***doing with.***”

*Synthesis of the Provincial Assemblies**LISTEN TO AND BE WITH THE POOR!*

*What do the poor tell us about themselves?*

- that they want to be accepted as they are, and visited where they are, at their own homes;
- that they want their economic and social status to be improved;
- that they want education and health care for their children;
- that their lives depend on others;
- that they are deprived of their own land;
- that they sometimes lose their dignity and self-esteem;
- that they suffer silently due to political injustices.

*We are called **to be with and share** the destiny of the poor who:*

- reveal to us authentic human and Christian life and value;
- teach us the importance of time, life and suffering with dignity;
- invite us to learn from them fidelity, generosity, and authenticity;
- look for our gentle and caring love;
- ask from us a sincere, loving and caring dialogue with them and a deep knowledge of the causes of their poverty;
- expect a new, creative and lasting solution for their problems;
- want to exert some control over their own destiny.

*To work for and promote the causes of the poor, the Congregation of the Mission needs:*

- to prepare its men humanly and spiritually to be faithful to St. Vincent and the Vincentian charism;
- to respond to the needs of the poor in an appropriate and effective way;
- to nourish confreres who know how to be with the poor in their circumstances;
- to form confreres who are able to accompany the poor in their promotional projects;
- to train confreres who remember that we are among the poor: "No one is so poor as to have nothing to offer, and no one is so rich as to have no needs."

*Recommendations:*

- The poor should be the best friends of the Vincentians: those who suffer physically, psychologically and spiritually should be at the center of the Vincentian Family's attention and mission.
- The Congregation of the Mission should be aware of changing cultural situations and should adopt, through a thorough and sincere dialogue among the Vincentian Family, new methods of being with and working for the poor. Cooperation with and collaboration among the members of the Vincentian Family is a key to the success of our evangelization.

DIALOGUE AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE  
VINCENTIAN FAMILY

- The concept of "*family*" is inspiring for us as Vincentians. The Vincentian Family, as a family, needs to grow together and have a basic common formation.
- At Folleville and Chatillon, Vincent entered into a true dialogue of how to help the poor and he ended by establishing an "***organized charity***". Today's dialogue among the members of the Vincentian Family must have such a constructive and practical goal.
- Shared experiences in serving the poor unite the Vincentian Family's efforts; we enrich each other and serve the poor more effectively. We have a lot to learn from each other. As family members, we develop a "common spirit" which helps the dialogue and improves our cooperation.
- The whole of the Vincentian Family is called to trust in Divine Providence.
- The Vincentian Family offers hope to the poor because we love and serve them with consistency and constancy.
- The Congregation works with and learns from the rest of the Family.