

Rome, 26 October 2005

*To all the Visitors and Visitatrixes and Members
of the Vincentian Family*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in St. Vincent,

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts now and forever!

I would like to share with you two experiences that I had in recent days.

The first is from my visit in Great Britain. I met a non-Catholic religious congregation which considers St. Vincent de Paul as a co-patron. It is moving to think how the Vincentian charism has gone beyond the borders of the Catholic Church, but, at the same time, this involves the need for a greater coherence in living the spiritual patrimony of the saint of charity.

The second is the collaboration that the Daughters of Charity have begun to accomplish with the Community of Sant'Egidio in Project DREAM (Drug Resource Enhancement against AIDS and Malnutrition), with Fr. Maloney representing the Congregation of the Mission as the coordinator of the group. This is a program which was initiated three years ago for a global fight against AIDS (education, prevention, and cure), malaria, malnutrition, tuberculosis, and the principal illnesses. Mozambique became the place where this project was first tried. Today it has become a proposal and a model for all Africa, with the best results in terms of both quality and quantity, with sustainable expense levels for economies with few resources and little infrastructure. I believe that, in uniting ourselves, firstly, as the Vincentian Family, and secondly, with other organizations, in order to promote programs of concrete action in favor of the poorest, we will be giving life to the Gospel of Jesus and our charism.

I would like to tell you that I participated in several meetings with the Community of Sant'Egidio to promote a **“Campaign of Humanization in prisons and in the fight against the death penalty.”** A first step in this campaign is to take a census of those who work in prisons, know a little about their work, etc. Later, once we have this information, we will reflect about how we can move this campaign forward. It would be well to remember that this same census (appendix 1) is being asked of all Congregations of Consecrated Life, through the International Union of Superioresses General (UISG) and the Union of Superiors General (USG). I hope that you will send me, as soon as possible, all this data on a national level. I am also interested in knowing if this type of service is carried

out as the Vincentian Family or as a particular branch of the Vincentian Family.

Let us unite in prayer, asking the God of life to grant us fidelity and joy in order to live intensely and share our charism with the poor. I entrust to your prayers all the wonderful work that the Vincentian Family carries out throughout the world. May God bless you always!

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General