

FEATURE

Presentation

by Julio Suescun Olcoz, C.M.

The title of this issue of VICENTIANA can appear to be presumptuous. Undoubtedly, it is. The intention is not to present the entire social teachings of the Church, not even a summary. What is included in this issue are various studies by Vincentian missionaries.

For the past several years, SIEV (International Secretariat for Vincentian Studies) has thought that the social teachings of the Church ought to be thoroughly integrated in Vincentian continuing education programs. SIEV asked some of the missionaries to write about these topics. This effort brought about a brief summary of studies of the social teachings of the Church from a Vincentian perspective. These studies would be able to be published in various issues of VICENTIANA, as well as one issue devoted to this specific topic. There were not many who responded, and we gave minor effort to the birth to this project. The completed studies were stored in the archives of SIEV.

As an instrument of service for the formation of missionaries, VICENTIANA has been thinking that these efforts of our thinkers ought to be used and not remain dormant. Thus, VICENTIANA has prepared this edition as a small tribute to those who with so much good will and skill responded to the invitation of SIEV.

The titles are suggestive in themselves. The titles and themes cover the spectrum of Vincentian spirituality, since the time of Vincent de Paul, "totally given to God," in a commitment in favor of the poor and in the practice of charity with its implications for justice. In response to the Church's urgings, many today are committed with eyes wide open to the same reality of the poor that exist in our world. Because of the poor and because of the demands of our vocation, and not because of church rules, we need to apply ourselves to the study of the social teachings of the Church.

VICENTIANA ends this issue with a remembrance, one more time, of the Common Rules, on the 350th Anniversary of their being given to the confreres. The Common Rules were not done in a day and were not the original thinking of one person. They were formed day by day, from the very beginning of the first missionaries giving themselves to God in prayer and in the experience of reflection and dialogue. These first missionaries were discovering the way of fidelity that God was asking of them.

Translation: JAMES G. WARD, C.M.