

## **Congregation of Sisters of Charity of St.Vincent de Paul, Vincentgiri,Mananthavady(SCV).**

*“In serving the poor you are doing what the Son of God did while He was on this earth.”  
St Vincent de Paul.*

### **Introduction:**

God in His infinite mercy never fails to bless the people on the earth at appropriate times with saintly persons with unique charisma, so that they may help the people through their heroic examples to fight the evils that menace the Christian life. In the so called dark ages of Europe - poverty, sickness, misery and destitution with all other evils that usually accompany them were rampant and were threatening to tear apart the fabric of Christian society. At this critical juncture, two heroic souls of undaunted apostolic zeal joined hands to bring solace to the masses through their unselfish service in love. They were St.Vincent de Paul and St.Louise de Marillac. This selfless love gives nativity to “Vincentians”. This Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Vincent de Paul, brings forth its shoots at Mananthavady with the same apostolic spirit and zeal.

### **Historical background of Indian Mission:**

A third of the world's poor live in India, one of the most unequal societies in the world. While economic development over decades has created pockets of wealth, poverty remains entrenched and widespread. Forty-two percent of the population lives below the poverty line and at least 20% of the population frequently goes hungry due to various causes.

Realizing the need in India the Congregation of The Sisters of Charity of St.Vincent De Paul started their mission in India, Kerala, at Mananthavady on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1976. It has its origin in the “Soeurs de la Charite” (Sisters of charity) of Strasburg, France founded by Cardinal Armond Gaston De Rohan Soubise, Bishop of Strasburg in 1734 for the care of the sick, and needy particularly the poor.

### **Cardinal Armond Gaston De Rohan**

Fr. Antonine Jeanjean, a priest from this diocese, was appointed Superior General, Adviser and Spiritual Director of the sisters from 1975. He was a great devotee of St.Vincent de Paul and suggested to the sisters to choose St.Vincent de Paul as the patron Saint of the Congregation.

The congregation, popularly known as Vincentians, grew rapidly and spread from Strasburg (France), to Germany, Austria and Italy. The houses founded in these countries developed themselves into independent foundations of the same congregation.

Inspired by the teachings of Vatican II, the congregations which were founded from Strasburg sought ways and means to come again in close association with each other. This common endeavour led finally in November 1970 to the formation of **FEDERATION OF VINCENTIAN CONGREGATIONS.**

Within the federation the mother houses of Freiburg, Fulda, Heppenheim and Paderborn had members from Syro-Malabar and Syro- Malankara dioceses in India. Their presence in the



congregations led them to think of founding their own houses in India. However, a common agreement was reached in the conference of these four Congregations held on 28th October, 1973 at Strasbourg and further in the conference of 4<sup>th</sup> November 1973, held at St. Theresa's Hospital Mannheim. It was decided to found a filial house in India, in the eparchy of Mananthavady, in the southern state of Kerala. The Holy See approved this new foundation filial house of the four member congregations of the Federation on 12th August, 1975.

So now, The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul, Mananthavady, is an Institute comprised of consecrated life in the Syro – Malabar Church. The Congregation is of Pontifical Right and is a member of the Federation of the Vincentian Congregations. They had started as a small band of 9 sisters in the hills of Mananthavady.

### **Mother House, Mananthavady in 1975**

The sisters christened these hills as Vincentgiri, and this house was blessed and inaugurated by Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy, the Bishop of Mananthavady, on 31st Jan 1977. Our number has become 238 in 2013 with 24 branch houses – built predominantly in rural, semi-urban and underdeveloped areas to fulfill our apostolic services.

Out of these 24 houses

- 15 are in Kerala
- 4 in Andhra Pradesh
- 2 in Karnataka
- 2 in North east India (Assam & Tripura)
- 1 USA.



**Charism:-** To serve the sick, poor and needy with a compassionate heart as exemplified in the life of St. Vincent de Paul who believed that merciful love conquers the world.

**Vision:** We, the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Mananthavady see “Jesus, the Evangelizer of the poor” as the supreme value in our lives, and see ourselves propagating the Kingdom of God by devoting ourselves through the works of Christian Charity.

**Mission:** - Impelled by the love of Christ and inspired by the ideal of our patron St. Vincent de Paul’s “merciful love conquers the world”, we, the sisters dedicate ourselves for the service of the sick, poor and those in any way afflicted in conformity with the mission of the church.

### **Generalate, Mananthavady**



### General Administration:

The 5<sup>th</sup> General Synaxis of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St.Vincent de Paul, Mananthavady, held on 19<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2013, at SCV Generalate, Vincentgiri, Kerala, Mananthavady, has elected the following members to the General Governing Body.

- Superiour General - Rev.Sr.Ancita Vadayaparambil
- General Councillors - Rev.Sr.Philo Mulakkara(Asst. Sup. General also)  
- Rev.Sr.Roslind Kaiparampattu  
- Rev.Sr.Lucy Antony Manthara(Secretary General also)  
- Rev.Sr.Tessie.Edackattil
- Treasurer General - Rev.Sr.Cicily.Vattamattam



### Activities:

Jesus had a special sense of mission to the poor and the oppressed. At the outset of His ministry, referred to as Jesus' mission statement, Jesus stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth and read from the prophet Isaiah:

- "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4:18-19).
- St.Vincent de Paul says: " Let us work with a new love in service of the poor, looking for the most destitute and abandoned among them. Let us recognize that before God they are our Lords and masters, and we are unworthy to render them our small services"— (SV XI, 393)

With this Jesus' statement in mind and the teachings of St.Vincent, the SCV with their creative vision decided to fully dedicate themselves to the least, lost and marginalized in the society without any discrimination of caste, creed, language, race, ideology or social standing.

According to St. Vincent, "There is nothing more in keeping with the Gospel than, on the one hand to gather up light and strength for the soul in prayer, spiritual reading, and solitude, and then to go forth and dispense this spiritual good to men. This is how we should act; that is how we should by our deeds bear witness to God, that we love Him." To actualize these,



Sisters witness God's love through apostolate by embracing all works of charity which mainly includes:

- Pastoral Ministry
- Health Ministry
- Social services
- Family Apostolate
- Teaching ministry
- Hostel for children
- Home for the children and aged.

### **Pastoral Ministry:**

The spiritual and apostolic qualities of the life of Saint Vincent, who used to say: "Let's enter into His mind so that we may enter into His workings. Doing well isn't everything; we have to do it well..." (CCD XII, 201)

Now-a-days a number of sisters are working in many areas of pastoral care. It is something SCVs love doing and are good at –Our ministry in the local church community is part and parcel of our lives.

Particularly in these times of shortage of priests, sisters are more and more taking on significant leadership roles in parishes. From busy and big city parishes to tiny, remote and extensive rural communities' SCVs are facilitating the life of the local faith community.

Individual sisters engage in a variety of parish and pastoral ministries like helping and preparing the faithful in receiving sacraments, teaching catechism, sharing fellowship, leading various groups such as Legion of Mary, Vincent de Paul society, etc. Pastoral work creates a compassionate and supportive environment in rural and city parishes. Sisters take leadership roles participating in Pastoral Councils and in the formation of lay leaders in parishes and deaneries. Sisters have expertise in liturgy, spiritual accompaniment and styles of prayer, counselling, adult education, sacramental preparation etc. Sisters in these roles are well trained and multi-skilled and work ecumenically very effectively. They effectively respond to all the normal crises in parish life, especially in city, town and remote areas, e.g. consoling the grieving, preparing liturgies and burying the dead, accompanying a young family through the death of a person/child as well as being there in times of new life and celebration. They also extend their services to families in rural areas, to act as liaison among parents, to engage in social service, to prisons, to community and hospital and family visits.

### **Health Ministry:**

According to the Gospel of Luke (4:16-21), Jesus identified himself and his ministry with that of 'the servant Lord': the one who Isaiah tells us was sent to bring good tidings to the afflicted; to bring hope to the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives. Christ is a 'Gospel of wholeness' that calls us to a ministry of healing: a ministry which understands



healing not only in physiological terms but as wholeness of mental physical, spiritual, rational and social being.

SCVs give special emphasis to the healing ministry of the Church. They extend their excellent health services in the field of

This Hospital was started on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1989. this hospital is the only one of its kind in Wayanad which caters to acute psychiatric cases and provides long term custodial care for chronic mental patients Since 2005 it is sanctioned with 150 bed strength. The hospital helps out in de-organizing the mentally challenged and addicted persons of Northern Kerala as well as the neighboring states Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. By the hard work of various departments in the Hospital the mentally disabled and the addicted are rejuvenated to stream of Society. More than 15000 of patients were treated per year. It is commitment by 56 staff members such as two Psychiatrists, one RMO, Clinical Psychologist, Psychologist, four Social workers, 15 staff nurses, lab technician, pharmacist, 30 Attenders who helps in making the dream true.



Mentally challenged



#### Daily routine for the patient.

1. Morning prayer, meditation and exercise.
2. Daily rounds and physical checkup
3. Psycho educative classes for the patients.
4. Individual and family counseling sessions.
5. Group therapy
6. Psychotherapy - covert sensitization and Aversion therapy.
7. Recreational procedures-Table tennis, treadmill, Chess, Caroms etc.
8. Relaxation Therapy – it helps out to relieve stress within the Patient.

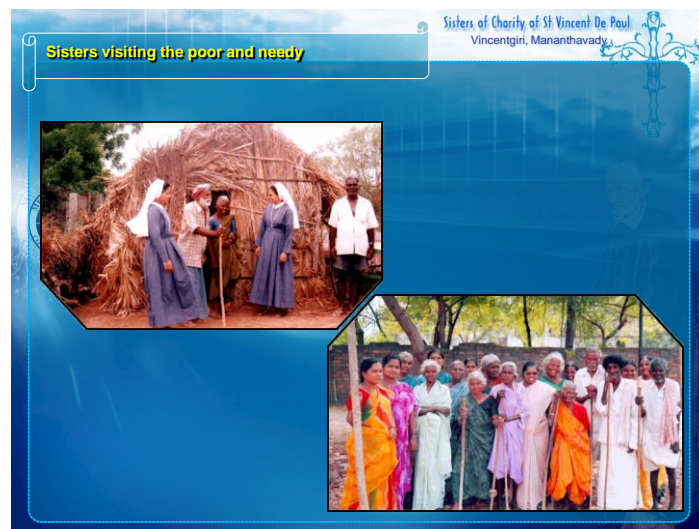


9. Food at appropriate timings is provided. It is based on nutritive value and based on the blood results of individual patients.

10. Group gathering of de addiction patients are conducted once in a month. And based on its attendance, the follow-up is made through telephone for the absentees of follow-up.

Since last 25 years, the hospital is catering the needs of thousands of patients. Also we provide custodial care(without bystanders) for the poor and weaker sections. The hospital is proud enough to later, each and every aspects of patients with care, love and affection.

### Family Apostolate



### HIV/AIDS/TB afflicted



- Geriatric
- General Medical conditions
- Drug and Alcoholic de-addiction
- In our area Alcoholic and Drug victims are increasing families and persons are suffering a lot. This pathetic social conditions and suffering of the families motivated us to begin a centre for treating Drug and Alcoholic addicts. The treatment for alcoholism, drug addiction and other psychological imbalances started at St. Vincent's

Hospital , Vincentgiri in January 1989. It is a pioneering involvement in education and prevention work in the field of alcoholism.

The duration of treatment is about 3-4 weeks. A close family member is expected to stay with the patient for three to five days from the time of admission. During the second week all the close family members of the patient are expected to attend the therapy programme for one full day. This is to give a chance for them to share and to express their feelings and that will help family members to understand him better. This open sharing will also help them to realize the need to love and accept him.

Our treatment includes detoxification, individual counseling, group therapy, family therapy, relaxation exercises, transcendental meditation and classes on various aspects of alcoholism especially its causes and consequences

- **Disaster management**
- **Community health care**

### **Social Services:**

Ps: 82/3-4. says “Give justice to the weak and to the orphan, maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy deliver them from the hand of the wicked”. Through social activities members of SCV family are tackling global poverty and injustice through the creation of a number of innovative programmes. They are able to help poor people in the surrounding community with access to education to the orphan, skills training to the differently able, clean water and sanitation, housing food and health care etc.

Women are regarded as the “better half” of the society and at par with the men. But in reality, our society is still male dominated and women are not treated as equal partners both inside and outside the four walls of the house. In fact they are treated as weak and dependent on men. As such Indian women enjoy an unfavorable status in society. Rural Organization for Social Service (SCV ROSS) is the pivotal attempt of SCVs on social service in Andhra Pradesh in order to work towards building up a peaceful and just society through the empowerment of the poor and marginalized with special focus on women, destitute and children to help the people to help themselves.

### **Family Apostolate**

The SCVs Family Apostolate mission is to encourage to bear witness to the Gospel life preached by Jesus – the care and concern for the stranger in need, regardless of race, colour, religion or country of origin.

A primary function of our family apostolate is to foster Christian relationships rooted in the Spirit. Through family apostolate SCVs try to build a community of faith, help the Catholics and non Catholics to encounter the living Jesus in the family, surroundings and in their lives. SCVs will nurture the hunger for God by joining with the poor, the sick and the needy in prayer and action. Faith in Jesus opens their eyes to see the world in a new way. They are nurturing a culture of compassion even in the midst of communal conflict.

### **Teaching Ministry:**

Seven million children under the age of 14 years in India do not have access to education and approximately 50% of these children drop out before they complete their elementary education.

Importance of education is most evident in the developing countries. Education is a means to alleviate poverty and engineer social change. It has a fundamental role to play in personal and social development. While it isn't a magic pill to solve the problems of the world, it is a ladder that can be used to climb out of poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war.

Giving importance to education SCV sisters of our times, take over responsibility to lead others and themselves, to be equipped with knowledge to usher in a better future. SCV family

believes that teaching profession plays an integral role in shaping the next generation of Indian citizens.

Children are the future of a nation. For an emerging and developing country like India, development of underprivileged children holds the key to the progress of the nation itself. Education is both the means as well as the end to a better life: means, because it empowers an individual to earn his/her livelihood and the end because it increases one's awareness on a range of issues – from healthcare to appropriate social behaviour to understanding one's rights - and in the process evolve as a better citizen. SCV Sisters working in the School taking care of the overall development of the children thus simultaneously help the sisters to learn, relearn, unlearn the stored knowledge, and facilitate to improve the medium of language. SCVs ensure that the teaching profession can attract and retain high quality individuals, broad changes are needed in the way that the profession is perceived

### **Hostel for Girls/working women**

There are several clear indicators of the fact that Indian women continue to be discriminated against – the sex ratio is skewed against them; maternal mortality is the second highest in the world; more than 40% of women are illiterate; and crimes against women are in all respects rising. Adolescent girls form an important vulnerable sector of population that constitute about one tenth of Indian population. It is a paradox of modern India that while women wield power and hold positions at the topmost levels, large sections of the women are still among the most underprivileged. Some of the areas that remain a main concern in case of underprivileged women are – health, sanitation, education, employment and social status. Health and education of women and girls are two main issues that loom large and continue to plague their development. While poverty, early marriage, malnutrition, lack of hygienic menstrual practices and lack of healthcare during pregnancy are some of the major health related issues; records state that the average Indian female has only 1.2 years of schooling; and more than 50 percent of girls drop out of school by the time they are in middle school.

SCV family is on the move in the given scenario to bring about sustainable development in the poor condition of underprivileged women and girls in the country by empowering them – by providing good quality accommodation with education, good health guidance and counseling. The objective is to enable girls from rural areas to pursue higher education and also to reduce school drop outs. Hostel life enables girl students to compete successfully in the field of education and try for jobs globally. Sisters sense that it is absolutely essential to strengthen this sector of education by providing greater access and also by improving quality in a significant way.

Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have been identified as the two most disadvantaged groups of Indian society who need special attention. Empowerment of the hostel girl is necessary to help her to cope with the changes and promote over-all awareness. The hostels run by the SCVs serve as home away from homes at all places where schooling facilities are available. The girls stay more than 8 years in our hostels. Over-all development of the girls is given utmost importance

### **Home for the Children and Home for the Aged**

St. Vincent Children's Homes provide both Long Term Residential Care and Case Planning-Assessment/Stabilization for youth who are unable to trust adults and maintain successful relationships in the community. These homes provide physical and emotional support, spiritual nurturing, and lots of tender loving care. The sisters carry out their service to the people in collaboration with many others. They relate to their co-workers with openness and trust. It is a matter of concern for the sisters that the people they serve understand and support the Vincentian Mission.



Like St.Vincent the sisters strive to listen to God's voice in the events and the signs of the times and seek to do His will in updated and well tested ways. They are ready to examine again and again their field of activities in order to be free for new and urgent needs. (con-205-1)

Our services are not merely an expression of social concern. It consists in surrendering ourselves to God in order to love our Lord and serve Him in the poor. Everyone being our neighbour, we meet all with esteem and readiness to help, regardless of nationality, race, caste, creed, ideology or social standing.

Vincent de Paul not only considered the poor as our neighbor, but also he rewarded them as our masters. We ought to treat them with kindness and cordiality. It is for this specific reason that he brought our congregation into existence.

SCV seek, in their relationship with those in need, to bear witness to the love of Christ for each one of us. The mission to the spiritually needy and the materially needy are integrally related and cannot be separated; one without the other is worthless. Our proclamation of the good news will resound in people's hearts especially when we give vibrant witness: We, the SCV

- Through the language of works: performing the works of justice and mercy which are a sign that the kingdom of God is really alive among us: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, helping to find the causes of their hunger and thirst and the ways of alleviating it;
- Through the language of words: announcing with deep conviction the Lord's presence, his love, his offer of forgiveness and acceptance to all;
- Through the language of relationships: being with poor persons, working with them, forming a community that shows the Lord's love for all.

### Conclusion:

Our vocation as Sisters of Charity of St.Vincent de Paul requires that we utilize our aptitudes and all our abilities to the fullest extent possible. What counts before God is not the greatness of our work, but the love of God with which we accomplish it. Our financial resources may be limited but no limit is placed on our willingness to serve. The more we abandon ourselves to God the more He works through us. We learned to read the book of life with each other's eyes seeing what we could not have seen alone. It was amazing to share how our loving JESUS led us to touch the life of the people who are poor, sick and afflicted in any way. The sisters are clear that they wanted to **retain the Vincentian spirit, retain the title, Sisters of Charity of St.Vincent De Paul.**

Merciful love conquers the world- with this motto in mind, and with the blessings of St.Vincent, we strive hard to overcome all our hardships with joy in our hearts and smile on our countenance, trying our best to provide even better service, with the hope that the future scenario will be bright.

