

Vinfam India

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Message

Christmas and Poverty Eradication

Once again we are privileged to celebrate the great feast of Christmas and we joyfully recall the infinite love of God for humanity: “God **so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life**” (Jn. 3: 16). Man who was created in the image and likeness of God lost his unique status due to the original sin. Subsequently human being became prey to: a) **Spiritual death** - that is, separation of man from God; b) **Bodily death** - that is, the separation of the body from the soul, the return of the body to the earth; c) **Broken ‘image’**- that is, darkness of mind, depravity and corruption of the heart, loss of independence, loss of free will, and tendency towards evil; d) **Guilt** - that is, a bad conscience, the shame that made him want to hide from God; e) **weak nature transmissible to progeny**, that is, the consequence of sin is transmitted to all of their decedents. All men participate in original sin because they descended from the same forefather Adam. But God’s love was so much so, that, He did not abandon him to domain to death, but rather in

His surpassing mercy set to liberate him. St. Louise de Marillac would say, “That a God should somehow be unable or unwilling to be separated from man.” That is the greatness of God’s love for humanity.

The birth of Christ in the history is the greatest sign of God’s promise. It brought hope to mankind. St. Paul says: “When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then a heir through God” (Gal 4: 4-7). Christ elevated the fallen human race. Through grafting, a wild tree is made to produce domesticated fruits, though its root would continue to be of wild tree. In the same way God helped man to enjoy the fruits of the Kingdom of God while allowing human being to keep up the human root. Let us realize the Kingdom of God in our lives as well as make it realizable in the lives of others especially the poor. That is why St. Vincent said, “It does not suffice

for me to love God if my neighbour does not love Him.” (St. Vincent, 30 May 1659, “Charity”, XII Conf. 207)

As we are concluding shortly the celebration of Jubilee Year in connection to the 400th anniversary of the origin of the Vincentian Charism, what Christmas could remind us? We are reminded that we constitute in the Church a formidable army of champions of the poor and the underprivileged. Today we are at the midst of various forms of poverty. In spite of fact that the tradition of charity which has expressed itself in so many different ways in the past four centuries by the Vincentians, still we are not able to eradicate poverty. The increase of sin obscure the spirit of one heart and one mind (Acts 2:44-46). Consequently, the number of the poor increases and found today with multiple forms. The methods to check the poverty does not appear to be sustainable. It lacks the perspective of integral development. Hence in spite of the number of services we offer to change the lives of the poor, their empowerment does not take place compared to the amount of resources we spend.

So, Christmas, first of all reminds that as Vincentians we need to find favour with God (Lk 2: 14). Sin prevents us to find favour with God. If sin can break the relationship with God, it can break relationship with others, with one self and with the nature. It can cause poverty. In other words, the poverty is the effect of the broken relationship. In order to check poverty first and foremost we need to be free from sin or need to reconcile with God and with one another and with nature. If no sin there will be no poverty. So let us learn from Jesus in keeping away from sin: “For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have One who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin” (Hb. 4:15).

Secondly, Christmas reminds of our call for even greater resourcefulness in our service to the poor. That is why St. John Paul II said, “Now is the time for a new ‘creativity’ in charity, not only by ensuring that help is effective but also be ‘getting close’ to those who suffer, so that the hand that helps is seen not as a humiliating handout but as a sharing between brothers and sisters” (*Nouvo Millenio Inenute*, no. 50 of John Paul II, January 6, 2001). For Jesus, His birth in the family of Joseph and Mary at Bethlehem is a new ‘creativity’ in charity, ‘to be getting

close to those who suffer’ and ‘a sharing between brothers and sisters’ in empowering them. Jesus perfected covenants and the teachings of the prophets of the OT. He is the perfect revelation of God. By becoming ‘Great High Priest’ (Hb 4: 14) and ‘Brother’ (Hb 2: 11), He gave us the boldness to come “unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need (Hb 4: 16). As Vincentians we are invited to learn from our elder Brother Jesus in serving the poor with ‘creativity’ (with systemic change approach), being closer to the poor (with affective and effective love), and the hand that help is a sharing between brothers and sisters (integral development, that is, spiritually and corporally).

Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM

National Coordinator

1. INTERNATIONAL

Closing of the 400th Anniversary of the Vincentian Charism

On the occasion of closing the 400 anniversary of the Vincentian Charism V. Rev. Fr. Tomaz Mavriè CM, the head of the Vincentian family write a letter to all the member of the Vincentian family world wide. Having The Theme, “on The Threshold of The fifth century of The Vincentian Charism”. The letter as follows

“Dear sisters and brothers in Saint Vincent,

May the grace and peace of Jesus be always with us!

As we officially end, on this 25 January 2018, the 400th Anniversary of the Vincentian Charism, with exuberant hearts we can repeat Saint Paul’s words written at the beginning of his letter to the Ephesians. Heaven has given us blessings on many different levels: on the personal level, on the level of each branch, and on the level of the Vincentian Family as a whole. May this experience remain for us a source to keep deepening, developing, and extending the Vincentian Charism to produce ever more new fruits.

During the Jubilee year, the Vincentian Family organized so many wonderful initiatives, projects, and celebrations on the local, national, and international levels. On the international level of the whole Vincentian Family, we organized:

- a) The International Vincentian Family Symposium in Rome from 12-15 October 2017.
- b) This project of the worldwide Vincentian Family, officially launched during the Symposium in Rome on 14 October 2017, will help us deepen our collaboration in order to respond more effectively to persons without a place to live.
- c) The Vincentian Film Festival, called “Finding Vince 400,” will be held from 18-21 October 2018 in Castel Gandolfo.

The Film Festival hopes to be an instrument to help “Globalize Charity.” Participation in the Festival is open to anyone, belonging or not to the Vincentian Family, from any country. The Festival will have three competitions: 1) for persons up to 18 years of age who will participate by submitting poems, drawings, writings; 2) for those who will submit screenplays for possible future films; 3) for those who will submit short films. The unifying theme is the life and charism of Saint Vincent de Paul.

- d) The Pilgrimage of the relic of the heart of Saint Vincent de Paul.

As we now begin the fifth century of the Vincentian Charism, I would like to suggest as first steps on this path the following two initiatives:

- a) To renew and deepen our relationship with the Saints, Blessed, and Servants of God of the Vincentian Family around the world as models of the Vincentian charism and spirituality by taking the following steps:
 - 1. Reviving the veneration and invocation of the Saints, Blessed, and Servants of God by starting from their place of origin, where they were born, lived, served, died, where they are buried or their relics are kept, through different initiatives to deepen our relationship with them. Renewing that closeness with them on a local level will encourage and help to spread veneration and

prayer through their intercession with renewed strength to other parts of the world.

- 2. Organizing meetings to make them known to those who do not know them, or do not know them well; organizing pilgrimages; developing prayer services for children, youth, and adults; printing new booklets; preparing PowerPoint presentations; using different media.
- 3. Praying incessantly to ask Jesus for the grace that all the Blessed and Servants of God or possible new candidates for sainthood be canonized by the Church. Engaging on the level of the specific branch of the Vincentian Family to which she or he belonged, as well as on the level of the whole Vincentian Family, to put all our efforts into the process of getting official recognition on the part of the Church.

- b) To renew and deepen the “Culture of Vocations.”

When we look for reasons for the decline in vocations to the consecrated life, in active participation of youth and adults in the life of the Church, and in faith in some parts of the world, we often hear the following reasons: consumerism, materialism, individualism, egoism, systematic laicization of society, etc. We can call this an “Anti-Culture of Vocations.”

I would like to invite us to unite all our efforts at showing the children, youth, and adults of today, who are caught in this “Anti-Culture of Vocations,” the beauty, attractiveness, and life-giving meaning of responding with a resounding “Yes” to Jesus’s call! I call us to demonstrate to the children, youth, and adults that it is normal to respond affirmatively, with a loud “Yes,” to Jesus’s invitation and not abnormal. We must strive together for a renewed Culture of Vocations.

“I will make you a light to the nations” (Isaiah 49:6).

This is also very much in tune with the theme of this year's Synod of Bishops, which will take place in October in Rome, "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment."

Putting all in the hands of Providence, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, the Saints, Blessed, and Servants of God of the Vincentian Family, we repeat the encouraging word to each other, the word Saint Vincent de Paul used when he was asked what else could he do in life, and he responded "more."

Your brother in Saint Vincent,
Rev. Fr. Tomaž Mavrič CM

2. NATIONAL

Registration of Vincentian Family India as a Trust

We are extremely happy to inform the members of VFI that Vincentian Family India has been registered as a Trust at Bangalore. As recommended, to be clear on the legal aspects and to be specific on the objectives, we have taken the assistance of a Chartered Accountant who is also a Lawyer and drafted the Trust Deed. The objectives included were discussed in detail during the Executive Body meeting held on July 2, 2017. For the smooth and speedy implementation of the registration process, as it was decided, we have included only three members as trustee, namely Rev. Fr. Francis Puthentahayil CM, Sr. Rose Chirayil D C, and Br. Tomy Varghese SSVP. After getting the Trust registered we made the application for PAN and we have secured PAN number also. Besides we have opened a Joint Bank Account with South Indian Bank at Bangalore.

The South Indian Province of the Daughters of Charity has sanctioned allotted 50 cents of land at Hallehalli,, KR Puram on long lease for the establishment of the VFI Secretariat and conduct of formation programmes. The Vincenciation family in India express heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Sr. of Chirayil D.C. (Visitoraties,), the council, the members and all the members of the South Indian province of the Daughters of Charity. May God bless our endeavour.

VINCENTIAN FAMILY FORMATION PROGRAMME – 2018

Theme: Empowerment of the Youth in the
Vincentian Charism

The program is scheduled to be held from 27th April to 1st May 2018 (inclusive of both days) at St. Vincent's Seminary (DC), Halehalli, Bangalore. Please send five (5) members from your Congregation/province/society for the programme. The registration fee is Rs. 1750/- per person. Please inform the names and contact address of the participants **on or before 20th March 2018**. The participants are to reach St. Vincent's Seminary, Halehalli on 26th April 2018 evening and may leave on 1st May 2018 afternoon.

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3. REGIONAL

Eastern Region

Vincentian Family get-together:

In order to strengthen the bond between various branches of Vincentian Family, the members of the various branches working in Kandhamal came together at Raikia on 20th November 2017. During this meeting, the CM priests of Jubaguda and Kottogodo, the Daughters of Charity of Kattingia, Aligonda and Raikia and the SSVP members were present. There was a meeting to reflect and discuss on how to organise the local units of the Vincentian family and to initiate activities in the levels of formation and service of the poor. Fr. Francis Puthentahayil CM shared on the value of collaboration and Sr. Grace Moolan DC shared on the ways collaboration could be fostered in the local level. All expressed the need of knowing more about the Vincentian Family. With the request to have more get-togethers of similar type the meeting was concluded.

4. FROM DIFFERENT BRANCHES

1. Daughters of Charity

Jubilee Celebrations in the South Indian Province of the Daughters of Charity

“I Was A Stranger And You Welcomed Me” (Matthew 25:35), the worldwide Vincentian Family inaugurated and celebrated the 400th anniversary of the origin of the Vincentian Charism. This was to remind the members, of the fruits of our pioneers who walked before us and forge the same foot prints to walk ahead with faith and hope. As a part of it the Company and the provinces had availed many opportunities to us, to deepen and integrate the Charism. As a response to this the South Indian Province organized seminars, quiz competition and festal celebrations in province level. Five seminars were conducted on Vincentian Charism. Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM was the resource person who imparted his knowledge into us in a simple and a digestive form which touched very much into our memory line and awakened us to do more for the poor and the needy. The Province also encouraged the local communities to celebrate the year in appropriate manner. The various celebrations helped many others to recognize the relevance of Vincentian Charism today. All the members felt that it was a moment of joy and grace to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the origin of Vincentian Charism. We the members of the South Indian Province as we step into fifth century of the birth of our Charism with boldness of Charity, commit ourselves to respond to poverty especially the new forms of poverty with creative fidelity.

Jubilee Celebrations in the North Indian Province of the Daughters of Charity

Having completed 400 years of living the Vincentian Charism in the service of the Church and the poor, it is only fitting that we look backward and forward what this precious gift of God means to each one of us yesterday, today and tomorrow.

The Province conducted a deeper study on the understanding of the Charism through reflective modules taken from the original sources and inspirations given by the Superiors. Four modules were sent to the communities which studies on them and evaluated their fidelity and the call to future commitment in the world today.

Also, the Seminars before the annual retreats were organised on the theme of deepening on the Vincentian Charism. The resource person for these seminars in five batches was Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM, the National Director of the Vincentian family.

Theme of these Seminars: 400th Anniversary of the Vincentian Charism, a time of grace and renewal

Dates: 20-22 Jul; 1-3 Aug; 28-30 Sep; 20-22 Sep; 1-3 Nov. Four seminars were conducted by Fr. Francis Puthenthayil, and the one of 28-30 Sep, by Rev. Fr. Ignatius Nayak.

The following points were studied and reflected:

- The origin of Vincentian Charism
- Contributions of Sts. Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac in developing Vincentian Charism
- Spread of Vincentian Charism
- Vincentian Charism today

In the right sense, Vincentian vocation in the Company of the Daughters of Charity has secular character as Jesus taught: ‘being in the world but not of the world’, as leaven to lead the poor to Christ through corporal and spiritual service. The studies led to deeper understanding of the poor, the realities of the poor today and the urgent need of preparedness to undertake services in response to the demands of new forms of poverty. The groups worked out ways to promote and revive the Vincentian Marian Youth groups and other Vincentian lay associations and to work out ways of collaboration within the Vincentian Family to seek out and serve the poorest of today. The practical ways given and worked out in groups will surely prove very helpful in many ways. We are deeply grateful to Frs. Francis Puthenthayil and Ignatius Nayak for all the efforts they made for giving us these meaningful seminars.

REFLECTING ON THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VINCENTIAN CHARISM:

Celebration of the 400th Anniversary:

This celebration was preceded by a Seminar for both of the Provinces together here in the Provincial House, Berhampur from 20 – 22 Sep 2017 according to the following programme.

1st day: Theme: **Origin of the Charism and the growth since then** (Fr. Devasia Pudussery CM and Fr. Jose Manjaly CM)

2nd day: Theme: **Charism lived out with boldness and charity** (Sr. Roslie DC and Sr. Velanganni DC)

3rd day: Theme: **Challenges and Ways to live the Charism** (Bp. Simon Kaipuram CM)

The Sessions were very inspiring, challenging and inviting for a renewal in a deeper level. Everyone appreciated the inputs and the discussions that were held thereafter. It was also a time of joyful fraternal sharing. On the 3rd day noon, was the solemn Eucharistic celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the Ordination of the two CM Provincials, Frs. Tommichan and Vijay; Golden Jubilee celebration of the opening of the Seminary formation in India 50 years ago, the Golden Jubilee of the vocation of the 1st Indian batch – Srs. Teresita Punnakal (absent), Teresa Mangalassery, Anne Kondodical, Mary Karimathil, Agnes Ozhukayil, and Benedicta Mendonca; the Diamond Jubilee of the vocation of Srs. Regina Elenjikal and Teresita Kondodical (absent). Rt. Rev. Sarat Chandra Nayak, Bishop of Berhampur, Rt. Rev. Simon Kaipuram, Bishop of Balasore and Rt. Rev. Aplanar Senapati, Bishop of Rayagada together with many priests officiated the Mass. Meaningful celebration of these events with proper hymns, inspiring homily, offertory procession and the gathering of many CM Fathers, priests and religious of the parishes of Gopalpur and Berhampur made the event solemn and memorable.

2. Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Installation of the President of Bhubaneswar Central Council:

The Area and conference presidents within the Bhubaneswar CC together with other members of the SSVP and other branches of Vincentian Family gathered

on 20th November 2017 at St. Catherine's, Raikia for the Installation ceremony of Bro. Bipin Montry as CC president. The program began with input session. It was conducted by Fr. Francis Puthenthayil. Fr. Francis explained briefly on the rules and regulations, the spirit and the living of the Society members. He emphasized on the importance of living the spirituality of the Society and to make it alive and effective especially in our parishes and in genuine commitment to the poor. The Eucharistic celebration was officiated by the Fr. Francis Puthenthayil together with Fr. Prodosh, the VG of the Archdiocese and a few other priests. After communion, Bro. Bipin took the oath, and with the blessing of the priests, was installed as the CC President of Archdiocese of Cuttack-BBSR. The singing of the litany of the Saints and Blesseds of the Vincentian Family and the prayerful atmosphere during the ceremony really touched the heart of many.

3. Vincentian Marian Youth

Session for the Vincentian Marian Youth (VMY):

In the afternoon of 19th November 2017, the members of the VMY joined together for a session with Rev. Fr. Francis. Puthenthayil and Joby, a national board member of Jesus Youth Association. They were 35 participants. He motivated the youth the need of promoting deep relationship with Jesus. He emphasized the need of having Jesus Experience in order to be a better VMY. He also explained the need of imparting this experience with others. From his own life experience, he shared how he powerful and strong he felt being close to Jesus. They conducted a group game and danced together to a hymn to Jesus. Though the session lasted only 3 hours, the members were greatly enthused and enriched, and they decided to make lives more rooted in Jesus.

Fr. Francis Puthenthayil explained on aim, nature, and spirit of the VMY and the way they should foster Christian living and be committed to service in the parish and to the poor. They were also advised to strengthen their unity among themselves as well motivate other members to VMY.

ANNUAL GATHERING: The Annual Gathering of the Major superiors/heads of the Vincentian Family in India will be held on 3rd and 4th March 2018 at St. Vincent's Retreat cum Seminar Center, Gopalpur-on-sea (Odisha).

Kindly confirm your participation to the Secretary