

Vinfam India

News Bulletin of the Vincentian Family in India



Volume 22

(For Private Circulation among members only) January – March 2018

Message

Be a Hope for the Poor

In view of observing the season of Lent and the feast of Easter in an appropriate manner on November 1, 2017, Pope Francis had given a message to all the Christian faithful worldwide. I was moved by a few highlights of Pope Francis in this message: first of all, concern for the present deplorable situation in the world and particularly its repercussion to impoverish the poor miserably; secondly, in order to explain the root causes of this unwarranted situation, an apt cue from the words of Jesus in the Gospel of St. Mathew: *“Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold”* (Mt 24: 12) is cited. According to Pope Francis, “these words appear in Christ’s preaching about the end of world. They were spoken in Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives, where the Lord’s passion would begin. In reply to a question of the disciples, Jesus foretells a great tribulation and describes a situation in which the community of believers might well find itself: amid great trials, false

prophets would lead people astray and the love that is the core of the Gospel would grow cold in the hearts of many”.

We are aware of the present awful situation in the world and in the Church due to terrorism, fundamentalism, corruptions, wars, sexual abuses, exploitations, degradation of values, environmental threats, etc. The steady increase of these iniquities points out the strong presence of evil power which breaks relationships and thereby reduces the love for God and for neighbor. This evil power which appears in manifold ways makes the love of many to grow cold. This coldness will adversely affect the poor. Hence Pope Francis says that, “many are disturbed by the spread of iniquity in the world and are concerned about the chill that paralyzes hearts and actions. Many notice a weakening in the sense of being members of the one human family...and join in raising our plea to God, in fasting, and in

offering whatever you can to our brothers and sisters in need!”. While appreciating Pope Francis for his timely inspirations, we as Vincentians have to think in which way we can respond to the present call of the Church. The best way would be to replicate what St. Vincent did in his time.

The situation of the 17th century during the time of St. Vincent de Paul was not better in any way. One of the priests of the Congregation of the Mission who was sent for mission reaching at Champagne was shocked in seeing the deplorable misery of the poor. He immediately wrote to St. Vincent in this way: “All the churches and the most holy mysteries have been profaned; the ornaments are sacked; the baptismal fonts are destroyed; priests are assassinated, tortured, and obliged to flee; houses demolished; the crops stolen; the fields are without crops and laborers; hunger and loss of life are almost absolute; the bodies are without burial and for the most part are food for the wolves. The poor that survive this ruin are obliged to pick up from the fields the grains of wheat or oat which are semi-rotten. The bread that is able to be made, if any, is like clay, and the life to be lived is insane, that it seems almost like a living death. Most of the sick are hidden in miserable shacks or caves, and we don’t know how to reach them. Most of them are lying on the plain floor or on rotten straw, with no more clothing than miserable rags. Their faces are blackened and disfigured, they look like faces of ghosts, and not men”. Hearing this without waiting for a minute, he sent that place, 12 of his priests to organize help there. He also confronted the concerned persons especially Richelieu who was responsible for such disasters. St. Vincent did all what he could do to bring changes to the situation of the poor. It is the love that motivated him to do so. Hence, he said in another occasion “love is creative even to infinity”.

This is the legacy that was handed over to us by St. Vincent as well as the various founders of the branches of Vincentian Family. Hence as Vincentians we are called first of all to have a heart that is not cold towards the poor and the needy; and secondly to have a prompt commitment to do all that is possible to bring changes in the lives of the poor. Let this feast of Easter lead us to have a transformation in us so that we can be a better Vincentian. I pray that this light of Christ rising in glory dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds and enable all of us to relive the experience of the disciples on the way to Emmaus.

Dr. Francis Puthenthayil CM
National Coordinator of Vincentian Family

I. INTERNATIONAL

International Film Festival & Competition Dedicated to Saint Vincent de Paul

“Finding Vince 400” in Castel Gandolfo in October 2018 to promote the globalization of charity.

“Finding Vince 400” is the final initiative of the Vincentian Jubilee Year that celebrates the 400th anniversary of the birth of the Vincentian Charism. Globalizing charity, one of the recurring themes of the Jubilee, will be expressed through the medium of cinema. This insight gave rise to the idea of organizing an International Film Festival where the main protagonist is the figure of Saint Vincent de Paul and his love for those living in poverty. The coordinator of the event, which will take place at Castel Gandolfo from 18 to 21 October 2018, will be US actor Clarence Gilyard, known to the world for having played in the television series, *Walker, Texas Ranger*, among others, and in many successful films including *Top Gun*.

The goal of the Festival is to stimulate creativity on the theme of the globalization of charity. “*Finding Vince 400*” is an invitation to develop stories and spread the message of globalized charity through the art of modern storytelling. The contest, open to all, is divided into three sections and envisages that the entries in the competition be submitted by 28 May 2018.

The first section entitled “Seeds of Hope” is aimed at the “under 18”: the contestants of this section are invited to use any creative expression (story, poetry, image, sculpture, music, etc.) that inspires direct service to the poor. The artists selected by the jury will be invited to the festival and awarded a trip to Castel Gandolfo.

The second section is dedicated to screenwriters: five will win a trip to Rome and a grant to produce their screenplay for a short film. These short films will be premiered at Castel Gandolfo.

The third section will see short films or films in competition on the theme “*Finding Vince 400*.” The jury will select films that inspire direct service to the poor and change our vision of poverty. These films will be premiered at Castel Gandolfo during the Festival.

The only condition necessary, which unites all three sections, is the theme: service to those in poverty.

The program of the festival, in addition to the awards to the winners, will include performances and the participation of actors as judges of the competition. There will be lectures, group work, screening of short films and feature films, music and entertainment, and it will be an opportunity to meet directors and screenwriters from all over the world.

For more details about how to attend FV400 at: facebook.com/FindingVince #findingvince, #fv400.

Find out how to submit at fv400.org The deadline for participation is 28 May 2018.

II. NATIONAL

1. 12th Annual Gathering of the Major Superiors and Heads of VFI



The 12th Annual Gathering of the Vincentian Family was held at Gopalpur-on-sea, Berhampur, Odisha from 3 to 4 March 2018. There were 42 participants from 9 branches. Rev. Fr. Vijoy Kumar Nayak CM the Hosting Head welcomed the gathering. Rt. Rev. Msgr. Simon Kaipuram CM made the inaugural address on the relevance of the theme ‘Vincentian Spirituality and Evangelization of the Poor. Bishop reiterated that St. Vincent realized both spiritual poverty and material poverty.

The first input session was presented by Very Rev. Fr. Sebastian Thundathilkunnel V C, Superior General who emphasized the need to identify with the person of Jesus and a radical option for the most poor. Each one of us has to find a personal way of life to be at the side of the poor in the modern world. After the Tea Break, Rev. Fr. Sebastian continued the session. Interaction followed in which the members shared their experiences. The Holy Mass was presided over by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Simon Kaipuram CM along with the Bishop Thiruthalil and other Rev. Fathers. Bishop Simon preached the homily also.

The next session after Lunch was presented by Br. Prof. Joseph Pandian the Vice-President General of

SSVP on the theme: 'Vincentian Spirituality: A lay perspective'. It was an enlightening and powerful talk. He started with the challenges for Christianity in India and observed that the faith is diminishing and declining in India. On spirituality of a Vincentian he asserted that by drawing closer to the poor, we draw closer to God. Highlighting the importance of collaboration, he stated that 'Divided we fall, United we stand'. In the evening, the members gathered for a Common Sharing – an Interaction with Sr. Marge Clifford DC, the Delegate from Vincentian Family Office in Philadelphia (USA). After the supper, the Executive Body met and evaluated the progress of VFI including the establishment of National Secretariat at Bangalore and its registration as a Trust. The second day of the Annual Gathering was fully devoted for various official business meetings. There was Prayer and Holy Mass in the morning presided over by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Thomas Thiruthalil CM. The business meeting commenced at 9 am. The National Coordinator, Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM in his welcome speech and introductory remarks called for solid deliberations during the meeting and the need for concrete plans for the effective evangelization of poor. The National Secretary Br. Tomy Varghese of SSVP presented the Report of the previous Annual Gathering. Matters arising out of the report were discussed. Rev. Fr. Francis presented the Finance Report and it was approved. There were three sessions and Rev. Sr. Sangeetha SCN (Asst. Superior General), Fr. Vijoy Kumar Nayak CM (Visitor of North Indian Province), and Rev. Fr. James Chelapurath VC respectively moderated the sessions. It was followed by the presentations of Regional Reports by the Coordinators. Of the 9 Regions, 4 regional coordinators presented brief reports on various activities taken up by the regions. After that,

the Commissions presented reports on various activities, programs and seminars organized by them. An evaluation of the VFI followed. Action Plan for the coming year was discussed and it was decided to take up a riot affected village in Khandamal, Odisha and change it into a 'model village' where the needs of the people are taken care of, 'each according to the capacity and each according to the need'. The project will be implemented with systemic change principles and strategies. The members also decided to continue the observation of September 22nd as a 'Day of Prayer & Fasting'.

Most of the members responded to the call and positive comments and suggestions were given. Sr. Sangeetha SCN proposed the vote of thanks.

2. Vincentian Family Secretariat

A Secretariat for Vincentian Family in India is in the process of getting realized. The following are the developments so far: **a)** The South Indian Province of Daughters of Charity has allotted half an acre of land for this purpose at Hallehalli, Krishnarajapuram, Bangalore; **b)** VFI has been registered as a Trust at Bangalore; **c)** VFI has secured PAN number also which is 'AACTV5709P'; **d)** A joint Bank Account has been opened in Bangalore with South Indian Bank Cox Town branch and the details are: Account Number: 0655073000000249. Name of the Account Holder: M/S. Vincentian Family India. IFSC: SIBL0000655.

Being the resource center, the secretariat shall offer short residential programs, seminars and workshops on Vincentian life to its members and those persons interested in the Vincentian way outside the Vincentian family. We have prepared a Project for this purpose. The building for the center

is designed to house 70 persons including the residential staff. The building includes a chapel, conference room, library and other facilities necessary to operate a resource center. As of now we have only a meager amount to begin the work. Hence, we earnestly depend on the benevolence of Almighty God. At the same time, we expect partial financial support from the VF International. At this juncture the major portions of the fund we must look at the generous and resourceful individuals, families, firms and institutions in India who could associate in a greater way by various means to realize this dream. We remember with gratitude the contribution of SCV Sisters from whom we are in receipt of One lakh and fortyfive thousand rupees for this purpose.

3. Commission for Women Empowerment

As reported earlier on the plans for organizing various workshops, preparations of Gender modules to be used in schools etc. are fast progressing. SCN through VFI has assisted us with a small amount of money to begin our work. Happy to inform you that we have already begun our work on the preparation of the modules for Gender Sensitization of teachers and students. Ms. Alka, a gender expert and Sr. Roselyn SCN have worked more than two weeks on this project and have prepared nearly 15 lessons that could be used for classes 1-10. We plan to prepare at least 10 lessons/sessions for each class. We need to do a lot of research and design classroom activities for children of different age levels. This is very time-consuming and needs the stretching of our imagination. We believe this will go a long way to sensitize, to shape the mind set/thinking of our educators and children and indirectly of the parents' too.

III.REGIONAL

1. Kerala Region



Members of the Vincentian Family in Kerala came together at Marymatha Provincial House of Vincentian Fathers at Angamaly on 13th of February 2018. The important aims of the meeting were:

- To awaken the VF Kerala Region
- How to divide the zones and how to organize them.
- How to find out financial support for the projects and plans.

The Meeting began at 10.15 a.m. with a short prayer by Rev. Fr. Roy Kochappilly C.M. Rev. Fr. James Kallumkal V.C, Provincial of Marymatha Province presided over the meeting. Twenty- three members participated from nine branches of Vincentian Family: CM, DC, VC, SCV, SCJM, SMDC, AMM, SSVP and FIAT Mission. Rev. Fr. James Chelapurath VC the Regional Coordinator for Kerala gave an introduction on the purpose of the get together. In his inaugural address, Rev. Fr. James Kallumkal VC emphasized the need of awakening the V.F in Kerala. He asked the members to take care of it with renewed enthusiasm and vigour. He also, called up on the members of the different branches of VF in Kerala to come forward and seek the ways and means to uplift the poor here. Fr.

Chelapurath explained briefly the origin and growth of VF in India. He also explained the need for the effective functioning of all the six zones of Kerala.

Sr. Maria Kalloorthottiyil DC sought from the participants invaluable suggestions as how to function VF in Kerala in an effective way. After serious discussions it was suggested to first strengthen at state level and then gradually at zonal level.

The suggestions came forward in the meeting are:

- ❖ About eighteen branches of VF are there in Kerala. Those who have not come for the meeting, regional leaders will visit them in their respective places.
- ❖ There shall be a common vision and a common project.
- ❖ There should be something useful for the poorest of the poor and can be done from a common platform even starting with a small project.
- ❖ Adapt the concept of systemic change in our projects
- ❖ There should be a trained group from VF in Kerala to assist promptly to the people who undergo natural calamities or any other disasters.
- ❖ The SSVP central council has permitted VF to use the up-stairs of their office-building to conduct Media Courses or coaching centre for civil/medical entrance examination.
- ❖ Arrange a programme of VF in Goodness TV at least once a month.
- ❖ Arrange a VF 'Formation Programme' in Kerala, as it is done in Bangalore but in Malayalam. More members can make use of this opportunity.

❖ There should be a meeting with all the Major Superiors of the VF in Kerala as soon as possible.

❖ To avoid communication gap, can form a 'Whats-App' group with all the members present and let the same members come for the meeting so that there is continuity.

Sr. Maria DC the secretary expressed thanks to all the participants. The program was concluded with a delicious lunch sponsored by the Marymatha Province of VC.

2. Western Region

The western region had state level meetings as part of the celebrations of the 'Year of Charism'. The first meeting was held in Gujarat. The input sessions were given in the local language and hence the participants could understand the Vincentian Charism. In Maharashtra, a seminar for young Vincentians was held at Pune with the help of CM seminarians. In Mumbai, a one-day recollection was organized and Fr. Anil CM was the resource person. In Mumbai, the Vincentians have a very cordial relationship with the Parishoners and some of the Parishes invited the members to speak on Vincentian Spirituality and Miraculous Medal resulting in the distribution of more than 5000 medals. In Manmad, two-day seminar was organized for the youth and the response was remarkable. So, it has been decided to conduct two more seminars shortly for the youth in Goa and Gujarat. Besides, it has been decided to send youth representatives to take part in the Formation Program on youth to be conducted by VFI in Hallehalli, K R Puram, Bangalore in April 2018.

3. Karnataka Region

A meeting of the Vincentian Family was held on May 7, 2017 at Bangalore in the Provincial house of the

Daughters of Charity. Bro. Francis Victor, the president of the Bangalore Central Council of SSVP led the opening prayer. Fr. Devasia Pudussery CM, the Coordinator of Karnataka region welcomed the gathering. The National Coordinator Fr. Francis Puthenthayil also attended the meeting. The releasing of 28 prisoners from the jail was the first and most accepted service the region did with mutual Vincentian collaboration.

‘Welcome the Stranger’ is being the common motivation spirit for the 400th jubilee year of Vincentian charism, the proposal has been made to build at least 12 houses for the homeless. The exploration of the fund is entrusted to the Regional Coordinator who together with the major superiors will find the fund.

4. Tamil Nadu Region

Seminar on Systemic Change

The Vincentian Family, Tamil Nadu region organised a one-day seminar on Systemic Change on 08.10.2017 at Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Thanjavur. Bro. T. Joseph Pandian, the International Vice- President General and Bro. A. Francis, National Vice President were the resource persons. The chief guest Bro. T. Joseph Pandian briefly explained about Vincentian Family and also a short introduction on the objective of the seminar. Bro. S. John Peter of Sivagangai Central Council gave a talk on Vincentian Charisam and SSVP. After the tea break, the session was led by Bro. T. Joseph Pandian on “Poverty and Systemic Change”. He stressed that to eradicate poverty we should change the approach of handling it. He spoke about the background for systemic change and explained what ‘System’ is and what Systemic Change is. The Third session commenced at 1P.M and Bro. A. Francis delivered a talk on Vincentian Spirituality. The fourth session was led by Bro. S. Pious, the Regional Coordinator, on Social Teaching of the Church with special reference to Pope Francis. After the tea break

Bro. T. Joseph Pandian continued his talk on Systemic Change. He spoke on notions of systemic change and challenges for the society of St. Vincent De Paul. He emphasized that, to eradicate poverty, we must focus not only on a particular problem, like supplying them with food but also on the overall living conditions. On February 4, 2018 a one- day session on systemic change was organized for all the presidents of Area Council of Tamil Nadu Region at Kodaikanal. There were nearly 300 participants. The session was conducted by Bro. T. Joseph Pandian SSVP.

IV. FROM DIFFERENT BRANCHES

1.Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary Congratulations & Best Wishes to Provincial and the Councilors of Delhi Province

Sr. Teresa Attupuram SCJM is re-elected as provincial of Delhi Province of the SCJM and she will be assisted by the following councilors: Srs. Archana Malampulakkavil, Ruby Joseph Chirackel, Moly Augustin Vavukatt and Kiran Kispotta. They are given the mandate in animating and guiding the province for the coming four years. The Vincentian Family India wish them sincere Congratulations and invoke abundant blessings as they shoulder this great responsibility and assures them their continued prayer supports.



Installation of the Provincial Leadership Team

The new provincial leadership team was formally installed on 21st February 2018 and it will go down in the history of Delhi province as a memorable day. The day started with the Eucharist, to implore the Lord to bless our new team and empower them with God's abundant blessings to enable them to carry out the mission entrusted to them. The installation took place in the evening during a meaningful prayer service prepared and conducted by Srs. Teresa Thomas and Monica Lahoria. In the presence of Sr. Lucy Jacob, the superior general, Sr. Roshni Barla the general councilor and around 30 SCJMs from nearby communities, the new team was led to the beautifully decorated chapel. With lamps in their hands, they moved to the entrance of the chapel, where they were received with 'aarti, tikka and flowers'. The whole prayer service was based on the theme of the general/provincial chapters- "SCJM, do you love me? Feed my sheep." The newly appointed team was led by Sr. Lucy Jacob and who invoked the power of the Holy Spirit to empower them. They were called upon to shepherd the flock entrusted to them, so as a symbol of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, Sr. Roshni gave them a staff, which was later placed close to tabernacle by Sr. Teresa Attupuram the newly elected provincial.

2. Daughters of Charity

A. Sr. Martha Pradhan DC, the New Visitatrice of North Indian Province



Sr. Martha Pradhan DC is nominated as the new Visitatrice of the North Indian Province of Daughters of Charity. Sr. Martha DC is replacing Sr. Christo Kumari Singh DC who was heading the province for the last nine years. Sr. Martha is given the mandate from the Company the mission to promote the spiritual and apostolic vitality of the North Indian Province of DC for the coming six years. The Vincentian Family India

wish her Hearty Congratulations and invoke abundant blessings from Almighty as she shoulders this great responsibility to stimulate in each community and in each Sister of the Province, the responsibility of mission and charity.

B. INSTALLATION OF THE NEW VISITATRICE

March 11, 2018 was a very special day for Daughters of Charity, North Indian Province. God in His infinite mercy and love continues to nurture and lead the growing Province through exemplary and committed leaders. The members of the Province while congratulating the new Visitatrice, remember with deep sense of joy and gratitude to all those who steered the ship of Indian Province and the present North Indian Province for 66 years, beginning with Sr. Adelaida Baida, the first **Vice Visitatrice** (1952-65), and other Visitatrices from the year 1965 onwards: Sr. Catherine Siquer (1965-75), Sr. Pilar Acerete (1975-85), Sr. Mary Louise Panikulam (1985-94), Sr. Pauline Inchanal (1994-2000), Sr. Grace Moolan (2000-2009) and Sr. Christo Kumari Singh (2009-2018).

Sr. Martha was born in the year 1959 at Pajimaha, Raikia, Kandhamal to her beloved parents Late Mr. Didima Prahdan and Regina Pradhan. She has two brothers and six sisters. One of her brothers is a member of the Congregation of the Mission. Sr. Martha after completing her graduation, joined as an aspirant to the Company of the Daughters of Charity in the year 1982. She became its temporary member in 1984 and its permanent member on 27th November 1990. She completed M.A B.Ed., and she was serving in various schools of the Province as teacher and as Head. The installation took place on the 11th of March in the chapel of the Provincial House at 11.00 AM. Sr. Teresa Mueda DC, one of the General Councilors read out the letter from the Superioress General, Sr. Catherine Appler followed by the Patent. May the Lord grant her many fruitful years and make her mission easy and light.