

# Vinfam India

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## Message

### Call to Holiness

*Gaudate et Exsultate* is the third Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis after *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Amoris Laetitia*. It was signed on March 19, 2018 and published on April 9, 2018. This document can be considered as a practical handbook on how to help one to achieve holiness in the modern world. It stresses that the call to holiness is a battle, and caution that during our efforts to attain holiness, the devil tries to “poison with the venom of hatred, desolation and vice”.

In his exhortation, Pope Francis warns about two dangers to the call to holiness, such as hedonism and consumerism, which can cause our downfall. If one does not realize this, he or she will be a prey to failure or mediocrity. Yet, the document suggests that one can count on “the powerful weapons” that God has given, including prayer, meditation, Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Eucharistic adoration, charitable acts and community outreach.

As I went through the document, I found a deeper Vincentian spirit hidden in it particularly in three ways: First of all the document gives creative and innovative ways to

seek for holiness in this modern world. St. Vincent de Paul also tried to provide a new approach to seek holiness. This is evident especially in the rules written by St. Vincent de Paul for Confraternities of Charities (AIC) or the Congregation of the Mission (CM) or the Daughters of Charity (DC) or the Ladies of Charities, where he highlights that the very purpose of their existence is for holiness. Thus for example, to the members of CM he said “...the whole purpose of the Congregation is... to have a genuine commitment to grow in holiness, patterning ourselves, as far as possible, on the virtues which the great Master himself graciously taught us in what he said and did”.

Secondly, Pope Francis mentions the names of few saints in this document. Of these the name of St. Vincent de Paul is mentioned two times (Cf. EG 100 and 126): i) Pope Francis refers St. Vincent in the context of speaking about ideologies which lead to two harmful errors: On the one hand, there is the error of those Christians who separate these Gospel demands from their personal relationship with the Lord, from their interior union with

Him, from openness to His grace. It means, Christianity thus becomes a sort of NGO stripped of the luminous mysticism. The other harmful ideological error is found in those who find suspect the social engagement of others, seeing it as superficial, worldly, secular, materialist, communist or populist. It means, an attitude of upholding an ideal of holiness that would ignore totally the injustices present in the world. According to Pope Francis, St. Vincent could give equal importance to luminous mysticism and social services to the neighbours. That is the reason why St. Vincent used to tell that we should be contemplative in action. He knew the importance of prayer and service. He always upheld that, spiritual and corporal services should go hand in hand. ii) In speaking about the Christian life, Pope Francis highlights the importance of joy. The Christian life is joy in the Holy Spirit (*Rom 14:17*). Christian joy is usually accompanied by a sense of humour. In this connection Pope Francis presents the example of St. Vincent. Ill-humour is no sign of holiness. Sadness can be a sign of ingratitude. Hence Pope strongly recommends the need of being joyful.

Thirdly, Pope Francis reiterates that caring the poor is the best means for attaining holiness, and continues to emphasize that, in our call to recognize Jesus in the poor and the suffering, we see revealed the very heart of Christ, His deepest feelings and choices, which every saint had sought to imitate. Further he adds, the uncompromising demands of Jesus to help those most in need, prompts him to ask Christians to acknowledge and accept them in a spirit of genuine openness, *sine glossa*. In other words, without any “ifs or buts” that could lessen their power (EG 96 and 97). In one of the letters of St. Vincent to Sr. Anne Hardemont on November 24, 1658, he wrote, “How consoled you will be at the hour of death for having consumed your life for the same purpose as Jesus Christ did, for charity, for God, for the poor!... And what greater act of love can one make than to give oneself, wholly and entirely, in one’s state of life and in one’s duty, for the salvation and relief of the afflicted”.

Thus, the call to holiness is intrinsically related to our approach and service to the poor (Ref. Mt 25: 31ff). Connecting holiness with the service of the poor and the citation of the example of St. Vincent prove once again the Vincentian Spirit of Pope Francis. As Vincentians, let us take to heart the beautiful instructions and recommendations proposed by Pope Francis through this document. May the inspiring words of *Gaudate et Exsultate lead us to keep up the Vincentian charism with joy and gratitude as well as with commitment and creativity than ever before.*

**Dr. Francis Puthenthayil CM**

**National Coordinator of Vincentian Family**

## **I. INTERNATIONAL**

### **1. Visit of International President of Vincentian Family**



Very Rev. Fr. Toma Mavriè, the Superior General of CM and DC as well as the International President of Vincentian Family will be visiting India in 2019. He will be also attending the General Body meeting of VFI - 2019. In his letter to Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM he writes,

“We are planning to reach Cochin on 4 February and will be in Southern Indian Province until 16 February 2019. We will be in the North from 16 to 28 February 2019. I would appreciate if you could convene the National gathering of Vincentian Family when we are there in India. We would like to participate in the meeting and would dedicate one full day for the meeting. We would like also to discuss further on the progress of the proposed Secretariat and Resource Center for Vincentian

Family. We can think together the best way to realize the project. . . . Looking forward to meet the Vincentian Family, India”.

The Vincentian Family in India extends hearty welcome to Very Rev. Fr. Toma• Mavriè and look forward to meet him personally.

## **2. Visit of International President of International Association of Charity**

Alicia Duhne, the President General of International Association of Charity (AIC) is immensely happy to see that, AIC is getting rooted in India. She wishes visiting India. She writes,

“I would like to suggest a visit to meet some groups, I would be accompanied by Melodee De Castro, as she is the Coordinator of Asia, it is important that she knows these teams with me to be able to follow up later. We would have to see which are the dates that suit all three. Do you like the idea? . . . . your sister in Christ and St. Vincent”

The Vincentian Family in India extends hearty welcome to Alicia Duhne, the International president and Melodee De Castro, the Asian Coordinator.

## **II. NATIONAL**

### **1. Formation Commission**

The five-day seminar organized by the Formation Commission of the Vincentian Family was held at St. Vincent’s Seminary, Hallehalli in Bangalore from April 27 to May 1, 2018. There were 33 participants. The seminar began with a prayer dance by the sisters of the Daughters of Charity. Rev. Fr Shajan Pudussery CM, the Chair Person of the Formation Commission welcomed the resource persons and the participants. The seminar was inaugurated by Sr. Amrita SCN, the Provincial of Bangalore. The inaugural Mass was presided over by Rev. Fr. Thomas Kandathil CM, the assistant provincial of South Indian Province. Sr. Rose

Chirayil DC, the visitatrice of the South Indian Province addressed the gathering.

On the inaugural day of the seminar, the topic ‘Realities, Dreams and Challenges of Youth Today’ was discussed and shared. It was also animated by the Jesus Youth members from Bangalore namely, Livin, John Joseph, Andrea and Neil. On the second day, Mr. Berly Earnest inspired the participants on the topic, ‘Youth and Faith: Struggles in the Darkness’. On the third day Rev. Dr. George Ayaloor CM highlighted the relevance of the formation of youth towards the Vincentian Charism. The fourth day, Rev. Dr. Joy Pulikan SDB presented a deep reflection on ‘Youth in the Biblical Perspective’ which inspired the participants, and everyone loved the presentation. On the fifth and final day, Rev. Dr. Francis Puthenthayil CM, the National Coordinator of Vincentain family in India together with Rev. Fr. Shajan Pudussery facilitated an earnest evaluation of the seminar. The participants were extremely happy with the pleasant and enriching experience. The participants also came out with the suggestion of taking up some concrete action plan. Sr. Sibina DC, the secretary of the Formation Commission proposed the vote of thanks. The seminar was concluded with Holy Mass presided over by Rev. Dr. Francis Puthenthayil. All the participants gratefully appreciated the hospitality of Sr. Beena DC, Sr. Joana DC, the Asst. Provincial and all the inmates of the Hallehalli community.

### **2. Executive Body Meeting**

The next Executive Body meeting of the VFI is scheduled to be held on July 28, 2018 at the Provincial House of SCN in Chandapura, Bangalore.

### **3. Seminar on Youth**

The theme of the forthcoming Synod of the Bishops (October 2018) in Rome is “Youth, Faith, and Vocational Discernment”. Pope Francis wants that all faithful reflect seriously about the different calls within the Church and live them aptly. The future of the Church depends on the Youth. As champions for the promotion lay leadership, we should whole heartedly welcome the call of the Church to

help the youth to deepen their faith, as well as guide them to discern their vocations. In view of this noble mission, the National Formation Commission of Vincentian Family in India (VFI) has volunteered to offer a **Three-Day Seminar** for the animators of Youth at St. Vincent's Seminary, Hallehalli, Bangalore from August 31 to September 2, 2018. The formal invitation letter relating to the seminar will be issued by Rev. Fr. Shajan Pudussery CM. In this regard kindly co-operate and send the number and names of the participants, especially who are actively involved in animating the Youth. This programme will be of great use for those who are in the formation houses. Kindly contact Rev. Fr. Shajan Pudussery for more information. His e-mail Id and contact number are: [shajancm@gmail.com](mailto:shajancm@gmail.com); - 09496100989

### III. FROM DIFFERENT BRANCHES

#### 1. Sisters of Charity of Nazareth

##### a) SCNs Elect New Leadership in Bangalore



VFI extends Hearty Congratulations to Sr. Sangeeta Ayithamattam, SCN and her team – Sr. Jackulin Jesu SCN and Sr. Adeline Fehribachare SCN.

##### a) General Assembly and Election of SCN Leadership

Sr. Malini Manjaly SCN

For the first time in the 206 years history of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth (SCN), that two of the three Central Leadership Team members elected in the recently held May-June General

Assembly (GA) in Bangalore are Sisters from India. Srs. Sangeeta Ayithamattam, SCN, president elect, Jackulin Jesu and Adeline Fehribachare the vice-presidents. They will begin their term in the ministry of leadership on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

The SCN Congregation was founded in 1812 by Bishop John Baptist David along with Catherine Spalding as its first superior and nurturer of the young community at St. Tomas Farm in Bardstown, Kentucky in the United States of America. The present SCN headquarter is at Nazareth, Kentucky.

The Congregation has three provinces ministering in five countries namely, USA, India, Belize in Central America, Nepal and Botswana in Africa. The General Assembly also has decided to establish a new Mission in Kenya in Africa. This is the second time that the SCN Congregation is having its GA in Bangalore.

To deepen the Congregation's Directives, the GA reiterated the members to: As Sisters of Charity of Nazareth we are women rooted in faith who have answered the call of Jesus Christ to on-going conversion to Gospel values in a vowed way of life (C.#1). The General Assembly 2018 calls the Congregation to be a transformative presence and witness across the globe. And we deepen the living of our directives by:

- Inviting SCN theologians to share theological insights from various cultural perspectives in the context of contemplative engagement to deepen our spirituality.
- Educating ourselves regarding the equality of women and their leadership role in the church and society, to bring about the required knowledge and understanding for meaningful dialogue and appropriate action.
- Fostering intercultural dialogue and community living across the Congregation, guided by the International Intercultural Team.
- Educating ourselves on systemic change, using resources such as the Vincentian Family

Document, Manual for Systemic Change etc., so that we acquire the common understanding to strengthen our efforts in the ministry.

- Intensifying efforts across the Congregation to address the destruction of natural resources and the ecological and environmental crisis.
- Engaging in a study of SCN Vocation Promotion, other forms of membership, Initial, On-going and Associate Formation across the Congregation for responding to the emerging demands of living a prophetic life, making changes where-ever appropriate.

This call impels us to live our directives anew, with passion and hope, for personal, communal and societal transformation.

## 2. Vincentian Marian Youth

### a) The National Assembly



The National Assembly of Vincentian Marian Youth - North India was held from 17<sup>th</sup> May to 20<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at St. Vincent Retreat Centre, Gopalpur-On-Sea, Odisha, India. The five purposes of the assembly were: Acquaintance and deepening knowledge about the Statutes of VMY; The Election of new office bearers; The need for updating the STATUTES relating to the new International Statutes of VMY; Rashmi Magazine; and Fund Raising for VMY Association.

There were 72 participants from different parishes belonging to four Dioceses of Odisha, namely Berhampur, Balasore, Rayagada and Cuttack Bhubaneswar. There were also 14 Sister Animators from

various parishes. The assembly lasted for four days and it had six sessions besides the opening and closing sessions.

The Resource Persons for the input sessions were: Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil, CM, the National Coordinator of Vincentian Family and Rev. Sr. Grace Moolan, DC, the Eastern Regional Coordinator of the Vincentian Family.

The sessions of the first two days were handled by Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil, CM. To have strong faith in Jesus Christ; to live and pray like Mary, and to foster and maintain the missionary spirit of the VMY Association, the STATUTES of Vincentian Marian Youth play a vital role in each and every member of the Association. Fr. Francis enlightened us with the aims and objectives of Vincentian Marian Youth through various reflective PowerPoint Presentations. Sr. Grace Moolan, DC. beautifully enlightened us by giving a lot of examples of stories and through Power Point Presentation to become fruitful members with deep faith in Jesus Christ and Mary as well as to live and to pray like Mary in simplicity and humility. Action Plans were formulated which was facilitated by Fr. Subir Kumar Singh, Sr. Victoria Singh, DC and Sr. Grace Moolan DC.

### b) Election of National Office Bearers:

The following are the Newly Elected office bearers:

President	: E. Shakti Srikant Montry
Vice- President:	Ravi Singh
Secretary	: Laxmana Sabar
Treasurer	: Anita Singh
Councillors	: Roselyn Gouda, Tophan Nayak and Subrat Kumar Misal

### 3. International Association of Charity

#### a) Seminar



One day seminar was organized for the potential members of AIC on May 2, 2018 at St. Vincent's Seminary, Hallehalli in Bangalore. Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM, the National Coordinator of Vincentian Family cum Judicial Vicar of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar was the resource person. The programme began with a quick self introduction by the group of 15 members from Odisha, Belgaum, Dharwad and Bengaluru along with Bro. G. Francis Victor, the President of Bangalore CC cum National Executive Body member of SSVP and Bro. Leonarad Rebello National Executive Body member of SSVP.

The programme started with the PPT on:

1. St Vincent De Paul – a brief biography of the founder of AIC
2. St Louis De Marillac - a brief biography of the first Mentor of AIC
3. AIC – Origin, vision and mission
4. AIC – developments and its present position.
5. The relevance of AIC in India

AIC – was started on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1617 by St Vincent De Paul, and a decade later supported by St Louis De Marillac. The group called *THE CONFRATERNITIES OF CHARITY* as it was mainly started by the lay women and continuing across the world in 53 Countries since 1617 till date. Presently it has more than 200,000 members. It is spreading across the world and now in INDIA. AIC has a representation in UN. The members of AIC are carrying on that charism, adapted to our times, in helping support St Vincent's fundamental plan in "Acting together against all

forms of poverty". It gives special emphasize on woman empowerment.

Rev Fr. Francis appreciated and encouraged the new members of AIC and at the same time thanked DC sisters for their hospitality, availability, food and accommodation extended to the participants. The meeting concluded with prayer and final blessings.

Shirley Martin

#### b) Election of office bearers

The following are the newly assigned office bearers in the National Level and Regional Level

- |                           |   |   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Ms. Clara Fernandes       | - | Incharge of AIC in India                |
| Ms. Deepika Kujur         | - | Incharge of AIC in India                |
| Ms. Shirley Martin        | - | President, Bengaluru, Karnataka Region. |
| Ms. Maria Michelle V      | - | Secretary, Bengaluru, Karnataka Region  |
| Ms. Rohini Milkesh        | - | Treasurer, Bengaluru, Karnataka Region  |
| Ms. Ayesha Anmol          | - | President, Odisha Region.               |
| Ms. Rashmi Jenifer Indwar | - | Secretary, Odisha Region.               |
| Ms. Soubhagini Digal      | - | Treasurer, Odisha Region.               |

Shirley Martin