



Vinfam India



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MESSAGE

St. Vincent de Paul: Model of Charity in the Church

September 27 is a very significant day for us the members of the Vincentian Family. On this day we celebrate the feast of St. Vincent de Paul who is an ever living inspiration for each one of us. Therefore we are delighted to celebrate his feast in a fitting manner. On this occasion let me wish all the members of the Vincentian Family, a very happy feast! May St. Vincent de Paul, our role model intercede for us especially in our endeavour to evangelise the poor.

Pope Benedict XVI in his first encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* of December 25, 2005 eulogizes St. Vincent for his extraordinary contribution and commitment for the causes of the poor. "Let us consider the saints, who exercised charity in an exemplary way... The figures of saints such as... Vincent de Paul stands out as lasting models of social charity for all people of good will" (DCE 40). We are to be proud of having such a long visionary as our founder or patron or source of inspiration. His life and works created an indelible impression in each one of us. Let us imitate this hero.

St. Vincent de Paul, born of humble peasant parents, achieved the glory of being the patron of all the charitable activities of the Church. He stood as an example displaying indomitable fortitude and courage in the service of the poor and the abandoned.

Vincent's early life was shrouded with doubts and questions as he was not a born saint. In his early priestly life, he found himself succumbing to the cravings for the mundane things of the terrestrial world rather than seeking the spiritual domain. He wished to misuse his priestly office for obtaining benefices like any one of other ecclesiastics of his time and to acquire a life of comfort with his kith and kin.

A series of events and interior experiences that marked the turn in the life of Vincent were - his exiled life as a slave in Tunis, the time when he was branded wrongly as a thief by his fellow-lodger, the time when a doctor of theology confided in him his strife against faith, his struggle to keep his own faith unshaken, his experience at Clichy as Parish Priest in 1612; his friendship with Berule, the founder of Oratorians and Francis de Sales, the founder of the Order of Visitation, the influence of some exemplary lay persons like Madame de Gondi, and above all his own personal experience at Folleville in 1617 when finally brought self realization of his need to serve the Master and he thus decided to consecrate his entire life to God and in the service of the destitute.

Vincent, very much alike St. Paul or St. Augustine thereafter began leading a life of sacrosanctity and closing out all vices and making his way through the hallowed portals of holiness. He becomes a real man, humble but not defeatist, gentle but not weak, simple and opposed to point-

less complexity, but not superficial. He becomes a man of action to a remarkable degree. He comprehends completely that the service of the poor was a supreme act of love, the sign of a real follower of the gospel. In the rest of his life he immersed himself in all types of charitable services.

He realized the need of having organized structure for the sustainability of the charitable services that he began to initiate. This is materialized when he was in Chatillon. He came across a sick family on the brink of death due to starvation. So aghast and grieved was he that he made an appeal during the following Sunday's homily and was overwhelmed to find umpteen parishioners rushing to help the family. He could perceive then that this type of helping will not solve the family's problem. After a week again the family would be in need again. So he understood the need of getting it organized. He collaborated with the eminent ladies of the parish and formed "Confraternities of Charity" and similarly in Paris the "Association of the Ladies of Charity" in order to maintain continuity of the service. The membership to this association is extended to volunteers of any status of life.

Vincent, while understanding the need of lifelong dedication for the sustainability and the stability of the works he began understood the need of having some simple girls who could remain in the company for life in celibacy and serve the poor. This led to the

origin of the “Sisters of Charity” or the “Daughters of Charity” in November 29, 1633. The members of these communities pledged to serve and help the down-trodden and the needy. Vincent also involved many men especially a number of clerics to be evangelizers of the poor. He was also engaged in various other charitable activities like - reorganization and reformation of the hospitals, the upliftment of galley slaves, establishment of orphanages, providing relief and comfort to the beggars, the aged and also to the famine affected. In short his charitable services touched all areas of life. In nutshell, he extended his services to all; sundry and in varied fields. But still he dreamed more....

Appreciating his charitable services, in May 12, 1885 Pope Leo XIII declared St. Vincent de Paul as the Patron of all works of charity in the Universal Church. Many wish to follow his footsteps. That is why counting together more than 268 institutions have adopted his vision of serving the poor.

Often the query arose as to what was secret of his success? There is only one answer: Vincent’s personal holiness of life, his intimate and continuous union with our Lord Jesus Christ. He surrendered his body, mind, will, and affections to the Lord and Master of love. In all things he had one ambition: **to imitate Christ**; one standard or rule of life: **the maxims of the Gospel**; one way of life: **to be a humble, simple, meek, mortified and zealous in gaining souls**; one abiding joy: **to serve as an instrument in the hands of Divine Providence**. He lived in Christ and for Christ. His vivid and joyous awareness of Christ in the poor and suffering people of the world gave him thrust and endurance to carry out all his works of charity.

How he loved the poor and the needy? He saw Jesus in the poor and therefore he loved them as lords and masters. This attracted him to have a passionate love for them (affective love)

and it is expressed in catering their needs concretely (effective love). Vincent stressed on propagating love both ‘affective and effective’ towards the poor, to be compassionate and assimilate the suffering of another which would automatically lead to destroying the evils afflicting the world of the poor. He prioritizes effective love and opines that complacency, benevolence, and interior affections though desirable but hold no ground unless they are practiced with genuineness.

A Good Samaritan, Vincent carried out his duties relentlessly with fathomless fervour and zeal. He dedicated his life to emulate the teachings of Jesus through self effacement and self aggrandizement. His charitable works were not merely a human sympathy and philanthropy but it is a Christian charity at its best. Thus he is a model of charity in the Church in every sense as well as for every one of the members of the Vincentian Family who are immersed in the works of charity.

**Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil, CM
National Coordinator, VFI**

NEWS - NATIONAL

National Executive Body Meeting:

The National Executive Body meeting was held on 21st of August at De Paul Institute of Religion and Philosophy, Kumalagode, Kengery, Bangalore (Major Seminary of the Vincentian Congregation). During the meeting there was a special emphasis on the forthcoming seminars at Ranchi and in Bangalore. Since the next annual gathering of the Major Superiors/heads of VFI will be preceded with a three day seminar on ‘systemic changes’, which is going to be conducted by very eminent resource persons (Rev. Fr. Robert P. Maloney and the members of International Commission for Systemic Changes), the Executive Body has decided to invite more participants. The SCN sisters have sponsored to host the programme and volun-

teered to provide food and lodging. The other expenses will be met from the contributions of the participants. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM, the National Coordinator is asked to form a local committee which will meticulously arrange the needful for conducting the seminar. At the end of the meeting, the Executive Body expressed profound gratitude to the Vincentian Fathers at Kengery for their generosity to avail everything needed for conducting the meeting there.

Fr. George Ayaloor CM leaves for higher Studies to Spain

Fr. George Ayaloor CM who was heading the formation programme of the VFI from 2009 to 2012, is leaving for Spain for higher studies. The VFI is immensely grateful to Fr. George Ayaloor CM for conducting the seminars so efficiently. VFI also wishes him every success for his higher studies in Spain.

Fr. Simon Kaipuram CM, the new Coordinator of Formation Programme

Rev. Fr. Simon Kaipuram CM has graciously accepted to be the new coordinator of the Formation Programme of VFI. Rev. Fr. Varghese Pudussery VC agreed to be the co-coordinator of the formation programme. Sr. Maria Kallioorthottil DC will support the team in the capacity of secretary. Others members such as Sr. Rita SCN and Sr. Celine John SCV will continue to be the members of the said team.

Core Committee for Seminar at Ranchi

The Executive Body of VFI formed a core-committee for making necessary arrangements for the seminar. Sr. Basanti Lakra SCN, the Provincial Superior of Patna and Bro. M.C. Mathew SSVP, CC President of Ranchi is nominated as the convener and secretary respectively. The first meeting was held on September 6, 2012 at house of SCN

sisters in Ranchi. The team is actively working for the success of the seminar on 'Systemic Changes'.

Visit of Sr. Evelyne Franc DC, Superioress General of the Daughters of Charity

Sr. Evelyne Franc DC, the Superioress General of the DC paid a visit to India on the occasion of the blessing of the New Provincial Curia of the Daughters of Charity of the South Indian Province on 27th of September 2012, the feast day of St. Vincent de Paul. On the same day she met the members of the Vincentian Family of the local unit at Bangalore. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM, the National Coordinator was present on the occasion. He briefed her about the VFI. Sr. Evelyne Franc admired and appreciated the steady growth of VFI. Being the successor of St. Louis de Marillac, the co-founderess of the Daughters of Charity, she encouraged the VFI and assured her support to vibrate the Vincentian Charism. She sends her cordial greetings to all

the members of the Vincentian Family in India.

Seminar on "New Evangelisation in the year of Faith" in the Month of May 2013

As we know the Year of Faith begins on October 11, 2012 and will run until the Solemnity of Christ the King on November 24, 2013. The commencement of Year of the Faith coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and the twentieth anniversary of the release of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The synod of Bishops on the New Evangelisation with the theme "The new Evangelisation for the transmission of the Christian Faith" will also be held in the month of October 2012. The year of the Faith aims at (i) **giving a fresh impetus to the mission of the whole Church** (ii) **through renewed conversion to the Lord** and (iii) **the rediscovery of faith in order that we be-**

come credible and joy-filled witnesses capable of leading others to the faith. The expression "New evangelization" means Evangelisation that is new in its ardor, in its methods and in its expression taking into consideration of the signs of the time. Understanding the importance of the subject which takes for reflection, the executive body of VFI together with the Formation team decided to have this theme "New Evangelisation in the year of Faith" for our forthcoming seminar at Bangalore. It will be held at St. Vincent's Seminary (Formation House of the Daughters of Charity of the South Indian Province), Hallehalli, Bangalore from 1 to 5 May 2013. Maximum number of participants shall be 40. Participants are requested to register their name at the earliest. The persons responsible for conducting the formation programme as well as for the communication will be Fr. Simon Kaipuram CM, Fr. Varghese Pudussery VC and Sr. Maria Kallurthottil DC. Their addresses as follows:

NEWS – REGIONAL

Andhra Pradesh Region REGIONAL MEETING

Vincentian Family -Andhra Pradesh Region conducted the Fourth Regional Meeting at Good Shepherd Regional House, Chinna Autapalli, Vijayavada on 14th July 2012. Participants attended from CM, VC, DC and SSVP. The resource person for the day was

Fr. Thomas Enchackal, C.M. The branches gave reports on their activities. It was decided to have the Fifth Regional Meeting at De Paul Bhavan, Yendada, Visakhapatnam on 12th January 2013.



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AN APPEAL

We request the Congregations / Associations / Individuals to sponsor at least for one issue of Vinfam India

LIVES OF VINCENTIAN SAINTS AND BLESSEDS

St. John Gabriel Perboyre CM, 1802-1840

John Gabriel Perboyre was born on 6th January 1802 at Puech in the diocese of Cahors, in France. His parents were Pierre Perboyre and Marie Rigal. John was the eldest son of a family of four



girls and four boys of which three boys became Vincentian priests and two daughters became Daughters of Charity and the third one died just as she was preparing to join novitiate. Since John was the eldest son he had to take care of the family. When his brother Louis expressed his desire to join seminary, John was sent to accompany him since he was sickly and thirteen years of age. At that time Rev. Fr. Jaques Perboyre CM, the uncle of John was running the seminar, at Montauban. After a few months stay in Seminary with Louis, John decided to join and become a priest. In 1818 he joined the seminary and was called "The young Saint" due to his practice of mortification, charity and self sacrifice. He was ordained a priest on 23rd September 1826. He had cherished a desire to go to Chinese mission, but contrary to his desire, he was sent to the seminary of St. Flour to teach Theology where he became Rector in 1827. In 1835 he was allowed to go on

China mission along with two Vincentian Priests and six other missionaries. After seventeen months of travelling he reached the province of Honan in August 1837 and then to Hu-Pei. Persecution started in China and any foreign missionary was found, he would be put to death. Fr. Perboyre and a few others were hiding in a forest but he was caught and tied hands and feet with heavy chains. When questioned he bravely confessed that he was a Christian priest and came to China to proclaim faith to those ready to accept Jesus. The persecutors were very angry and he was tortured severely and thrown into a filthy dungeon. After thirty days of severe persecution he was moved to another place. Once the saint was asked to trample down a crucifix which was thrown in front of him. But he bent down and kissed the crucifix. The persecutors were furious and his suffering was intensified.

In March and April 1840, Fr. Perboyre was tormented with terrible tortures, but he remained unyielding. The viceroy finally condemned the saint to death by strangulation for the fault of illegal entry into China and propagating faith there. The saint prayed all the time preparing himself for the supreme sacrifice of life. He was led to be executed where a cross had been erected. He knelt down and offered his life to God. The executioner placed a noose of rope around his neck and pulled his head back against the cross. They tightened the rope on his throat three times. Without any exterior sign of convulsion his body sagged forward and died on a Friday noon, 11th September 1840. His body remained hanging on the cross till the next day. His body was buried near three Jesuit priests tomb by a few faithful. Twenty years later, his mortal remains to the Vincentian Mother House in Paris where they were preserved with veneration. Many miracles followed due to his intervention. He was beatified by Pope Leo XIII on 10th November 1889 and Pope John Paul II elevated him to the rank of saints on 2nd June 1996.

Four Themes in his Spirituality

The purpose of this article is modest. It asks: What went on inside this genuinely holy man? How did he see God? How did he look at his mission? What was his attitude toward those around him? What shape did his prayer-life take?

- I. Devotion to providence "I love the mystery of Providence very much."
- II. His love for the mission "How happy I am for such a wonderful vocation."
- III. Love for the community "I would give a thousand lives for it."
- IV. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary "The whole world is filled with the mercy of Mary."

Let us learn from this our martyr saint to have deep faith and love for the passion of Jesus and sanctify our daily crosses and sufferings, enduring them as he did for the love of the Lord.

The Church celebrates his feast on 11th September.

Sr. Anne, DC
Bangalore



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