

To the Vincentian Family and all the friends of Vincent and Louise

Dear Friends and Colleagues in the family of Vincent and Louise,

In the name of the Heritage Commission for the 350th Anniversary of the Deaths of Saint Vincent and Saint Louise, I am happy to present the first two Reflection Papers to the Vincentian Family. The first one for October 2009 was written by Sister Julma Neo, D.C., of the Province of the Philippines and is entitled, *Remembering Vincent and Louise: Two Great Prophets of Charity*. The second for November 2009 was written by Father Luigi Mezzadri, C.M. of the Province of Rome and is entitled, *Vincentian Spirituality: An Encounter with Christ in Poor People*.

Ten more will follow, two every two months. You can find them on line at famvin.org/xxxx and you will also receive them from the leadership in each branch of the Vincentian Family through their normal channels of distribution.

The Commission hopes to reach every member of the Vincentian Family through these Reflection Papers. Success, however, depends on initiative at the local level.

As an individual member of the Vincentian Family, you are invited first of all to reflect on the theme of each month and take it to heart.

Then reach out. Reach out to four different groups: members of your own branch, members of other branches, co-workers in Charity, poor people and people in need. This could be a creative moment, a chance to open our eyes to new opportunities. If you live in a region where collaboration and planning are excellent, you are blessed. In any case, initiatives are not restricted to those in charge. Organization can be formal or informal, changing and growing from month to month.

We are fond of quoting Vincent saying, “The love of God is inventive to infinity!” Let’s make creativity a hallmark of this year of celebrations.

It’s a time for praying, reflecting, sharing and *action*. Simple gestures of friendship and mutual appreciation, love in action, an open door, an unexpected visit, gathering around the same table, discovering ways of creating new life among us. Small is beautiful. Plant seeds. Let them grow.

It has already been said, but it’s worth repeating – involve co-workers and poor people. Welcome everyone eye to eye.

If you are looking for some guidelines for your group sharing and celebration, here are a few that have come to us.

1. Start the sharing with a prayer or song.
2. Invite the members of the group to share their responses to the questions for personal reflection. Let it be a time for listening to each person. Discussion might follow later.
3. After everyone has shared, have a time of silence ... be conscious of the presence of the Spirit in the group speaking through the sharing of each member ... listen to the Word.
4. The group leader may invite the group to mention the main themes they have heard.
5. The leader can then invite the members to pray aloud spontaneously.
6. The group can end with the prayer to the Founders.

Finally, share your experience with the larger family. The famvin website for the 350th Anniversary is providing an opportunity to share your personal and local experience with the wider Vincentian Family. Please send your stories, photos, and notable discoveries to

350famvinen@gmail.com for English; 350famvines@gmail.com for Spanish; 350famvinfr@gmail.com for French; 350famvinit@gmail.com for Italian; 350famvinpt@gmail.com for Portuguese; and 350famvinpl@gmail.com for Polish..

I know all of you join the Commission in thanking the writers of these Reflections and the confreres and sisters who have done the translations.

May the Spirit help us to capitalize locally on this unique opportunity!

Writing for the Commission, I am your brother in Saint Vincent,

Hugh O'Donnell, C.M.

Chairperson

Members of the Commission:

Madame Sylvie Larminat (AIC France)

Sister Angeles Infante Barrera, DC (Spain)

Sister Carmen victoria Ruiz de Toro, DC (Spain)

Sister Louise Sullivan, DC (USA – Canada)

Father Jose Carlos Fonsatti, CM (Curitiba, Brazil / CIF Paris)

Father Marcelo Manimtim, CM (Philippines / CIF Paris)

Sister Mariana Gruber, DC (Brazil)

Sister Gloria Anienbonam, DC (Nigeria)

Sister Socorro Evidente, DC (Philippines)

Father Hugh O'Donnell, CM (Chinese Province)