

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

LETTER OF AGGREGATION

We are happy to inform you that the Council General, at its meeting of
11th of September, 2001 has aggregated to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul
St. Timothy's Conference, WINNIPEG (MN)
Diocese of St. Boniface - Canada

The aggregation has the effect of uniting this Conference to those of the entire world.
It is the link which expresses the fraternal friendship of Vincentians and gathers them in the same
spiritual family.

Yours sincerely and devotedly in Our Lord,



International Vice-President



President General

President of the Superior Council

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, founded in Paris in 1833 by Frederic Ozanam and his companions, is ever marked
by its original inspiration.

1. Fundamental principles of the Vincentian apostolate.

Two features sum up this apostolate: living in personal contact with those who suffer and living together the spirit of charity.
These are translated into practice:

- by person-to-person contact;
- by a spontaneous gift of the heart;
- by participation in a fraternal community of lay people animated by the same vocation.

These essential features should operate in accordance with the needs of the modern world.

We must go far beyond material aid and seek dialogue with our deprived brethren, whatever their poverty may be
without any trace of paternalism but rather in an attitude of sincerity, shared friendship and delicacy. Every charitable initiative
inspired by such a spirit can be a work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The Vincentians are convinced that Christ identified Himself with the poor.

"Whatever you did to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." (Matt. 25,40)

2. Essential characteristics of the Society.

- a) It is a lay Society, composed of men and women, young and old, sick and poor.
- b) It is a Society with a spirit of youth which gives it dynamism, enthusiasm, generous acceptance of risk, creative imagination and, above all, faculty of adaptation.
- c) It is essentially a universal Society, a sign of the Love of God and of His Grace. This universality should not be confused with uniformity. The Society remains one, even though its activities take many forms, which are not limited to the relief of material poverty.
- d) The Society is Catholic, open to ecumenism in the universal Church. It should bear witness to the duty of unity in its apostolate of charity.
- e) The Society is traditionally poor. The spirit of poverty is opposed to all hoarding, administrative expenses should be reduced to a minimum. The virtue of poverty is also that of sharing: possessions, knowledge, available time, spiritual and moral comfort.

3. Modern character of the Society.

- a) The concept of the Vincentian family embraces both those who help and those who are helped, leading to a sharing with the latter of the affection given to our own family.
- b) Prime importance is given to spiritual life.
- c) Women are present in the Society in either feminine or mixed Conferences.
- d) Presidents are elected at all levels. Each president is, at the same time, a member of the next higher Council.

Vincentian vocation is fully rooted in the **Gospel's message**. A permanent reference to it enlightens our service and prevents from degenerating into mere philanthropy or activism.