

Celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the Vincentian Charism

In 2017 the Vincentian family throughout the world celebrates the 400th anniversary of the birth of the Vincentian charism. It was in 1617, while preaching in the parish church of Chatillon, that Vincent exhorted his congregation to take responsibility for a poor family from the parish that had taken seriously ill and were in need of food and comfort. The family was saved by the overwhelming response to this call to action. Vincent as a result realised that for charity to be effective it must be properly organized – an event which has changed the world for the last 400 years.

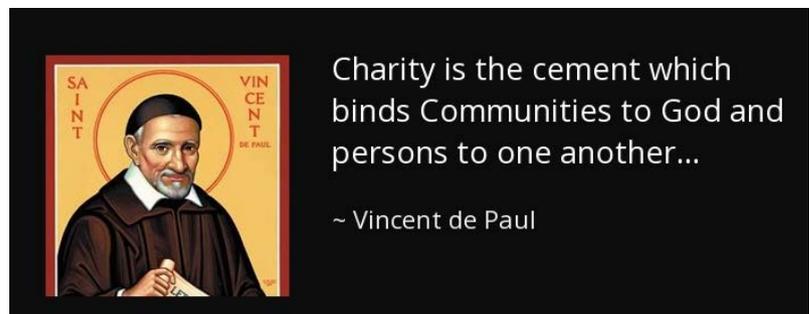
Vincent began by encouraging others to change their lives **from within**, as well as to **reach out to the people around them**, who had material needs. At the

same time, he experienced his own personal conversion, dedicating himself totally to the spiritually and materially poor and bringing about the collaboration of so many, who followed in his footsteps, to make the Gospel a reality “here and now” for millions and millions throughout the 400 years that have passed since that time.

The theme of the Jubilee Year throughout 2017, is: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me....” (*Matthew 25:35*) The story of the parish in Chatillon brings to life this gospel text at the heart of our shared Vincentian calling. By reaching out and helping the strangers in our midst we show solidarity with that event where the Vincentian charism was born.

For Reflection:

- How have you experienced the call to change your life from within through your involvement in the St Vincent de Paul Society?
- Consider the two quotes on this page from St Vincent de Paul, how do they speak to where your Conference finds itself today?
- Who are the strangers in our midst today?



Briefly discuss in small groups people's responses to the above questions

Leading into the next part of the Review and Planning process we note that today offers the opportunity to consider how we are 'Welcoming the Stranger' :

- Who are the strangers in our midst?
- How are we currently supporting them?
- What new needs are emerging?
- How might we respond to these needs?

This reflection contains excerpts from these 2 posts:

<http://famvin.org/en/2017/01/18/message-of-the-superior-general-fr-tomaz-mavric-cm-at-the-beginning-of-the-400th-anniversary-of-the-vincentian-charism/>

<http://famvin.org/en/2016/03/03/in-2017-we-celebrate-the-400th-anniversary-of-the-birth-of-the-vincentian-charism/>