UNTIL THE END

Saint. Vincent de Paul, messenger and servant

PROLOGUE

SONG : **Hard Times**

In the search for false well-being,
In the search for a false well-being, we sail within an ocean of excesses,
We have everything, but it is never enough.
What a hard time!
What a hard time!

Countries and governments work together
to control hunger and wars around the world,
Horrors old and new, blood and tears
like rivers without banks, in eternal winters.

But deep down, I'm looking for love.
Yesterday as today, in these incredible times.
There is an abyss in us to be filled and only You can do it, only You.

I can't stop searching, I will never stop looking.

Days always full of banal things, tired and without the shadow of great ideals.
We sink into stress, like quicksand.
What a hard time!
What a hard time!

But deep down, I'm looking for love.
I'm looking for love
Yesterday as today, in these incredible times.
There's an ocean around, around
There is an abyss in us to be filled and only You can do it, only You.
I can't stop searching, I will never stop looking.
I can't stop looking for love
I will never stop doing it...

SCENE 1
CULTIVATE DREAMS
ST. Vincent the first steps

(Vincent de Paul in period costume)

Vincent:

I was born in Pouy, a small town in the south of France. I lived in a country house called Ranquines with my parents, my brothers and my sisters. As a child, like many others of my time, I soon became a herder of cows, pigs and sheep. Of course, when I later went to the city, I was careful not to say that I had been a pig herder. And I was also ashamed of my father, yes... my father, who had made so many sacrifices for me...
I remember as a child, when he took me with him to the city, I felt ashamed to walk by his side and even to recognize him as my father. Maybe because he was poorly dressed or because he was a little lame. How miserable I was!

However, he was a lively, cheerful child, with an alert intelligence. And then my family decided that I should study. And I studied. Left. He was 15 years old. I studied first in Dax, with the Franciscans, then I continued my university studies for seven years between Zaragoza and Toulouse. And it was in that period that my father died. Then I had to fend for myself. I started giving private lessons. Of course, life as a student and teacher was very hard. I remember that I had to go to bed very late and then wake up at dawn without giving myself a little rest or distraction. And I couldn't go on like this.

There was, however, a possible solution: to obtain an ecclesiastical benefice. I decided to become a priest as soon as possible. And I was ordained a priest on September 23, 1600, in the diocese of Périgueux. He was 19 years old. But was this really my calling? Yes, absolutely yes. Although I didn't know it yet... Since then, He already asked me to follow Him and remain in His love...
Oh, by the way... my name is Vincent.

Song: **Come and follow me**

I want to sing your love, my God,
to You who one day called me by my name.
That fire you lit inside me
may shine around me and give light to those who are in darkness.

Come and follow me, abide in my love.
Come and follow me, drop your anchors.
Come and follow me, and while it's all passing away,
You, come and follow me.

I've dreamed of a big, simple love
and then a path lit up in the night.
What joy you have left inside me!
May I love the one who is next to me,
and find yourself in the face of the little one.

Come and follow me, abide in my love.
Come and follow me, drop your anchors.
Come and follow me, and while it's all passing away,
You, come and follow me.

Despite the storm I can sing and fly
When at dawn the dreams of the night cross in the air,
they touch and dissolve... And you stay!
I dreamed of flying freely with you.

Come and follow me, stay in my love.
Come and follow me, untie your anchors.
Come and follow me, and while it's all passing
You come and follow me, and as the world changes
You come and follow me, and while it's all left
Come and follow me.

SCENE 2
MISSION
St. Vincent in Folleville

Vincent: One day, in January 1617, I was in the castle of Folleville. They came to call me from a distant village because a peasant who was about to die wanted to see me. And then I immediately ran to his bedside to hear his confession.
The farmer unraveled the sad rosary of his sins and began to confess miseries never confessed before, and it was at that last moment that I had the strong feeling that God's grace had completely filled his heart. And the farmer felt the touch of grace, too! An irrepressible joy invaded him. The remorse of a lifetime disappeared and he breathed freely. The farmer from Folleville will die a week later, peacefully!
Questioned about this episode, Mrs. De Gondi and I discovered a way to help many would-be unfortunates. And from that Wednesday, January 25, the feast of St. Paul's conversion, in Folleville, I went up to the pulpit and spoke about confession.

Vincent and Priest: In front of me were the humble people. I preached clearly and forcefully, and my word instructed, moved, dragged.

Priest: Those who asked to confess were an incalculable crowd... It was a revelation!
A light illuminated my night! I understood then that this was my mission, that was God's will for me: to bring the Gospel to the poor, with simple words and with all my heart.
Also during that first mission, we discovered that several priests, who had come to help us in confessions, did not know the words of absolution.
Now I had in my mind and in my heart the clarity of two important notes: the spiritual misery of a humanity that had lost the Gospel and the lack of preparation of a clergy that did not know how to approach the poor and transmit the flavor of God, his mercy, his goodness. Providence thus indicated to me what my contribution should be to the great enterprise to which God was leading me: the evangelization of the poor and the formation of the clergy! I love to think that nothing happens without a love plan! And this missionary project, demanding and extraordinary, still lights me up today when I remember it, a fire in my heart! Because I felt and feel his gaze on me!

Song: **Messengers and Servants**

In the light of heaven, where light is born every day,
In the shade of a great oak tree,
and on the muddy roads, the everyday ones,
He dreamed of climbing the world.
Your gaze fell on me
But I wasn't ready, I wasn't ready yet.

Then one day his face, your face,
the delivery of a promise.
Io li ho visti e ho visto Te,
and slowly a rushing wind
has drawn me to Thee.

Among the poorest brothers and sisters
I sought Your gaze
and my heart opened to the world.
I found new and infinite forces in myself
and dreamed of climbing the sky.

I felt your gaze inside me
In me you were ready, in me you were ready.

Then one day her crying, your crying
the promise of a prayer.
Io li ho visti e ho visto Te,
and slowly a wind that blows...

Our hands as instruments of love,
our belly of the heart that welcomes
to carry the Word and serve our brothers and sisters,
to quench hunger and thirst for true life.
We under the cross along the way.

All you needed was my yes.

Then one day his face, your face,
the delivery of a promise.
I saw them and I saw myself
and slowly a rushing wind
has drawn me to you.

Messengers and servants
of a hope that will never die.

SCENE 3
CHARITY
Saint Vincent at Chatillon

Vincent: I left for a new destination: Chatillon. It was Lent in 1617.
While I was preparing for Mass, they came to call me because outside the village, in the open field, there was a family that was in a state of extreme need. They were all sick and had no medicine or food. And so, during the homily, it was natural for me to speak to the faithful also of that poor family... and I was moved... And my compassion was contagious because God touched the hearts of those who had also listened. In the afternoon, after vespers, accompanied by a volunteer from the village, I went out in search of these unfortunates. Which was not my surprise to see that there were already so many people coming and going. All people moved by the same charitable purpose. Among other things, it was a very hot day, it was August 20 and many stopped in the street to sit down, cool off, rest a little... It was a real procession.
Then, when I arrived, I personally realized the state of extreme need in which that poor family found themselves, so I prayed, administered the sacraments to the most serious and saw the numerous help that the parishioners brought. And that spectacle made me think. Another event, another sign of Providence, showed me, once again, my way. "But these poor sick people," I thought, "in a single day they have received so many provisions, too many provisions; It was a charity that needed to be better organized. Many of those supplies would have been spoiled the next day." And so, three days later, on Wednesday, August 23, I gathered a group of women and encouraged them to create an association to help the poor sick of the country.

Vincent and Sick: They promised to start the service in shifts. The first Charitable Association was born.

Sick: Charity needs truth. I... We... sick and poor... We need a lot of listening, patience, kindness. Sometimes, it seems to us, it seems to me, that we are suffocating under the weight of this evil. Others, often, even those who love me, tell me that "Everything is going to be fine," but it is not true. They are afraid! They are afraid that they will not be able to bear so much pain if we talk about it. But charity, only true charity, can embrace pain and comfort us a little. Suffering is a mystery: who will help me to let go of anger and to recognize in this abyss the good and beautiful face of Jesus?

Song: **Let me contemplate**

Mother today I want to give you
My love, my life,
As a precious stone:
keep it under your protection
may it not fade under the burden of evil.

Let me contemplate with you
the beautiful and lovely face of Jesus
in the mystery of your majesty
that satisfies my hunger for infinity.

Mother I want to give a voice
to my amazed heart
for what you give me:
keep it under your protection
may it not fade under the burden of the night.

Let me contemplate with you
the beautiful and lovely face of Jesus

in the mystery of your majesty
that satisfies my hunger for infinity

Oh Mother,
Always hold me in your arms
May my heart become stronger
become stronger
keep it under your protection
may it not fade under the burden of the night.

Mother today I want you give you myself.

SCENE 4
FOUNDATION
The birth of the Congregation of the Mission

Vincent: I will not tire of repeating it: who first had the idea of transforming my apostolic activity at the service of a new community?
On the afternoon of April 17, 1625, two notaries had arrived at Gondi's palace, and were immediately joined by the proprietors and I, their chaplain. A contract had been read and signed with a simple ceremony. And for me that signature was of transcendental importance! At that time and with that contract, a new ecclesiastical community was created: the Congregation of the Mission.
I was certainly able to count on the support of Gondi's family, who gave me an assistant with the task of teaching their children to support me in their home: his name was Antonio Portail.

Vincent and Priest: Who founded the Congregation? Who has assigned us to the missions, to ordinands, to the formation of priests, to preach in retreats? Was it me?

Priest: Not at all. Who, then, is its author? It is God, it is His Providence and His pure goodness.
Today, faithful to St. Vincent, we follow Christ who proclaims the Gospel to the least, to those brothers and sisters who, with the weight of their difficult lives, are our teachers, on a journey where our vocation is revealed, step by step, an unpredictable journey, never taken for granted, demanding, exciting, crucifying... A journey on which the Lord Jesus, our Master, never leaves us alone, he precedes us and accompanies us.

Song: **Clothed with Christ**

Faithful to St. Vincent, we follow Christ
who proclaims the Gospel to the last.
With all our strength, let us put on the Spirit
to live charity.

We care, especially the little ones
to bring the good news,
We help clergy in their commitment
to evangelize the poor.

Faithful to St. Vincent we follow Christ...

With the Gospel Mind Turned to the Gospel
We are breaking new ground.
Clothed with Christ, in fraternal communion,
We live the mission.

Faithful to St. Vincent we follow Christ...

The love of Christ is the source of service,
Let us remain steadfast in His love.
We venerate Mary of the Miraculous Medal,
immense gift of his goodness.

Faithful to St. Vincent we follow Christ...
… charity

SCENE 5
CROSSING THE THRESHOLD
Saint Louise and the Daughters of Charity

Vincent: In my life I have received many gifts: one of the most precious gifts was undoubtedly having met Louise de Marillac. Luisa was a young widow, reserved, a little scrupulous, marked by the harshness of life. Over the years, I had the opportunity to delve into her rich personality: she had a deep and true faith, prudence even when talking to ladies, an excellent sense of organization, precision and competence in the drafting of regulations. And again: he visited the poor, cared for the sick, taught catechism. In short... A true work of God's hands!
One day, in 1630, I met a peasant woman who had been marked by the invisible touch of grace. Her name was Margherita, Margherita Naseau.

Vincent and Luisa: After Margherita, other girls arrived, some attracted to her. The person God has always thought of for the formation and guidance of these young women...

Louise/A Daughter of Charity: ... It was me. Very quickly a small group of young people formed. The girls got together and grew bigger and bigger without even realizing it. The Charity of the crucified Christ burned in their hearts and impelled them towards something absolutely new, towards a new path of charity.
Thus, on November 29, 1633, the Company of the Daughters of Charity was born.
What did they do? They came and went: from Christ to the brothers, from the brothers to Christ... With simplicity, humility and charity!

Song: **Cross the threshold**

Above us, precious stones from a foreign land
See, Spirito.Su us, love poems, redeemed love
Come, Spirit.
Ray of light, joy of hearts,
upon us the Spirit comes.

With voices of joy, we want to sing
That yesterday, today and you always call us
to come and go to love, to serve
however You want, where You want.

Above us, confusing notes of a sacred mystery
See, Spirito.Su us, the faces and stories of the poor
Come, Spirit.
You, harmony of man, You, Father of the poor,
upon us the Spirit comes.

With voices of joy...

Love is a journey:
You cross the threshold with us!

SCENE 6
BEHIND BARS
Saint Vincent and Galeotes

Vincent: The Armada was one of the most prestigious in the entire military apparatus of France, but the glory of that Armada floated in an ocean of misery, blood, pain: the convicts! The convicts were the crew members of prisoners convicted of common crimes who, with the help of the weapons and leather straps of the torturing overseers, advanced the galleys, that is, the ships. And few situations were as horrific as those condemned to the galleys: they lay piled up in infected places, chained two by two, exhausted by hunger, devoured by worms. And the situation did not improve once they were transferred to the ships. There endless days of hard rowing awaited them, scorched by the scorching sun of the Mediterranean and frustrated by rain and storm; sentenced to two or three years in prison, their sentences were extended due to bureaucratic disorder or the great need for weapons of the French Navy.
I began visiting the prisoners of Paris in 1618. I was 37 years old... And I shuddered at that unimaginable misery! So much so that, once, an impulse pushed me to sit in the dock of one of the convicts to avoid a good dose of whipping.
What could I do?
I met with the military general and convinced him to move the prisoners from Paris to a more habitable building where the convicts could have a healthier and more abundant meal. I was appointed royal chaplain of the galleys of France, and thanks to this very uncomfortable but useful position I was able to send several Missionaries and several Daughters of Charity...

Vincent and Woman: ... who descended into the underground cells like true angels of consolation. I saw those poor people treated like beasts.

Woman: I myself have seen those poor people like me, treated like animals; I too suffered torture, starvation, drank dirty water, thought I was going to die of asphyxiation in a cell that housed eight people instead of four, waiting years, and years, and more years than I have lost count, a fair trial! I am guilty and I know it, I know it very well! But I ask, I pray, a little humanity... God was moved by my pain, by our pain! And through them, visitors of God, he wanted to help us to get out of the trap that was crushing us and to raise our eyes to heaven again. God wants for us, his beloved children, a new life...

Song: **Recognize you**

Recognize
All the emptiness of my life and misery,
How difficult it is.
A painful step between resentment and shame
that gnaws at me inside, that burns my heart.

This is not life
It's another trap that drags me down.
How to ask for forgiveness?
And then boldly say: I was wrong!
Yes, repeat again: I was wrong!

Retrace my steps,
To be able to raise our eyes to the sky again
How difficult it is.
But I feel like winter gives way to hope
to find you, to feel you.
This is not life,
I want to be reborn and recognize you
In all those little things
For this is the time to give myself completely.

How difficult it is
Follow you through the obstacles of the world,
Leaving behind hatred and all error:
A leap to the truth.
And when the night comes
and that silence dies...

How difficult it is
Follow you through the rules of the world,
Which leaves gaps unexplained:
A leap into the immensity.
Like a prayer
blossomed with pain,
of bitter roots,
For you.

SCENE 7
THE WAR
Saint Vincent and the War in Lorraine

Vincent: The war. It struck with unprecedented violence in France, in the lands of the small Duchy of Lorraine. I received the first news of our missionaries who had immediately put themselves at the service of the victims of the war, transforming their homes into hospitals and sheltering the sick.
The war ... the war... The compass had broken.
The passage of armed soldiers and the explosion of diabolical devices had dotted the streets with the corpses of men, women and even many children. Soldiers and mercenaries who looked like human beings, like me, like you... but who resorted to the most refined tortures: women and girls kidnapped, raped; men gagged, chained, tortured; Civilians detained, kidnapped, disappeared into thin air, just because they dared to react. War, a cursed and lying trap that begins when there is no longer an "us" but only an "I"; a war that begins to feed on hypocrisy, on icy looks "within the walls of the house", that unleashes indifference like stabs, with looks of hatred, hands that close, judgments of condemnation that squeeze the heart and the will to live... And they leave us all deaf and blind! and blind!
I couldn't wait any longer. Then I met Cardinal Richelieu, Minister of State of France, the only one who could intervene with his political authority; then I knelt down and prayed to him: "Monsignor...

Vincent and the immigrant: Give us peace, have mercy, have mercy on us and our lands! Save us, save us and our children!"

Immigrant: But the cursed trap has freed hundreds and hundreds of brothers and sisters... They set off in boats to reach a promised land that instead swallowed them up. People like me, like you... War and poverty push us to flee. War is here in our hearts.

Song: **All the Story Is Here**

The whole story is here,
here, in the immensity of these fragile waters,
Among the blues that shine
I'm looking for a way to get away from here
far from the desert and pain.

But I find them here, at the bottom of this sea
That kidnaps me and knocks me down
in the depths of the Mediterranean.
And I look for the face of my father, my mother,
My children,
I don't see them anymore: knocked down mercilessly.

The whole story is here,
Even if I look at the horizon and then at the earth
There I died,
in the depths of indifference,
between the waves and the tears.

And I find myself here, facing this sea
That kidnaps me and drags me away
in the immensity of free dreams.
And I look for the face of Love to build
A new day,
The whole story is here: who will stop this story?

SCENE 8
ON THE PATHS OF CHARITY
Love is a path... together

Vincent: Love is a path...

Missionary (to a worker): You cross the threshold with us!

Daughter of Charity: You cross the threshold with us!

Volunteer (to a poor man: You cross the threshold with us!

Missionary (at the convention during a celebration): You cross the threshold with us!

Vincent (to all of us watching the video): You cross the threshold with us!

Song: **The Way of Charity**

Coral skies on the paths I walk
Where not even the wind has time to stop and listen
And music is the silence of the sleeping benches.
I ask heaven to accompany you on your way
On the paths of charity you will find earth and fire
Pieces of glass and a dream...

May it be a comfort to you,
shade against the heat of the sun,
Shelter in the rain and cold.
He won't leave you
on the path of charity.

Emerald skies for those who have lost hope
between waste and the dejected gazes of a distracted society.
And music is the silence of abandoned smiles.
Be strong to lift their weaknesses.
On the paths of charity you will carry blood and body,
a cross and his face...

May it be a comfort to you,
shade against the heat of the sun,
Shelter in the rain and cold.
And in eternity
The Way of Charity

Yes, in the Lord
The Way of Charity.

EPILOGUE
UNTIL THE END
St. Vincent... Into the future

Vincent: My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: when will I come to see the face of God? Tears are my bread day and night, while they always say to me, "Where is your God?" *(Psalm 42:3-4).*

Father Tomaž: In the face of so much suffering of all kinds, in the face of so many brothers and sisters with broken lives, the heart becomes heavy! What proclamation, what message, can and do we want to take to the streets of the world, in our daily lives, in the midst of humanity?
My brothers and sisters, let us not be afraid to be bold or foolish in the eyes of this world in proposing God's love to prisoners, to the blind, to the oppressed, to everyone.
In the face of evil there is always the force of good that opposes it and overcomes it! Each wound... is not the person's ultimate horizon, but an invocation of help so that the light can break through!
Where the spirit of the world sees only evil, the spirit of God in us makes us see the seed of life and love in the actions and words of so many men and women who make the kingdom of God grow. Just a seed, it's true, but it's enough for us... because we know that Jesus can transform the seed into a great tree...
This is what we believe, my dear brothers, this is what we Vincentian missionaries want to live, dear young people and dear friends, this is what we want to proclaim, with respect and firmness, with humility and passion, with patience and without delay:
We will serve the brothers and we will love them... until the end... The Master is always with us!

Song: **Until the end**

Walk with us, young Master,
break bread with us again,
Break bread for us.
Open our eyes, you who are the Risen One
Let us recognize your face.
We are looking for you.

We had stopped believing
so as not to be disappointed again,
We had stopped waiting
by too many promises and words.
We will never stop loving the poorest,
we will protect them... Until the end
We're going to love them... until the end.

Walk with us, young Master
And even if we love in a fragile way
You stay with us.
With you we seek love, the one that lasts forever
We'll push the wind and clouds out of this sky
We will break new ground.

We had stopped believing...

With you we will carry the weight of heaven,
We will lift the earth,
crossroads of scattered roads.
We will be born to a new life.
With you we will carry the weight of heaven,

We will lift the earth,
crossroads of scattered roads.
We will be born into a new life, with you.