

NUNTIA



Congregation of the Mission
of **Saint Vincent de Paul**

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Editorial



Christmas: the revolution of closeness

Christmas returns each year like a light that does not blind but guides, a flame that does not burn but warms, a word that makes no noise yet transforms. In a time marked by divisions, confusion and loneliness, the Nativity is not a sentimental recollection: it is an event that continues to happen. It is God who takes the initiative and chooses the only way capable of truly touching the human heart: becoming near.

For our Vincentian charism, this mystery is not decorative; it is an urgency. Saint Vincent de Paul contemplated Christmas as the place where God “lowers himself down to us” and, precisely for this reason, it became a model for every missionary called to “go out to meet” before even “speaking to”.

The Child of Bethlehem is not born on the margins by chance: he places himself exactly where fragile humanity lives, suffers and hopes. Our mission houses, parishes, international communities, the geographical and existential peripheries we inhabit are nothing other than new Bethlehems where God continues to ask for space.

Christmas is the revolution of tenderness that abolishes every distance. The Word does not become an idea, but flesh; not a programme, but presence; not power, but relationship. The world is asking for missionaries who know how to do what Christ did in Bethlehem: to enter, to dwell, to listen, to draw near, to put down roots in reality.

The danger of our time is not only hardness, but numbness. We grow accustomed to everything: to war, to poverty, to migration, to the loneliness of the elderly, to the shattered dreams of the young, to the outskirts inhabited by those who have no voice. Christmas, instead, awakens us: it asks of us open eyes, hands joined and hands outstretched.

It challenges us with its simplicity: no one can say, “I have nothing to give.” For Christmas entrusts to us the greatest power of all: the capacity to make of ourselves a gift.

Christmas reminds us that Christian joy is not superficial euphoria but peace that rises from below, as in the cave: little space, little light, few means... yet a Presence capable of changing everything.

Our mission, often poor in resources and marked by human frailty, continues to bear fruit precisely when it takes root in the humility of Christmas.

Merry Christmas!!!

Fr. Salvatore Farì, CM

On Chastity and the Burning Desire to Possess It

Meditation on Chapter IV of the “Common Rules”

Sexuality is a great gift from God. Chastity guards it. It prevents the disordered and wild exercise of a force we must learn to master. The experience of physical attraction is often overwhelming. Therefore, we feel the need to have reference points, boundaries. The strict Catholic morality, with all its rules—sometimes perceived as burdensome and unlivable—nonetheless constitutes a great map through which we are oriented and guided. Over time, one discovers that such rules, which once seemed rigid and absurd, are in fact very wise.

The rules that St. Vincent offers to live out chastity must be read in this light. They are prudential behavioral norms, meant to prevent disastrous falls. St. Vincent, as a wise knower of the human soul, knew that erotic charge, in certain moments, could betray even the most spiritual man. Therefore, no one can “presume upon himself and his own chastity” (IV,2). Consequently, every missionary “will employ all possible care, diligence, and caution to preserve the chastity of soul and body intact” (IV,1). To achieve this goal, every missionary “will carefully guard the internal and external senses.” St. Vincent speaks of care, diligence, caution, attention. Because it is vitally important for a missionary to reach “a remarkable level in the practice of chastity” (IV,4), since the effectiveness of the mission depends on this maturity. Even the mere suspicion—adds St. Vincent—would be so harmful as to discredit the entire Congregation and nullify all apostolic efforts (IV,4).

These might seem like exaggerated concerns stemming from a certain sexophobia present in the religious culture of the seventeenth century. Let us not forget that the Grand Siècle in which St. Vincent lived has also been defined as the Augustinian century, and it is known how often St. Augustine has been accused of introducing into Christian culture the devaluation of sex, fear of sexuality, and the demonization of pleasure. It is likely that St. Vincent was influenced by a certain anthropological pessimism of the Calvinists, by the moral rigor of the Jansenists, or by the spirituality of renunciation found in devout Catholic circles. But more as an “atmosphere” breathed in a particular context and time, rather than as a true dependency on any specific trends or doctrines. The proof is found in the first paragraph of Chapter IV.

After recalling the example of Jesus, who throughout His life “valued chastity” and “longed to instill its desire in the human heart,” St. Vincent assigns to the Congregation the task of living in a state: that of being “animated by a burning desire to possess this virtue” (IV,1). If in the prudential norms that follow, the tone seems rather negative, here, in the introductory paragraph, the language is extremely positive: in his view of sexuality, the focus is on the gift to be guarded, not the problem to be fought. The example is precisely that of Jesus, who lived chastity and taught how to live it as an expression of a greater love. It cannot be renounced, just as love itself cannot be renounced.

Sexuality is the source of tenderness and affection, the root of warm and passionate relationships, of fervent hearts, of generous actions. Chastity prevents sexuality from being lived for itself and from perverting the purpose for which it was given to humanity. Chastity, then, purifies intentions, clarifies one's gaze, sharpens sensitivity, combats possessiveness and egocentrism.

If love "cannot" be renounced, one nevertheless "must" renounce the perverse expression of love—where "perverse" means distorted, inverted, corrupted, deviant, degenerated. This renunciation is not negative but rather a sign of balance and maturity. Chaste is not the one who renounces feelings, but the one who renounces their perverse, selfish expression. Everyone has the right to live their emotions with intensity: chastity allows them to be lived honestly, never ambiguously. In this perspective, chastity becomes synonymous with respect, self-giving, delicacy, and transparency. It is the virtue that exalts the ability to "become a neighbor."

The positive aspect prevails in St. Vincent to such an extent that he even advised a young missionary tempted against chastity, Giacomo Tholard, not to renounce the ministry in order to retire to a monastery and escape certain temptations, but rather, to throw himself even more into the mission. If God allows such temptations in the mission, it means that He does so "to teach us to have total trust in Him and to believe in His ability not to let us succumb to temptation" (SV II,107). St. Vincent significantly adds: "this made a similar temptation that I was suffering during my vocational duties vanish!" (Paris, August 26, 1640). For this reason, he went to make a retreat in the Carthusian monastery of Valprofonde (in 1624). A holy monk helped him not to fear his own ministry. God does not want cold, detached missionaries who are therefore "distant" out of fear of falling, but rather, He rewards those who have the fire of the mission, who throw themselves into radical availability for pastoral service and charity, and who, because of this, make themselves "neighbors."



Fr. Nicola Albanesi CM

After an intense journey of preparation that saw us committed to revitalize the prophetic, synodal and missionary dimension of our Vincentian spirituality, in April 2025 we celebrated in Paris the triduum and the feast of the fourth centenary of the foundation of the Congregation of the Mission.

Our jubilee is becoming more and more a "history of charity". As a sign of the fourth centenary of the foundation of the Congregation, tomorrow we will offer the meal to the brothers and sisters invited by Pope Leo in the Aula Paolo Sesto in the Vatican. At the end of the lunch the Vincentian Family of Italy will offer the backpack of San Vincenzo to those who participated in the lunch.

Together we will experience the beauty of service and witness, not only with our financial resources but also with our physical presence, our commitment to the poor.

This afternoon, we are preparing ourselves spiritually for the experience that we will have together tomorrow. I urge you to participate with an open heart. Serving a meal is much more than a gesture of solidarity: it is a "liturgy of charity" where Christ makes himself present in the face of the other. It is precisely in this encounter that the Lord can speak to each one, awakening or strengthening the desire to follow him more closely.

The passage of the Gospel that we have heard sets us before a clear and surprising criterion: God's blessing is not related to what we possess or achieve for ourselves, but to what we are willing to give. Jesus asks us to recognize him in the concrete faces of frailty: in the hungry, in the sick, in the prisoner, in the stranger. It is there that the Lord reveals himself.

Saint Vincent de Paul understood this well when he said: "it is certain that the Lord will bestow his blessing, because with his own words he assures us that those who will assist the poor will hear him say in his sweet and loving voice: Come, blessed of my Father" (SVit, XI 419).

Even Mother Teresa of Calcutta, referring to the same biblical passage, called it "the Gospel on five fingers": you did it to me.

I am happy this evening because we are experiencing the internationality of the Congregation of the Mission and the Vincentian Family: Italy, Spain, Ireland, United States of America, Panama, Ukraine, Slovenia, Slovakia, Eritrea, Madagascar, Middle East, Portugal, Poland, Croatia.

I am also happy for the presence of so many young people.

Tomorrow morning, we will live the table service together: it is a vocational experience.



The table service is not just a gesture of organization or practical help. It is a school of the Gospel. Who serves at the table puts himself in the position of Jesus in the last supper: not in the center, but in the middle; Not above, but beside.

Serving at the table educates to gratuity, discretion, simple joy of those who do not seek applause. It is an experience that forms the heart to care for the other.

The table for us, must be the place of communion and mission. It is prepared, served and shared: three verbs that trace the vocational path of each disciple. Prepare with love, serve with joy, share with simplicity.

The wish that we can rediscover the gift of being an outgoing Church, a poor Church for the poor, a vocational Church, which attracts with the life given.



The Congregation of the Mission celebrates 400 years of charity together with Pope Leo and 1,300 people living in poverty

To celebrate the World Day of the Poor and its Jubilee, the Congregation of the Mission organized the Holy Father's lunch in the Vatican with people living in poverty.

(Vatican City, 16 November 2025) – At the heart of the 2025 Jubilee Year, the Congregation of the Mission marked its 400th anniversary with a deeply evangelical gesture: sharing a meal with the poorest alongside Pope Leo XIV during the 9th World Day of the Poor.

Before the Mass for the Jubilee of the Poor, Pope Leo XIV personally greeted Father Tomaž Mavrič, C.M., Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and President of the Executive Board of the Vincentian Family, Juan Manuel Buergo Gómez, International President of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul; and Sister María Rosario Matranga, Visitatrix of the Daughters of Charity in the Province of Italy. He also met with several families benefiting from the global “13 Houses” project coordinated by the Famvin Homeless Alliance (FHA). The families present in Rome – from Australia, Brazil, Chile, Italy, Peru (Chiclayo), Syria, Senegal, and Ukraine – shared with the Holy Father their stories of resilience, hope and gratitude for the home they received from Vincentian Family.

In the homily of the Mass that the Pontiff celebrated in St. Peter's Square, Leo XIV recalled that “poverty challenges Christians, but it also challenges all those in society who hold positions of responsibility. I therefore urge Heads of State and leaders of Nations to listen to the cry of the poorest. There can be no peace without justice, and the poor remind us of this in many ways: through their migration, as well as through their cry, so often suffocated by the myth of well-being and progress that does not take everyone into account and even forgets many people, leaving them to their fate.”

The following lunch, offered by the Congregation on behalf of all Vincentian missionaries worldwide, gathered 1,300 people living in poverty in the Paul VI Hall, invited by the Holy Father, who presided over the celebration. Father Tomaž Mavrič, C.M. accompanied the guests and the Pope in this visible sign of communion, hope, and service. Before blessing the table, the Pope expressed his gratitude to the Vincentian family for organizing the gathering and took the opportunity to congratulate the Congregation of the Mission on its 400th anniversary.

“The Jubilee of the Congregation could not be lived in any other way than by sharing with those most in need,” said Fr. Mavrič. “Celebrating 400 years of mission means renewing Saint Vincent de Paul's desire to serve Christ in the poor, with simplicity, humility, and creative charity.”



Charity in action: serving and sharing

The meal was prepared by L. Perrotta Catering & Events Napoli-London and served at table by 70 Vincentian missionaries from Italy, Spain, Ireland, the United States, Panama, Ukraine, Slovenia, Slovakia, Eritrea, Madagascar, the Middle East, Portugal, and Poland, together with 130 members of the Vincentian Family from Italy, Spain, Lebanon, Ukraine, Ireland, Croatia, and Slovenia.

Lunch was lively, enriched with musical moments and classical pieces from the Neapolitan tradition, performed by 100 young people from the Rione Sanità district of Naples, participants in the educational programs Sanitansamble and Tornà a Cantà, promoted by the Nova Opera Foundation ETS. Their performances of classical pieces and Neapolitan melodies offered a message of joy and hope, symbolizing a charity that is also expressed through shared art and beauty.

At the end of the lunch, the Vincentian Family of Italy distributed to each guest the "St. Vincent Backpack," filled with food and hygiene products, as a gesture of closeness and continued support.

A Jubilee of living hope

The celebration of the Jubilee of the Congregation of the Mission was experienced as a concrete expression of Vincentian charity, which seeks to make love a mission in movement.

In the words of the Superior General: "The Jubilee does not remain in the memory of the past; it is a call to look to the future with active hope. Let us continue to be pilgrims of hope alongside the poor, witnesses of a Gospel that becomes service and fraternity."

With this encounter, the Congregation of the Mission reaffirms its commitment to continue evangelizing the poor in every corner of the world, faithful to the spirit of its founder, Saint Vincent de Paul, whose legacy continues to inspire millions of people to transform faith into works of love.



The Superior General Blesses the “Madonna Art Museum” at the Basilica Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

Art can enliven our creativity, perspective, respect, and spirituality. Engaging with art, in all its forms, helps people feel better, think more clearly, connect with others, express themselves, and relax. Vincentians understand this. Superior General Fr. Tomaž Mavrič, CM, recently visited and blessed The Fr. Joseph Skelly, CM, Madonna Art Museum at The Basilica Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in the United States' Eastern Province.

“We thank You for this sacred space dedicated to the arts that reflects Your glory and lifts hearts toward You,” Fr. Mavrič said during his blessing. “We ask Your blessing upon this museum, its walls, and every work displayed on them.”

As part of the blessing, Fr. Mavrič asked God, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, that each creation inspires all who enter the museum, deepens their faith, and draws them closer toward God's divine presence.

The museum, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is home to more than 250 pieces of Marian and religious art, showcasing a diverse collection of artists, time periods, mediums, and artistic styles. The Objective: Make Our Lady better known and loved.

“Bless the artists whose gifts mirror Your creative power, the patrons who support this mission, and the visitors who seek meaning and hope here,” Fr. Mavrič prayed.

As one of the largest collections of Marian artwork in a single location, visitors can explore the beauty and depth of devotion to Mary and Christ through artistic expression. People with either a love for art or religion can appreciate where the museum rests at the intersection of faith and art.

“Let this museum stand as a testament to the harmony between faith and art, letting souls contemplate the mysteries of salvation,” Fr. Mavrič said. “We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”



Meeting, looking at one another, listening to one another

In Rome, at the General Curia, on 7 December the annual meeting was held between the Curia community and the confreres who attend the Roman pontifical universities. We experienced a beautiful day of formation, prayer and fraternity. Fr. Salvatore Fari, Superior of the Curia and Director of the Office of Communication, gave a lecture on the theme: “Vincentian pastoral ministry in the digital world: from connection to relationship.”

He introduced his talk by speaking of communication as a vocation, explaining how the whole of revelation can be read as a communicative movement of God towards humanity: a God who speaks, who enters into relationship, who makes himself understood within human history and language. He then retraced the Church’s Magisterium on communication, from the Second Vatican Council to Pope Leo XIV, before outlining some challenges for us Vincentians.



In the light of this journey, it clearly emerged that communication is not simply one operational sector of the Church, but a constitutive dimension of her mission. The Church communicates because she is generated by the Word and sent to spread throughout the world a good news that cannot be kept to herself.

After sixty years of ecclesial reflection, we can say that communication is no longer merely a “topic” of pastoral ministry, but the very form of mission. The charism of the evangelization of the poor today asks to be expressed also along the digital highways, where new forms of poverty emerge and new questions await to be heard. Digital platforms thus become “new peripheries,” in which it is possible to live a kind of communication that is neither propaganda nor strategy, but an act of charity, a style of closeness, a word that lifts up and unites.

After the time of community sharing, the Eucharistic concelebration followed, presided over by our Superior General, Fr. Tomaž Mavrič. In his homily he highlighted the invitation of the Apostle Paul: “Welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you.” Welcome, Fr. Tomaž said, is the soil in which Jesus is born. To welcome the other means to welcome the diversity of origins, of journeys, of ecclesial sensitivities; to welcome one another’s limits and labours; to welcome the stories that each person brings, the dreams and the wounds, the nostalgia and the enthusiasm. In this Advent season, therefore, it is not enough to prepare liturgies or plan activities: we must put our relationships in order, live the mysticism of charity (as I wrote to you in the Advent Letter 2025), the mysticism of open eyes that see and welcome those who are in need.

At the end of Mass, we shared a good meal and a joyful time together.



Visit of Fr. Dominique to the Province of the Orient

The visit of the Assistant of the Superior General took place over three days, in a fraternal and attentive atmosphere. The community and personal meetings made it possible to hear sincere testimonies about spiritual life, governance and fraternal relations within the Province. A particularly significant moment was the visit to the house in Mejdlaya, where the Assistant was able to meet the confreres and share with them a time of listening and reflection on community and missionary life.

The meeting with the Bishop of Tripoli was also important, marked by a frank dialogue on the Vincentian mission in the local pastoral context and on the challenges of ecclesial presence in the North of Lebanon. Taken as a whole, the visit highlighted, on the one hand, the apostolic vitality of the confreres and, on the other, the deep wounds of a community in search of truth, reconciliation and spiritual renewal.



CEVIM Meeting: to revitalize the Little Company

From 2 to 4 December 2025, the CEVIM meeting with members of the General Curia took place in Paris, at our Mother House. Visitors, Regional Superiors, Treasurers, and Provincial Secretaries were present.

The days were shaped by meditation, the celebration of the Eucharist, thematic conferences, and sharing in language groups.

The Superior General, Fr. Tomaž Mavrič, gave a presentation on revitalizing the identity of the Congregation at the beginning of the fifth centenary of its foundation.

The General Treasurer, Fr. Ziad, also presented the organization of the General Treasurer's Office and projects aimed at good cooperation among the Provinces.

The Secretary General, Fr. Giuseppe, provided some general information to ensure proper communication between the General Curia and provincial secretariats.

The Procurator General, Fr. Sergio, presented the Office of the General Procurator, recalling the importance of dialogue and interaction with the Dicasteries of the Holy See.

This meeting, set within the context of the Jubilee of the 400th anniversary of the Congregation of the Mission, was a moment of grace, encounter, mutual knowledge and sharing, which greatly enriched us and strengthened our sense of belonging to the Little Company.

Fr. SEJBUK Adam





Blessing of New Mission House in Nepal

Mission, as we know, is at the heart of the Church. The mission mandate of Our Lord to go forth as the heralds of His Gospel continues to re-echo in our ears and hearts. St. Vincent was being inspired by this mission appeal of Jesus that he named the little company as the Congregation of the Mission. Over the last four hundred years the Congregation has been committed to the missionary zeal of expanding the Vincentian Charism beyond the borders. In line with the missionary nature of our congregation, the Southern Province of India has been spreading the fragrance of Christ's Gospel far and wide. In 2022, when we celebrated the blessed centenary of the Vincentian presence in India, the Province sent forth four missionaries to start up a new Vincentian mission in Malawi, recalling the advent of the first four Vincentian Spanish missionaries to India. But, prior to that, we had already sent two confreres to Nepal to begin a new mission in 2019. From then onwards, we have been working on establishing ourselves in Nepal.

November 15, 2025, will go down in the annals of the history of the Southern Indian Province as a golden day for blessing and dedicating the De Paul Sadan to be the Vincentian Mission House in Nepal. His Grace Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, the Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal, prayerfully blessed and dedicated the house for spreading the Gospel of Christ and building up the Church in Nepal. Very Rev. Fr. Silas Bogati, the Apostolic Administrator of the Nepal Vicariate, graced the occasion with his gracious presence and prayers. Priests and Religious rendering their service in different parts of Nepal also joined for the celebration.

The celebration commenced with a warm welcome extended to the Nuncio, Apostolic Administrator, and other important guests by garland, shawl, and traditional Nepal cap. Fr. Tibin Mathew, the Father-in-charge, extended words of welcome to all present for the occasion. Then we had the official inauguration of the house, cutting the ribbon by the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, and unveiling the plaques by the Apostolic Administrator, Rev. Fr. Silas and the Provincial Superior, Rev. Fr. Anil Thomas. Thereafter, the Nuncio presided over the prayers and blessed the house.



His Grace Archbishop Girelli offered Holy Mass and prayed for the Nepal mission going to be undertaken by the Vincentians. In his homily, the Nuncio appreciated the Congregation and the Vincentian confreres engaged in missionary activities and the new venture in Nepal. He recalled the great legacy of St. Vincent de Paul and the Vincentians for the cause of the poor and spreading the Gospel through various missionary activities across the world. He highlighted his great appreciation for the Superior General and the Congregation for all the support and aid extended to the Nepal mission.

Very Rev. Fr. Anil Karackavayalil, the Provincial Superior, in his welcome note at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist, expressed his joy at completing this long-cherished mission endeavor to make available our Vincentian presence and ministry in Nepal. He highlighted the missionary dimension of the Congregation expanding and extending Vincentian Charism far and wide. He placed on record the new missions, such as Nepal, Malawi, and Sri Lanka, that the Province of South India could venture into within the past couple of years with the generous support of the Superior General, Very Rev. Fr. Tomaž Mavrič and the Curia. Fr. Provincial also expressed a very special thanks to Rev. Fr. Jomon James, the Dean of Far West Nepal, who generously rendered his unwavering support and cooperation throughout this mission endeavor. After the Holy Mass, Rev. Fr. Georgekutty Sasseril, the Mission Superior of Nepal, proposed the vote of thanks to all. He extended a special thanks to Fr. Tibin Mathew, who was overseeing the work day and night, and gratefully acknowledged the appreciation of all for the commendable service rendered by him for completing the house. The celebration was concluded by an agape meal.



Fr. Sebastian Vettickal, C.M.

Closing of the 400th Anniversary Jubilee in Cameroon



On Saturday, 29 November 2025, the closing of the Jubilee of the 400th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Congregation of the Mission took place at the Saint Vincent de Paul Scholasticate in Yaoundé (Cameroon). It was celebrated in the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio to Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, Archbishop José Avelino BETTENCOURT; of the confreres of the Vice-Province coming from the missions of Cameroon, Chad and Equatorial Guinea; of priests, religious men and women; of the Vincentian Family; of associations and lay branches of the Church; as well as of many Christians who came from all parts of the country, from Chad and from the Central African Republic (RCA).

This closing of the Jubilee had been opened on 22 April 2025, in Nsimalen. At that opening, the confreres wished to retrace the missionary and spiritual journey that saw them come to birth in Cameroon. Thus, through conferences on the history of the Congregation of the Mission in Cameroon, penitential celebrations and pilgrimage walks, the Vice-Province of Cameroon sought to place itself firmly within the theme proposed for this Jubilee, namely: Clothe yourselves with the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

To mark this closing on 29 November in a special way, five deacons were ordained priests by the Apostolic Nuncio. They are: BOUTCHI Michael, C.M. – NGONO Armel Donadoni, C.M. – ONANENA Jean Emmanuel, C.M. – MVONDO Athanase Victor, C.M. and METTE Gyldas, C.M.

In his message of exhortation, addressed first to the jubilee confreres, the Nuncio conveyed to everyone the blessing of Pope Leo XIV; then he thanked the Lazarists for the missionary work carried out in the Church of Cameroon and throughout the world; finally, he invited the new priests to identify themselves with Christ, poor and servant, in the manner of Saint Vincent de Paul. To illustrate his message, he reminded them that the priesthood is a permanent diaconate, that is, a permanent service of brothers and sisters and, in particular, of the poor. This (the priesthood) is lived “on one’s knees,” in humility and in the obedience of faith.

The various interventions that followed did not cease to offer praise and gratitude to Almighty God for the gift of the Vincentian charism. The Visitor, in his “Ite, missa est,” then spoke to recall that this regional and solemn closing of the Jubilee does not close the Jubilee in itself, but now sends us out as new missionaries to sow hope in communities, to make the graces of this Jubilee bear fruit by making them fruitful through our witness of life, a witness that invites us to clothe ourselves with the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Laurent Georges ZIBI, CM



The Congregation of the Mission and the UN

Rev. Brian Shanley, university president. St John's Board of Trustees, administrators, faculty and staff. Vincentian priests, students, family and friends.

I want to thank the University for this wonderful recognition of the significant work of the Congregation of the Mission at the United Nations for over 25 years. For me personally, it was an honor to be its NGO Representative there for the last five.

I believe in the UN. But that is dwarfed by my belief in St. Vincent DePaul. So let's talk about both.

The UN turned 80 this year and I wonder how many of you think it has outlived its usefulness. Born out of war to keep the peace, the relevance of the UN today is often questioned. It couldn't prevent Russia from invading Ukraine, nor has it stopped the horrific genocide in Gaza. Resolutions about global peace and security are often blocked by one of the five nations that gave themselves individual veto power at the very foundation of the institution. And on other issues there are no enforcement mechanisms in place to ensure that nations fulfill their pledges.

So the UN is a flawed institution. Do we know one that is not? While much of the mission of the UN and many of its goals remain merely aspirational, its significant contributions to humanity are undeniable. The UN is also UNICEF, with great global work for children. The UN is humanitarian aid that is often actually heroic. No other institution in the world does more to promote human rights and concern for women and girls. If the UN did not exist, we would have to invent something like it, a space where 193 Member States can come together in an organized fashion to debate the great issues of the day.

The problem with the UN is not a lack of experience or intelligence, but a lack of imagination. It deals with today's problems with yesterday's solutions. New approaches are urgently needed. Life today is very different than in 1945.

But the UN is ultimately about people. The first three words of the UN charter are "We the People"-- not we the nations or we the ambassadors. The people of the world. And so the UN offers humanity a path forward to a healthier and safer world. Its 2030 Agenda for People & the Planet, for Peace & Prosperity, signed ten years ago today actually, pledges to leave no one behind. The Agenda has unfortunately stalled as Member States—for different reasons—fail to keep their pledge to carry out the Agenda they voted for. Wealthy countries have other priorities, while poorer nations, burdened by debt repayment, will be unable to invest in socioeconomic infrastructure until the global financial architecture prioritizes humanity over profit.

And the UN faces challenges beyond its control. The rise of extreme nationalism with thinly veiled racism and xenophobia has nations turning their backs on multilateralism—the very heart of the UN mission—as some countries, including and especially our own, withdraw from the Human Rights Council and decrease UN humanitarian funding even for children's programs.

I believe the Congregation of the Mission should be present and active at the UN. Like all branches of the Family, Vincentian priests and brothers have a story to tell, a powerful story about the struggles of real people in the 102 countries where they minister to people considered—and treated—as the Last and the Least among us. People in poverty, uninvited to the tables of power and decision-making, their input into solutions very rarely sought, even though they know best what must be done.

It is a story not from theory nor merely from university study but from personal contact, personal involvement with people in poverty. People with whom the Vincentians share the Gospel and are themselves evangelized by those served from the depths of their need, their generosity, their utter dependence on God.

Our Vincentian Family knows these individuals well. And this story needs to be told in places of power. People in power need to hear this story because otherwise they live and move in a closed bubble of documents and diplomatic protocols that preclude a real understanding of what happens every day at the grassroots level.

They need help to keep it real. And at times they will even admit it! In terms of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, ambassadors and UN officials will sometimes say that they need NGO input because the grassroots communities that NGOs represent know best what solutions work or not at the all-important local level.

I always say that if we just accomplished the first two of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, we could call it a day. Goal One is End Poverty; 700 Million people live in extreme poverty. Goal Two is Zero Hunger; 2.3 Billion people suffer food insecurity.

Change is hard at institutions so complex and ponderous, filled with the competing priorities of the 193 countries' own narrow interests.

But positive changes are possible there, as the Working Group to End Homelessness has shown in its two resolutions passed by the General Assembly, one lifting the issue of homelessness to be treated as its own stand-alone issue, the other requiring the Secretary General to present biannual reports on progress addressing the problem. Even if some Member States prefer to speak only of housing, homelessness is now firmly on the UN's agenda.

What must be Done is always the Vincentian question in the face of issues affecting people in poverty. Our Vincentian Family should be justifiably proud of our 400+ years legacy of wonderful charitable work. In that regard we have certainly followed St. Vincent the Universal Patron of Charity.

Pope Francis called inequality the source of all social ills. As inequality spreads like a virus and abject poverty stubbornly continues to plague humanity, there is a clear need to embrace justice more fully. Justice, a kind of social charity. St. Vincent himself said "There can be no charity if it is not accompanied by justice" (CCD:II:68).

So at the UN the Congregation engages issues related to poverty: homelessness, social development to reduce inequality, the plight of migrants and refugees especially at this time. And it does non-partisan political advocacy based on Catholic Social Teaching and Human Rights with a Systemic Change mentality that brings hope to those trapped in poverty by offering a way for them to address the root causes of the systems that keep them poor.



Together with other like-minded NGOs, the Vincentian Family at the UN does advocacy in two ways. First, we get in the way by organizing events and presenting position papers to influence official proceedings with concern for the common good, meetings with ambassadors and staff to emphasize the needs of people in poverty. But we also get out of the way by helping grassroots communities to speak for themselves. I remember in the 70s and 80s in Latin America it was a badge of honor to be called the voice of the voiceless. But the best advocacy is to help the voiceless find their own voice and speak for themselves.

I would like to close with a few words to the students present with us. I hope when you graduate you take with you not just a diploma and great memories of St. John's but also something of the great Vincent de Paul. If not his commitment to the Church, then pieces of his humanity.

He was a fascinating person, very real, not like some saints who seem so perfect we could never relate. He became a priest mostly to escape the poverty of his childhood, then spent 20 years finding himself and experienced some depression along the way. He was always aware of his shortcomings and the challenges of his own temperament.

But he was also open to the deeper meaning of his encounters with people in need and he recognized God's presence there. And once he did, there was no stopping him, as creative outbursts of organizing and collaborating led to so many effective projects to help people in need. He emphasized practice over theory.

This, I think, is Vincent's greatest legacy: a man of action, not simply words, responding to human need. Not activism but action grounded in prayer and shaped by reflection. Affective and effective love for people in poverty. The preacher at his funeral proclaimed that Vincent had just about changed the face of the Church.

An award-winning film was made about his life and in the final scene they have him conversing with the youngest novice of the Daughters of Charity before she goes on her first visit to the poor. He tells her she will find charity a heavy burden, but she must always act with love, that "only for your love, for your love alone, will the poor forgive you the bread you give them."

At the United Nations, the Congregation of the Mission, along with the other Vincentian Family NGOs, strives to create a world where no one need forgive bread that's given because everyone will have what they need to live dignified lives worthy of the sons and daughters of our loving God. Thank you.

Jim Claffey



“Today, in the city of David, a
Savior has been born for you.”
(Lk 2:11)

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR**



NOMINATIONES

RUDY SULISTIJO Stephanus	09/12/2025 (start 25/01/2026)	Visitor Indonesia
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ORDINATIONES

NZIMENYA Damas	Sac	COL	27/09/2025
NIWENSHUTI Joseph Mukasa	Sac	COL	04/10/2025
NIYOMUGABO Jean Baptiste	Sac	COL	04/10/2025
PASTRANO LEDEZMA José León	Sac	MEX	08/11/2025
MAURÍCIO Atánasio	Sac	MOZ	29/11/2025
MACAMO Ângelo Cacilda	Sac	MOZ	13/12/2025
SITOE Adérito Jaime	Sac	MOZ	13/12/2025

NECROLOGIUM

Nomen	Cond.	Dies ob.	Prov.	Aet.	Voc.
SÁNCHEZ JUANES Jerónimo	Sac	27/08/2025	SVP	91	73
GAGNEPAIN John F.	Sac	15/11/2025	OCC	90	72
MORO GONZÁLEZ Justo	Sac	20/11/2025	SVP	89	72
HARTENBACH William E.	Sac	21/11/2025	OCC	88	70
GENEROSO* Miguel Maria	Fra	22/11/2025	FLU	92	68
MANZO Vincenzo	Sac	04/12/2025	ITA	90	74
BANKO Lucjan	Sac	05/12/2025	POL	66	45
SÁNCHEZ MALLO José Manuel	Sac	06/12/2025	SVP	90	74

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of **Saint Vincent de Paul**

