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SUPERIORE GENERALE

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To the members of the Vincentian Family

Communicating the charism and spirituality of Saint Vincent de Paul: a legacy that never fades

Dear members of the Vincentian Family,

May the grace and peace of Jesus be always with us!

Each year, the Solemnity of Saint Vincent de Paul is a special moment to rediscover his spiritual legacy, strengthen the bonds of communion within the Vincentian Family, and renew the missionary commitment that unites us.

Pope Francis, in his message of 11 December 2024, sent to me on the occasion of the commemoration of the fourth centenary of the foundation of the Congregation of the Mission, gave all of us a clear recommendation; namely, to persevere in the charism and spirituality lived by our Founder, Saint Vincent de Paul. In fact, the late Pontiff wrote that **“it is fitting to reflect on the legacy of spirituality, apostolic zeal and pastoral care that Saint Vincent de Paul bequeathed to the universal Church.”**

To reflect is to persevere. However, this action does not mean remaining “mummified” in practices, but rather interpreting the “signs of the times” in the light of the Gospel of Charity, which is God. Our charism, in fact, always refers us back to the concrete conditions, to the human contexts in which we are immersed, in order to build meaningful relationships where we are sent as witnesses of Love.

The charism, as Saint Vincent taught, requires each of us to interpret human situations in order to proclaim and live the Gospel, just as it **obliges us to promote human development in an integral and concrete way**. Only in this way can we be recognized as witnesses of Charity and, therefore, witnesses of the Love we have encountered and wish to proclaim.

In his life, Saint Vincent allowed himself to be surprised and moved by the newness of the Gospel, because he was capable of **letting the face of Jesus present in the poor radically challenge him**. Love thus became hope for something new, *an active hope* that puts the proclamation of the Gospel first, living it and then preaching it with words.

Saint Vincent presents himself to us as a man of hope because in his concrete actions he showed uncompromising faith in God, faith lived in the most marginal human situations, and he brought the fragrance of love where the abandonment of the poor spread its acrid smell. **It is there that Vincent made hope active because he “got his hands dirty” with humanity and bore witness to the Truth.**

The Mystic of Charity is still today the man of active hope, and all of us, members of the Vincentian Family, become like him, hands that serve, hearts that love. In a world marked by wars, injustice, and new forms of poverty, Saint Vincent reminds us that Christian hope is not escapism, but commitment. He invites us to believe that, even in the face of seemingly hopeless situations, charity can open new doors. **Being Vincentians in today's world means bringing hope that translates into service, capable of uniting faith and action, contemplation and social transformation.**

Hope, faith, and love, as lived by Saint Vincent, are virtues to be lived and communicated everywhere and by every means. Recent Popes have reiterated this in their magisterium and have lived it through the use of the mass media, social networks, and every means of social communication.

We live in an age marked by the power of social communication: words, images, social networks, videos, podcasts, websites. All of this is not simply a neutral tool, but a real living environment, in which women and men of every culture meet, learn information, are formed, and sometimes even are hurt by distorted messages.

As members of the Vincentian Family, we are called to recognize this reality as a new frontier of evangelization and service. Saint Vincent used every means that Providence made available to him: letters, conferences, written reports, and networks of collaboration. Today, with the same boldness, we are sent to inhabit contemporary languages in order to communicate the beauty of the charism entrusted to us.

Over the centuries, the figure of our Founder has inspired numerous artistic and multimedia expressions: songs, musicals, plays, and films. Each era has sought to give voice and image to his life, to convey the appeal of his holiness and the relevance of his work. **Among these productions, the film *Monsieur Vincent* occupies a special place, not only because it was one of the first major cinematographic attempts to tell the story of a saint, but above all because it captures his profound spirit, presenting Vincent not as an inaccessible hero, but as a man capable of transforming faith into action and charity into a way of life.**

Monsieur Vincent is a classic French film from 1947, directed by Maurice Cloche, dedicated to the life of Saint Vincent de Paul, played by Pierre Fresnay, who converted to Catholicism during the filming of the movie. In 1949, it won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. **Our confrere, Father Celestino Fernández, in one of his studies, highlighted the two essential axes of the film:**

- **the holistic liberation of man (which is pleasantly surprising for its connection with post-conciliar theology and pastoral care regarding evangelization);**
- **the Incarnation, the foundation of all Christian liberation.**

Between these two main axes, there are various themes: love, the Christian conception of the world, a selfish and unsupportive society as a terrible machine that produces poor and marginalized people, charity, justice, the faces of the Church, and the organization of charity.

LINKS

Netflix: <https://www.netflix.com/title/70042283>

Plex: <https://watch.plex.tv/movie/monsieur-vincent>

JustWatch: <https://www.justwatch.com/it/film/monsieur-vincent>

JustWatch: <https://www.justwatch.com/es/pelicula/monsieur-vincent>

JustWatch: <https://www.justwatch.com/fr/film/monsieur-vincent>

JustWatch: <https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/monsieur-vincent>

IMDb: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0039632/>

Letterboxd: <https://letterboxd.com/film/monsieur-vincent/>

Even today, the creativity of our Vincentian Family is still at work throughout the world and is enriched by various artistic and multimedia expressions, all of which deserve praise and support. I am pleased with this and thank all those who are involved in this field of missionary animation.

Even the General Curia of the Congregation of the Mission of Saint Vincent de Paul, **on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the Foundation of the Congregation**, together with the Italian Province of the Congregation of the Mission, **produced a musical work entitled *Fino alla fine. San Vincenzo de Paoli, messaggero e servo (Until the End: Saint Vincent de Paul, Messenger and Servant)***. The musical work was coordinated by Father Salvatore Farì, CM, with script and lyrics by Sister Rosanna Pitarresi, DC, and music and direction by Maestro Claudio Mantegna. It was produced by the musical group GM Music of Catania in collaboration with Bliverse Academy.

The work consists of: a prologue that quickly immerses us in the characteristics of today's world; **eight musical scenes introduced by a monologue by Vincent de Paul who tells us today about his life** (his vocation, his mission, his service of the poor, his commitment to prisoners and to building peace), **followed by a video clip with the musical piece that brings his message up to date; an epilogue in which, as successor to Saint Vincent, I invite the Missionaries, the Vincentian Family, friends, and young people to serve their brothers and sisters, to love them, to protect them... until the end.**

LINK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-jv4i5arPY&t=2913s>

In the coming months, our Communications Office will distribute the script of the film and musical and an educational-pastoral guide to be used after viewing the film *Monsieur Vincent* and the musical *Fino alla fine (Until the End)* in the various settings where the Vincentian Family operates.

On this occasion, I am delighted to announce that a new film, *Vincent* (SAJE Production), will be released in 2028. I am certain that we will be presented with a masterpiece as a sign of continuity and an act of living memory: *continuity*, because Vincent's mission continues to inspire the Church and the Vincentian Family throughout the world; *living memory*, because the film will be a tool for listening to Vincent's voice again and allowing ourselves to be challenged by his example, in a language that is still capable of touching our minds and hearts today.

I encourage everyone to disseminate and promote these productions in communities, parishes, schools, missions, and works of the Vincentian Family as an opportunity for knowledge, formation, and prayer; to use them as missionary tools to reach out to young people, families, and those distant from the faith, showing them the beauty of a life given to God and to others; to experience the viewing of the productions as a community event that strengthens our sense of belonging and rekindles in us the flame of the spirituality and charism.

I entrust you to the intercession of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Saint Vincent de Paul, and all the Saints, Blessed, and Servants of God of the Vincentian Family, so that we may be messengers and servants of the Gospel of charity.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,



Tomaž Mavrič, CM
Superior General