

Ninth World Day of the Poor

Homily of Fr. Tomaž Mavrič
Rome, Collegio Leoniano
15 novembre 2025

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.

Prayer to Saint Vincent de Paul

Saint Vincent de Paul, you who answered the call of God with an open and generous heart,
intercede for us before the Lord, so that we

may follow your example of charity and dedication to our neighbor.

You who have seen Christ in the poor, teach us to serve them with love and humility, seeing in each
one of them the
face of Jesus.

Give us the strength to renounce selfishness and live every day for other,
with a spirit of mercy and compassion.

Saint Vincent, who has dedicated his life to the service of the sick, the marginalized and the suffering,
help us never to turn our eyes from suffering,
but to be bearers of hope and comfort for those in need.

With your intercession, strengthen our faith and our hope, so that, like you, we
may be instruments of the peace and justice of God in the world.

Make us faithful to our path of holiness, and let every action
be an act of love towards God and toward our neighbor.