

LETTER OF POPE BENEDICT XVI TO VINCENTIAN FAMILY

Reverend Father Gregory Gay
Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission
and Reverend Mother Evelyne Franc
Superioress General of the Company of Daughters of Charity

„Whoever loves God, must also love his brother” (1J 4:21)

With these words of Apostle John, I would like to join in thought and prayer the entire Vincentian Family, as it celebrates in thanksgiving the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of death of Saint Louise de Marillac and Saint Vincent de Paul. These words were lived out in the luminous way in the lives of your Founders. It is because they believed in charity they put themselves in the service of their brothers and sisters. May this same faith be your light and strength in your ways of service to the most abandoned and lowly in our so often heartless societies!

By placing this jubilee under the motto **„Charity and Mission”**, indeed, you have wished to indicate what is the heart of heritage which you have received. As I wrote in my first Encyclical, figures of saints such as Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac **„stand out as lasting models of social charity for all people of good will. The saints are the true bearers of light within history, for they are men and women of faith, hope and love.”** (Deus Caritas Est, 40). This is what I encourage you to be, in a daring way amongst the men and women of our time, so that your involvements in favor of human person be in fact the revelation of the love of God and simply the expression of humanism and philanthropy.

The intuition of Vincent de Paul in getting the priests, consecrated persons and laity to collaborate is a precious good in to which the Vincentian Family rightly engages itself to develop better service of the Church's mission. So, you will ever be more effective in proclaiming the Gospel to all, so that each person might recover their dignity as Children of God in the world, in unity and solidarity. May God help you always to remain faithful to the heritage you have received to live it out with faith and generosity!

Entrusting you to the intercession of Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Louise de Marillac and all the saints and blessed of the Vincentian Family, I give you all a full heart an affectionate Apostolic Blessing.

at Vatican, 14 June 2010

Benedict XVI