PART ONE

VINCENTIANS
DURING THE SPANISH REGIME
Chapter One

Historical Antecedents
(1847-1851)

Apostle of the Poor

Vincent de Paul, “the Great Saint of the Great Century”, as he has been deservedly called, was born on April 5, 1580, according to his own saying, (or perhaps, 1581 or 1576, according to other sources).1 His parents were John de Paul and Bertranda de Moras, from Tamarite de Litera, a region of Aragon, near the province of Lérida, Spain. But St. Vincent himself was born in Pouy, a little village near Dax, France, which now bears his name.2 He died in Paris on September 27, 1660.

Vincent de Paul was a man who left to history an account of outstanding priestly virtues and all-embracing services to humanity. He was concerned with the rehabilitation and relief of the poor, the support and education of orphans, the ransom and protection of galley slaves, and the formation and training of priests and seminarians. He was an indefatigable promoter and director of spiritual exercises and retreats; and while advancing and supporting foreign missions, involved himself in the fight against the rampant heresy of Jansenism. He distinguished himself as a man of encompassing social conscience. Eventually he was acclaimed by the Church as the “universal Patron of all works of Charity which in some way originated from him.”3

Today when people speak about the “third world”, the underdeveloped countries”, the “underprivileged members of society”, and the “have-nots”, it might be well to recall that more than 300 years ago St. Vincent de Paul had already organized his institute or Congregation, for the service of the poor in country places and in mission lands. Not for mere philanthropic reasons (which often are not free from selfish considerations), nor for religious politics (so inimical to faith, yet at times found even among churchmen), did he zealously reserve his priests for the poor, pointing out to them that the greatness of their work lay in its faithful resemblance to the work of Christ:
Vincentians During The Spanish Regime

Our Lord asks us to preach the Gospel to the poor. We have great reason to be humble, seeing that the Eternal Father has chosen us to carry out the plan of His Son who came to preach the Gospel to the poor and who mentioned this fact as proof that He was the Son of God and the long expected Messiah... There is no Company in the Church of God whose inheritance is the poor... This is what missionaries profess to do; it is their special work to be like Jesus, devoted to the poor...  

St. Vincent practiced what he preached about the poor. He went forth — even when his physical health did not warrant the accompanying exertions of his search for souls — to win them to the Gospel of God. In 1617, he gave his first mission in Folleville, and from that time on, he evangelized the towns, villages and hamlets all over the estates of Philip de Gondi and his wife. In the years 1625-1632, his priests (at times accompanied by St. Vincent himself) were able to preach in about 140 missions.

The Congregation of the Mission

St. Vincent de Paul founded the Congregation of the Mission after long deliberation and experimentation. He did not spare himself, never tired of consultations, made frequent requests for written advice and, above all, prayed earnestly, because he was establishing a congregation which, in his time, was "revolutionary." St. Vincent did not intend to establish one more new religious congregation, similar to those already existing — in this he was supported by the policy of the Holy See. His Congregation was intended to be a company of "secular priests." To this day, the Constitution of the Congregation of the Mission keeps intact the secularity of the Vincentian missionaries. At the time St. Vincent was seeking approval for his Congregation, there was in Rome and in Paris a pronounced current of opposition to the establishment of new religious congregations. Besides, the priests who followed St. Vincent disliked the title "religious", and St. Vincent took that into account.

Even before the Vincentian Fathers were formally recognized in 1633 by Urban VII's Papal Bull Salvatoris Nostri they had already been engaged in missions and works of charity in different parts of France. Although his priests were occupied with so many activities, St. Vincent became obsessed with thoughts of how to turn out exemplary parish pastors who might preserve among the poor rural folks the fruits obtained in the missions given by his priests. It was for this purpose that,
upon the encouragement of some Bishops, he proposed to include among the specific aims of his congregation, the formation of the clergy, specially in Seminaries. The Seminary apostolate continues today to be a most important part of the labors of the Congregation of the Mission throughout the world. In the past this was its predominant service to the Church in the Philippines. 

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul

The beginnings of this Company founded by St. Vincent in the 17th century were providentially quite simple and unexpected. The founder himself acknowledged it saying: “Who would ever have thought that there would be Daughters of Charity? . . . I did not think of it. . . God thought it for you.” 

Docile to Divine Providence, and inspired by God, St. Vincent devoted his whole life to meeting the spiritual and material needs of the poor and suffering people whom he called “Our lords and masters.” For this purpose, he founded the Confraternities of Charity, in 1617, and then the Congregation of the Mission, in 1625.

In the meantime, he met the widow Louise de Marillac whom he encouraged to get involved in charitable works, especially those undertaken by the ladies of the Confraternities of Charity. A simple peasant girl named Marguerite Nasseau presented herself, eager to perform the menial tasks which were too difficult for the ladies of Charity to assume. So she joined Louise de Marillac and with true evangelical love she became also the servant of the most abandoned. St. Vincent said of Marguerite Nasseau from Suresness, that she was the first sister to have had the happiness of showing others the way . . . although she had no other master or mistress than God.

Marguerite’s example was contagious. Soon, other village girls began to join her. The Company that gathered around Louise de Marillac grew imperceptibly, in the manner of things divine, and thus the Company of the Daughters of Charity was born. In 1630, St. Vincent entrusted to St. Louise the first sisters who dedicated themselves to the work of the various confraternities of Charity. And on November 29, 1633, these first sisters decided in union with St. Louise, the co-foundress, with St. Vincent of the Company, to live their ideal of Christian charity in a community of fraternal life.

At first, they cared for the sick in their homes in towns and villages. That is why their original name and title was “Daughters of Charity, servants of the poor sick.” Then, as needs were made known to them, they engaged themselves in the care of the sick in hospitals, poor children in schools, foundlings in orphanages, galley slaves, wounded
soldiers, the aged, the insane... Whenever choices were to be made, they preferred the poorest among the poor. The holy Founder had told them that they were for persons deprived of all assistance, and insisted that they should not commit themselves to the service of "those who have other ways of being helped." St. Louise reaffirmed: "Oh, what a happiness it would be, provided God were in no way offended, were the Company to serve only the totally destitute." In 1644, she adopted the motto: "The Charity of Christ compels us!" (2 Cor 5:14).

To devote themselves entirely to the service of Christ in the poor, which is the principal aim of their Company, the Daughters of Charity professed the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, by private vows that were renewed every year. The Sister's main concern would be to make God known to the poor, to announce Jesus Christ to them telling them about the kingdom of God that is at hand and that is for them. "Through faith they see Christ in the poor and the poor in Christ. Therefore they endeavor to serve Him in his suffering members 'with compassion, mildness, cordiality, respect, and devotion.'"

Their holy Founder said: "Although they do not belong to a Religious Order; yet, as they are much more exposed to the world than nuns — their monastery being generally no other than the houses of the sick; their cell, a rented room; their chapel, the parish church; their cloister, the public streets or the wards of hospitals; their enclosure, obedience; their grating, the fear of God, and their veil, holy modesty; — they are obliged on this account, to lead as virtuous a life, as if they were professed in a Religious Order." He added: "You should know, my dear Sisters, that the spirit of your Company consists of three things: to love our Lord, and serve Him in a spirit of humility and simplicity. As long as charity, humility, and simplicity exist among you, one may say the Company is still alive."

A distinctive feature of the Company of Daughters of Charity was that although the immediate government was exercised by a Superior General, assisted by a General Council of Sisters, the actual Superior General was necessarily the Superior General of the Vincentian Fathers. This provision has existed from the beginning of the Company of the Daughters of Charity. It was expressly requested by the co-foundress St. Louise de Marillac, who saw in it a very important means of safe-guarding the identity and vitality of the Vincentian spirit in every circumstance of place and time. She wrote to St. Vincent in 1647.

"During mental prayer God gave me great peace and tranquility of soul... I was meditating on how necessary it is for
the Company of the Daughters of Charity ever to remain under the guidance of him whom Divine Providence has given it, as well as under the guidance of his successors, for both spiritual and temporal matters.\textsuperscript{15}

Since then, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, successor of St. Vincent de Paul, has always had over the Company of Daughters of Charity a double power, dominative and jurisdictional, recognized by the Church and by their Constitutions. The Daughters of Charity recognize and accept him as God's representative helping them to maintain their characteristic spirit and to fulfill their specific mission in the Church. They vow to obey him and he may command them in the name of this vow. Within the Company, everything that pertains to the vows is within his jurisdiction.

The Superior General of the double family of St. Vincent names or appoints a Vincentian priest of the Mission to become Director General of the Company of Daughters of Charity, that is, his delegate and permanent representative, to help him and to replace him during his absence. His duty is to see to it that the life and apostolate of the Sisters remain faithful to their vocation. The Director General is one of the Major Superiors to whom the Sisters also owe obedience.

In the various Provinces there is also a Provincial Director appointed by the Superior General from among the priests of the Congregation of the Mission. The Sisters owe him obedience as to a Major Superior, and have full liberty to communicate with him. He has the right to grant them the permissions indicated in the Statutes, and makes the canonical visitation of the houses.

All these provisions indicate the close relationship between the two religious families founded by St. Vincent, and the need of the Sisters for the direction and guidance of the Vincentian Fathers. It was for this reason that the Daughters of Charity — as we will see later — would not have accepted the mission of the Philippines unless the Vincentian Fathers could come also.

\textit{Critical Religious Situation of Spain in the 19th Century}

On October 3, 1833 a civil war broke in Spain. The liberal government of Mendizabal, Alcalá Galiano, etc. which are openly Masonic or anti-Catholic, issued iniquitous laws against all religious Orders.\textsuperscript{16} On May 5, 1834 the Government forbade the religious to receive novices; on July 25, 1835 all religious communities of less than twelve professed members were suppressed. Thus the Brothers of San Juan de Dios had
to abandon fifty-two hospitals in Spain, three in the Philippines and two in Cuba. However the Decree of March 9, 1836 which suppressed totally all religious and monastic Orders made an exception for the Hospitaller Order of San Juan de Dios because of the need and usefulness of its work. But since they were forbidden to wear the religious habit and to receive novices, they were practically doomed to slow extinction. The Father General of this Order, Fr. Jose Bueno died on March 11, 1850. In spite of efforts during his lifetime to save the Order, he died without attaining anything to prevent the final extinction of that Hospitaller Order that flourished gloriously during almost three centuries in Spain.\(^{17}\)

History shows quite often that the very persecutions aimed at destroying the Church become the occasions for her to attain new conquests and advancement. Such is the wonderful way of God’s providence — to write straight with crooked lines. The coming of the Vincentian missionaries to the Philippines was occasioned by the raging persecutions fostered by the enemies of the Church, the liberals and freethinkers of those days. The effects of the closing of convents, the massacres of the religious, the prohibitions to wear the religious habit, and to admit new candidates and novices, the dispersal of the religious and the loss of community life and religious discipline were sadly felt by all. Some religious congregations were so adversely affected as to lead to their temporary extinction. Such was the fate that befell on the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God. Other communities, however, such as the Vincentian missionaries and the Daughters of Charity withstood the onslaught of the persecution and soon recovered; and the Church, in the end, was able to rejoice with new acquisitions and conquests, through strange and unexpected ways.

These events led to the coming of the Vincentians to the Philippines. Because of the persecution of religious orders, the Hospitaller Order of San Juan de Dios in Spain was closed. That affected deeply the condition and discipline of those religious who were administering the hospitals of the Philippines. To remedy the lamentable situation, the Spanish Government decided to send to the Philippines the Daughters of Charity to replace the Brothers of San Juan de Dios. And since the Daughters of Charity would not come without the assistance and spiritual direction of the Vincentian Fathers, the latter were also sent for that specific purpose, and concomitantly for the formation and training of the secular clergy in the Philippines. Thus by a providential chain of events the religious persecution in Spain led to the solution of a grave problem in the Philippine Church, i.e., the lack of a sufficient native clergy.
How did the Vincentians come to the Philippines? The Spanish Province of the Congregation even as late as the mid-19th century had never thought of it. Since the French invasion of Spain in 1808, aside from certain intervals of peace for the Church, all religious Orders and Institutes found themselves persecuted in the Peninsula. They were subjected to laws and decrees tending to suppress them, or consign them to slow extinction, by forbidding the admission of new candidates. Such disastrous conditions did not allow them to send missionaries abroad, since they could hardly survive at home.

This sad situation in the Peninsula had its repercussions in the Philippines. One of the most adversely affected religious Orders was the Brothers of San Juan de Dios, who were at that time in charge of three Hospitals, two in Manila and one in Cavite.

For more than two centuries, since they took over the Cavite hospital on January 30, 1642, and the Manila Hospital de la Misericordia (later, San Juan de Dios) on May 31, 1656, they had rendered good hospital service to the Philippines. But in 1743, the remote Philippine Province of San Rafael, of the Hospitaller Order, complained to the General of the sorry condition of its hospital due to lack of proper attention from the Commissaries (representing the General) in far off Mexico. The Brothers of Manila asked to be placed thenceforth under the direct supervision of the Fr. General in Spain. The request was granted on January 10, 1748.

Unfortunately, Spain was similarly far away from the Philippines; and by 1831, the Father General had again to inform his Councilors about the sad conditions of the convents of the Philippines. Mexico revolted against Spain in 1810 and became independent in 1821. The resulting difficulty of communications prevented any proper remedy from being applied. There was a dire scarcity of personnel to attend to the hospitals. The counsel and direction of major superiors whose vigilance and zeal might have maintained religious observance, in practice, no longer existed. Such isolation and neglect brought the most grievous evils on the Brothers of San Juan de Dios.

From the mid-18th century, the Provincial of the Order in the Philippines was given special faculties to receive novices and invest postulants with the habit of the Order without need of recourse to higher authorities. Obviously, this privilege was granted because of the urgent need for personnel for the hospitals. However, it seems that some of those vested with the holy habit of the Order were not worthy enough. "Donados," i.e., laymen who had "donated" their services in
return for certain privileges — were accepted. Some of these were neither worthy nor exemplary. They lacked zeal, religious observance and dedication to the works of mercy entrusted to them. Extant documents show that not only the lack of supervision from major superiors and the misdeeds of some local superiors, but also the poor administration of the goods of the Order and a certain decadence of the religious spirit, all contributed to the loss of prestige and the ill fame of the hospitals run by the Brothers.

In addition to this sad situation, there was the undeniable fact that in Spain, since 1935, the Order had been entirely suppressed. It was actually extinct and there was no hope for its possible survival in the near future. Thus, the existence of the Brothers in the Philippines was actually questionable. What was really the canonical status of those Brothers in the Philippines who had been all along depending on the General in Spain where the Order no longer existed? Were those Brothers of San Juan de Dios, specially their novices, truly “religious”, strictly speaking, according to the demands of Canon Law? When the Order ceased to be recognized in Spain in 1835, and when its last General died in 1850, who was considered to be the highest authority of those Brothers in the Philippines? On what authority were they still receiving new candidates and admitting postulants, or investing novices and “donados” with the habit of an Order that was practically extinct?

A Solution to An Unsavory Problem

In early November 1847, Fr. Buenaventura Codina was invited to a conference with the ministers of Justice and Overseas Affairs, to discuss the possible establishment of the Daughters of Charity in the Philippines. The prudent Provincial told them plainly that the Sisters were ready to go to those remote missions to serve the poor and the sick; but they would not go unless accompanied by their Spiritual Directors, the Vincentian Fathers, whom they needed for their guidance and protection.

On July 6, 1846, the Governor General of the Philippines, His Excellency Narciso Claveria, wrote to the recently elected Archbishop of Manila, Jose de Aranguren, O.S.A.R., inquiring as to the number of priests and novices among the Brothers of San Juan de Dios working in Manila and Cavite.

The Archbishop replied that the Brothers of San Juan de Dios in the Philippines had never been more than ten, and such was their number in 1846. Anyhow, according to the Archbishop, the problem was not a question of number of religious, but something deeper and more fundamental. The fact was that the so-called Hospitaller
Brothers of San Juan de Dios in the Philippines by that time were illegitimate and anti-canonical; they were not “religious”, strictly speaking. As a consequence, the supposed “religious” were in effect, simply good fellows who, in their own way, served at the hospitals without any grace of state. The miserable condition of the Manila and Cavite hospitals was so great that it called public attention. Even the City Government (the Ayuntamiento) of Manila made an official exposé about it, seeking for a remedy to the situation.20

The Manila Archbishop, in his answer to the Governor dated July 10, 1846, requested him to send official information to the Queen about the situation of these religious and the hospitals entrusted to them, with some suggestions about the actions that might be taken to provide adequately and conveniently to the beneficent purpose of their institution, so that her Majesty may design to decree what may be in accord with her royal satisfaction.

By that time, the religious persecutions of the years 1833-1842 had subsided. Under the newly proclaimed Queen Isabel II, steps were taken to sign a Concordat with the Holy See for the restoration of the Orders to their Church prerogatives. The religious Orders of the Philippines sent their Procurators General to Madrid, and similarly the Manila Archbishop sent the Dean of the Cathedral Chapter as his own Procurator in the years 1845-1847.

One of the problems taken up by the Dean was the condition of the Philippine Hospitals and their administrators, the Brothers of San Juan de Dios. The Dean proposed the substitution of those Brothers by the Daughters of Charity who were well known and highly esteemed in Spain. The famous Fr. Buenaventura Codina, C.M., who later became Bishop of the Canary Islands, was then the Provincial Visitor of the Vincentian Fathers and Director of the Daughters of Charity in Spain, and was actually working hard for the official restoration of the double family of St. Vincent de Paul in the Peninsula. At the request of the Queen, he had already sent to Mexico the Daughters of Charity by the end of 1844. The Vincentian Fathers, on the other hand, were also well appreciated by the Bishops, the Nuncio and the Ministers of State, of Justice (Gracia y Justicia) and of Overseas Affairs (Ultramar). Hence, Fr. Codina was quite confident of the restoration of the Congregation of the Mission, partly because the Daughters of Charity would not accept missions abroad without the company of Vincentians to guide and support their apostolate.

Final Arrangements for the First Vincentian Mission

The first formal steps for the coming of the Vincentian Fathers and the Daughters of Charity to the Philippines were taken by the great and
holy missionary, Fr. Buenaventura Codina, C.M., in the conference he held in Madrid with the Ministers of Gracia y Justicia and of Ultramar, in November 1847. At that time, the two Vincentian Congregations were not officially recognized by the Government since they had been suppressed (together with all other religious Orders) by the iniquitous laws of the revolution on March 8, 1836, and on July 29, 1837. But the double family of St. Vincent de Paul, Fathers and Sisters, were highly esteemed, and their immediate restoration in Spain, thanks to Fr. Codina was forthcoming. This zealous and well-deserving Vincentian, who was the Provincial Visitor of the priests of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity in Spain, was then elected Bishop of the Canary Islands. After his consecration in the Madrid Cathedral on February 20, 1848, he departed for his mission in the company of St. Anthony Maria Claret. To replace Fr. Codina, Fr. Ignacio Santasusana was appointed by the Superior General.  

The Concordat of Spain with the Holy See for the settlement of Church affairs after the revolution was finally signed on March 16, 1851. By virtue of the Concordat, the double family of St. Vincent de Paul was again officially recognized and re-established in Spain. Articles 29 and 30 of the Concordat declared:

“Art. 29. In Order that there may be found in the whole Peninsula a sufficient number of ministers and evangelical laborers who might be sent by the Prelates to give missions to the towns of their dioceses, as well as to help the parish priests, to attend to the sick, and for other works of charity and public utility, the Government of her Majesty, with the intention of improving the colleges for foreign missions, will at once take the necessary steps for the establishment wherever it may be needed, after hearing previously the Diocesan Prelates, religious houses and communities of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Philip Neri and some others among the Orders approved by the Holy See; and these religious houses shall serve at the same time as places for retreats of ecclesiastics, for spiritual exercises, and for other pious purposes.

Art. 30. In order to have also religious houses of women, wherein those called to the contemplative or to the active life may follow their vocation serving the sick, teaching the girls, and exercising other works both pious and useful to the people, the Institute of the Daughters of Charity should be preserved under the direction of the priests of St. Vincent de Paul, and the Government shall endeavour to foster it. Similarly, houses of religious women who may join the contempla-
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The work of teaching and educating girls or doing other works of charity, shall be preserved also.  

Subsequently, a Royal Decree was issued to implement the above clauses of the Concordat:

"Since it is absolutely necessary to reorganize without delay the Congregation of St. Vincent in order to render fully effective the provisions of article 29 of the Concordat, and following the suggestions proposed by the Minister of Gracia y Justicia, I decide to decree the following:

Art. 1. The Congregation of the Mission of St. Vincent de Paul is hereby declared re-established.

Art. 2. Without prejudice of keeping subject to the Ordinary of the place according to the Apostolic Brief, the houses to be established hereafter, the Visitor of the Spanish province shall habitually reside in the capital (Madrid), and shall exercise his jurisdiction upon the said houses, according to the faculties given him by the Constitutions and Statutes of the said Congregation.

Art. 3. The Rev. Fr. Ignacio Santasusana, appointed "ad interim" by the Most Rev. Apostolic Nuncio in the capital (Madrid) according to the faculties granted him by the Holy See, shall exercise the office of provincial Visitor until another may be duly appointed by the competent authority.

Art. 4. A Novitiate house shall at once be established in the capital (Madrid). This house, besides its special object, shall exercise also in the province of Madrid all the ministries and duties of its institute."

Thus, the double family of St. Vincent de Paul was restored in Spain in 1851. Officially recognized by the Government, the Daughters of Charity and the Vincentian Fathers could now be sent to remedy the serious problems found in the remote colony of the Philippines, as had been planned since 1847.

On July 23, 1851, four months after the ratification of the Spanish Concordat with the Holy See, the City Government of Manila (Excmo. Ayuntamiento) presented to the Governor General Antonio de Urbiztondo a request for the Daughters of Charity to take over the administration of the city hospitals and schools for girls. The Ayuntamiento asked for ten Sisters, and offered to defray their travel expenses and their maintenance in the country; they also gave an estimate of projected
expenses for the first five years of the Sister’s service, as well as possible contribution to defray them.\textsuperscript{24}

On July 30, Governor Urbiztondo informed Manila Archbishop Aranguren about the proposal of the City Government. The Archbishop, expressing his satisfaction that the Ayuntamiento coincided in all its suggestions with his own views and intentions, added that such were also the aims of his predecessor’s (Archbishop Jose Segui) solicitude. He himself had been pondering on the matter, so as to propose it to Her Majesty, the Queen, with the knowledge and consent of the Superior Government of the Islands. The Archbishop offered his own contribution for the coming of the Daughters of Charity.

The Archbishop however referred to a big obstacle that had to be hurdled first before the Daughters of Charity could be brought to the Islands, namely that derived from the unsavory question of the Brothers in charge of the Philippine hospitals. The poor service given to the sick in their hospitals was, according to the Archbishop, from lack of personnel, and thus “they were doomed to a quick extinction, due to quite obvious reasons that are difficult, if not impossible already, to remedy.”\textsuperscript{25} This pessimistic view of the Manila Archbishop on the sad situation of the Brothers of San Juan de Dios and their decline in religious observance and discipline was inferred from the results of various canonical visits made by the ecclesiastical authority to their house in Manila.\textsuperscript{26} The Brothers of San Juan de Dios serving in the Manila Hospital, according to Archbishop Aranguren, “were not properly religious, but simply good fellows who, in their own way, served at the hospitals without any grace of state, since they were not strictly speaking Brothers of San Juan de Dios, except by name.”\textsuperscript{27} In spite of such hard judgment, the good Archbishop, in his letter of 1851, made a very just eulogy to the illustrious Order of San Juan de Dios.

All this notwithstanding, those Brothers were in actual possession of the hospitals, which could not be taken away from them without due process of law; hence, it could be foreseen that in order to remove them, it might be necessary to obtain beforehand the papal suppression of their houses in the Philippines. This was the main obstacle to the plan of putting Daughters of Charity in their place. In fact, it took more time than expected to hand over the San Juan de Dios Hospital of Manila to the Daughters of Charity, even after their arrival in the city. The Sisters took over at once the Military Hospital of Manila in 1862 and soon afterwards the Municipal School of girls, and the College of Santa Isabel in Manila (1864), the Hospicio de San Jose (1865), and the College of Santa Rosa (1866). Only in 1868 was the Hospital of San Juan de Dios in Manila entrusted to the administration of the Daughters of Charity.
BIRTHPLACE OF VINCENT DE PAUL
The hamlet *Maison de Ranquine* at the village of *Pouy* (now called, *St-Vincent-de-Paul*) in the Landes, France. The house where the Saint was born was like this one built 20 years after his death.

FRONT VIEW OF THE "MAISON DE RANQUINE" where St. Vincent was born
FOLLEVILLE: THE CRADLE OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION
The castle of the Gondis was in this town. In its little church St. Vincent preached his first rural mission on January 25, 1617. Here also he started the first Confraternity of Charity of men on October 23, 1623.

PULPIT OF THE CHURCH AT FOLLEVILLE
According to local tradition, St. Vincent preached from this pulpit.
DRAWING OF VINCENT DE PAUL (1580 - 1660)
It was signed by Angélique Labory, dated 1654 and it is preserved at the Berceau de Saint Vincent de Paul, Pouy, France.
CO-FOUNDERS WITH ST. VINCENT DE PAUL OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION in a contract signed on April 17, 1621.

MADAME DE GONDI, FRANCES MAGARET DE SILLY (1580 - 1625)
St. Vincent called her, "our first co-founder".

PHILIP EMMANUEL DE GONDI (1581-1662)
After the death of his wife, Margaret de Silly, he joined the Oratory of Berulle and became a priest, on April 6, 1626.
MADEMOISELLE LE GRAS, ST. LOUISE DE MARILLAC (1591 - 1660)
Co-founder with St. Vincent de Paul of the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the sick poor on November 29, 1633, approved by the archbishop of Paris in 1655, and by Pope Clement IX in 1668. She was canonized by Pius XI in 1934, and proclaimed Patroness of all Christian Social Workers by Pope John XXIII on February 10, 1960.
SHRINE OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
He was beatified by Benedict XIII on August 21, 1729; canonized by Clement XII on June 16, 1737, and proclaimed Patron of all works and associations of charity throughout the Catholic world by Leo XIII on June 22, 1883 and in 1885. His bones encased in a representation of the body with face and hands modelled in wax, are preserved in the Chapel of the Vincentians' Mother-House, Rue de Sevres, Paris.