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Newsnotes

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Newsnotes

Vincentian Heritage Reader Survey

The recent questionnaire sent out by the editors of *Vincentian Heritage* to the readership resulted in an unexpectedly large response. Of approximately 900 questionnaires mailed, 530 were returned. Of these responses 257 or 48.49 percent were from the Vincentian Community, and 231 or 43.58 percent were from the Daughters of Charity. There were forty-two responses from other groups and individuals. The largest number of respondents were in the 56-75 age bracket (48.3 percent) and the second largest in the 36-55 bracket (33.9 percent). The lowest number of respondents was in the 35 and below category (5.8 percent).

The responses were overwhelmingly positive. In responding to the question about reading habits, 238 (45.8 percent) answered "always" and 246 (47.3 percent) answered "sometimes." Only thirty-five (6.7 percent) responded "never." Of the last, thirty-one gave lack of time as their reason. With regard to the preferred topics, not surprisingly articles on Saint Vincent and Saint Louise ranked at the top, with 234 (46.8 percent) of the former, and 175 (35.9 percent) for the latter. Four other topics -- American Vincentian history (28.6 percent), the notable Vincentian/Daughters series (23.8 percent), international Daughters of Charity history (20.1 percent), and international Vincentian history (16.1 percent) ranked lower. Reader interest also tends more toward inspirational than purely historical topics. To the question on general level of interest, 114 (22.8 percent) respondents ranked it very high, 178 (35.6 percent) high, 162 (32.4 percent) moderate, twenty-seven (5.4 percent) low, and eighteen (3.6 percent) very low.

The comments and suggestions, as may be expected, varied greatly. Among the suggestions given serious attention at the October meeting of the Vincentian Studies Institute were the inclusion of more art work based on the Vincentian heritage, a letters column, and news synopses. Consideration was also given to suggestions for individual articles. In

this regard the editors of *Vincentian Heritage* want to take this opportunity to solicit articles from our readership and further suggestions by artwork or iconography that can be used in the journal. Please send all articles and suggestions to the executive editor.

The Vincentian Studies Institute wishes to express its profound appreciation to all who answered the question. That so many took the time and trouble not only to answer but also to offer encouragement and comments is truly gratifying. All the remarks and suggestions have been and will continue to be given serious consideration. It is hoped that this questionnaire will aid the VSI and *Vincentian Heritage* in providing even more service to the Double Family.

SIEV

The International Secretariat for Vincentian Studies (SIEV) sponsored during the month of July 1990 a Vincentian month for the directors of the Daughters of Charity throughout the world. Nearly every province was represented in this first-ever meeting. Papers presented during the month dealt with topics of interest to the directors and to the Daughters of Charity. They ranged from the historical, such as notes on the life and vocation of Saint Louise de Marillac and the development of the rules of the Daughters of Charity, to the sociological and psychological. The papers will be published in a future issue of *Vincentiana*.

SIEV is continuing to promote Vincentian studies and has begun the work of publishing an official history of the Congregation of the Mission. This will be in several volumes and will be prepared simultaneously in several languages. Such a major work is expected to take several years.

In conjunction with the Vincentian month, SIEV assembled representatives from the various Vincentian journals published throughout the world. These included the *Annales* (Spain), *Cahiers Vincentiens* (Toulouse), *Bulletin des Lazaristes de France* (Paris), *Colloque* (Ireland), *Vincentian Heritage* (USA) MEGViS (Central Europe), *Vincentiansche cahiers* (Netherlands), CLAPVI (Central and South America), and *Vincentiana* (General Curia). Not included were specifically provincial newsletters. The Italian publication, *Annali della Missione*, could not be represented. The purpose was to gather information and to provide for networking among the various publications.

Publications

Journals

MEGViS, number 29 (1990), published by the Middle European Group for Vincentian Studies based in Cologne, Germany, contains the two remaining papers from the 1990 Vincentian meeting held in Untermarchtal. They are "The Pedagogy of Saint Louise de Marillac in View of Her Correspondence with the First Sisters," by Sister Alfonso Richartz, and a study of "The Political and Social Background in the Life and Works of Saint Vincent," presented by Bernard Krabbe. Sister Richartz's contribution reviews Louise's educational style, dedicated to the individual person, with religious content, her motivations, the following of providence, her holiness, the support she gave to community life, and her concern for the poor and for a simple lifestyle. Louise faced several difficult problems, such as the early death of many sisters and her own preparation for death. She tried to remain realistic in her treatment of others.

The editor closes with a request for information about the artist of the painting of "The Holy Trinity and Saint Vincent." This was painted between his beatification and canonization.

Issue 30 (fall 1990) continues Sarneel's analysis and updating of the biography of Saint Vincent by Pierre Coste. This number includes an index for issues 21-30.

Annali della Missione, published in Rome for Italian Vincentians, Daughters of Charity, and others devotes a double number (January-June 1990) to Luigi Nuovo, "Le missioni Vincenziane negli stati Saubaudi, al de qua dei monte dal 1655 al 1800." This study is devoted to a history of the Vincentian parish missions in the states of that part of Savoy, Piedmont (now a part of Italy), from the last years of Saint Vincent until such work ceased because of the French Revolution and its aftermath. In his five chapters, Nuovo describes carefully the structure and method of the mission as preached by the Vincentians, particularly the "little method" of preaching and the catechism. The largest section of the study describes the actual experience of the missions, such as the number of participants, confessions, marriages, betrothals, wakes, and condemnation of carnival and dances. The author also focuses on specific classes of individuals, such as witches, the demons, Waldensians, and Jews. This kind of thorough research is what is needed to build up gradually a clearer picture of the impact made by the Congregation of the Mission in carrying out in history its first and principal objective, the parish missions.

Issue 3 for 1990 contains two studies on Saint Vincent. The first is taken from a doctoral dissertation by Father Jozef Parafiniuk, C.M., on the contemporary impact of Saint Vincent de Paul's teaching on the priesthood. Part III of the dissertation contains three chapters. The first discusses new elements in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and their points of contact with Saint Vincent. In the second chapter the author writes of the convergence of the teaching of Saint Vincent and the Council on the priesthood. Chapter three presents new elements in Saint Vincent's teaching on the priesthood, such as practical methods of preaching, love of God and neighbor, meditation, and the virtues in a priest. The selection presented does not contain a bibliography apart from the items listed in the extensive footnotes, nor does it give the university where the dissertation was presented.

The second article, by Luigi Mezzadri, C.M., deals with the following of Christ in the thought of Saint Vincent. He concludes his study by showing that Vincent had wished to be like Christ "for the mission," that is, a man-for-others. Facing the reality of poverty, Vincent tried to build up structures engaging the Church in the struggle against misery, namely, the Confraternities of Charity, with a lay, parochial, and volunteer basis. Out of those developed the Daughters of Charity. Both groups responded to every call, especially in times of war and revolution. In this Vincent was a teacher of the modern Church.

Anales, the publication of the Vincentians and Daughters in Spain, that also has a world wide Spanish readership concludes the long series of necrologies in 98:8 (November 1990) by publishing the entire and corrected necrology of the Spanish members of the Congregation of the Mission from whatever province. It is intended to be used in connection with community prayer for the departed, but it also contains printed biographical references as these are available.

Issue 98:7 (October 1990) announces the publication in Spanish of the first volume of the biography of Saint Vincent by Pierre Coste. Since its original publication in French in 1932, it has grown in stature as the major modern biography. Versions have existed in other languages, including English, but never in Spanish. Alfonso Ortiz, the translator of the correspondence of Saint Vincent, has completed the first volume, published by CEME in Salamanca. This edition does not add any modern notes or corrections to Coste's original work.

CLAPVI, the Latin American publication, entrusted the Central American province with the work of completing issue 68 (July-September 1990). It contains valuable notices on the Vincentian charism in the

modern world by Adrian Bastiaensen and historical studies on Panama and the Vincentian presence in Central America.

The Catholic Historical Review 76, no. 4 (October 1990) contains an article by Professor Andrew P. Yox, of the University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, entitled "The Parochial Context of Trusteeship: Buffalo's St. Louis Church, 1828-1855." The article details the struggle between the various bishops of Buffalo, especially John Timon, C.M., and the Alsatians who founded and maintained Saint Louis Church. The author adds still more information to this aspect of Timon's career, one that has drawn an increasing amount of attention.

Videos

Vincent in Heaven, a new play by Brother Augustine Towey, C.M., is now available on videocassette. Copies may be ordered from the Niagara University Theatre, Niagara University P.O., NY, 14109. The total cost of the tape, shipping, and handling is \$30.00 and checks should be made payable to the Niagara University Theatre.

The Daughters of Charity in India

DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, in preparation for "world citizens in the global village" recently sent fifteen faculty members to Asia for a month. This included travel in Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and India. It provided valuable insights into the work of the Vincentian Community and the Daughters of Charity in that part of the world.

When the first four Spanish Daughters of Charity arrived in India on 7 February 1940, they worked with Vincentian missionaries who had been there since 1922. Today the community has grown to 193 Daughters of Charity employed in thirty works.

In Taiwan a Daughter of Charity who had traveled in India told the story of recent formation for the young community, now fifty years old. The women of India are assisted in their education and then placed in villages to work with the poor before they are asked about their commitment to the Daughters of Charity. In this way education helps them to become economically independent. It is part of the culture that a woman's word is a matter of honor. Commitment is an important choice for those entering formation in the Daughters of Charity. As a result of serving the poor in the villages, the choice of the woman is made after education and experience.

The Missionary Sisters of Charity in Calcutta work primarily in the cities of India. The Daughters of Charity work in the southern prov-

inces, principally in the villages. Many of these are preindustrial and lack electricity, especially in the outlying rural areas. The primary work dealt with the need for a creche to care for abandoned babies because of the deaths of mothers in childbirth. Gopalpur represents this work in the province. Many Daughters of Charity provide medical services in the provinces, especially in Orissa. The Daughters take the place of doctors and often are called the "Doctor-Amma" (Sister Doctor). They have organized mobile clinics to reach remote villages and small hospital with thirty or forty beds. One hospital specializes in tuberculosis patients. Ten health centers serve Hansenites, with ministry to the families and children of the "colonies." The Daughters have two high schools and nine primary schools, providing education for 2,859 students.

To witness the massive homelessness in India, with thousands sleeping in open areas of the city and the villages, including roadsides, railway stations, and streets, is to glimpse the challenge faced by the Daughters of Charity. Poverty, hunger, and sickness have turned them to serving the homeless and aged, who are the most abandoned in India. Evangelization and pastoral care, particularly for the elderly, are their chief works.

Recently, a Daughter of Charity who had traveled to the province said that two years ago wealthier women of a higher caste asked to join the Daughters. Mingling them with persons of a lower caste required good planning for the formation program. Those lower caste women who were talented in literature, music, and art were chosen for the seminary (novitiate) each year. The plan worked well, and women from different cultural backgrounds were formed to serve the various works.

Though the DePaul University tour was confined to the north of India, the poverty of the country, as was shown by the fact that in Bombay, the tour's point of entrance, 50 percent of the population of five million is homeless, demonstrated that the poor of India need the growth of the Vincentian Community that is serving them so well.

(Frances Ryan, D.C.)