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Vincentian Heritage Readership Survey

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Vincentian Heritage Readership Survey

In the fall of 1996 the Vincentian Studies Institute undertook its second survey of the readership of the *Vincentian Heritage*. The first such survey was conducted six years before and proved helpful in surfacing the needs and preferences of our readers. Like the first, this second survey was intended to elicit responses that would help the V.S.I. find ways in which it can better be of service to the Double Family of Saint Vincent de Paul. For that purpose the survey had five distinct sections: (1) the status of the respondent; (2) the frequency with which the respondent reads the *Vincentian Heritage*; (3) the respondent's level of interest in reading about specific topics; (4) the general level of interest in reading the *Vincentian Heritage*; (5) and other comments the respondent might wish to make. Nine hundred and twenty-five surveys were mailed, and 300 answers were received. In the world of surveys this is considered a high level of responses.

The questions and the number of answers are given below. In general they indicate a high level of reader interest. However, the informal comments also show that because of the press of apostolates and other business many readers do not have the time they need in order to read the *Heritage* thoroughly. This was also brought out in the first survey. The Vincentian Studies Institute wishes to express its thanks to all those who took time to complete the survey and to stress its appreciation for the high level of reader interest and encouragement.

Readership Survey

(1) Respondents:

Vincentians:	150
Daughters of Charity:	115
Ladies of Charity:	2
Saint Vincent de Paul Society:	3
Other:	30

(1b) Respondents by age

35 and under:	13
36-55:	71
56-75:	123
76 and over:	51

(2) Ordinarily I read *Vincentian Heritage* (total responses 276):

Always:	150 (54.3 percent)
Sometimes:	115 (41.7 percent)
Never:	11 (4 percent)

If "always," I usually read this amount of each issue:

25 percent:	24
50 percent:	52
75 percent:	75
100 percent:	49

If "never," I usually do not read *Vincentian Heritage* because of:

Lack of time:	9
Unavailability of issues:	3
Articles do not appeal to me:	2
Other (please specify):	2
"Failure to put 'first things first'"	
Other activities	

Lack of planning to use the time I have better

Lack of good sight

(3) *The following describes my level of interest in reading articles about:*

	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Vincent de Paul	5	3	29	92	161
Louise de Marillac	9	18	53	83	114
American CM History	4	27	57	80	99
American DC History	23	31	60	79	87
International CM History	4	32	91	71	56
International DC History	24	40	63	74	51
International DC/CMs	7	15	66	90	71
Vincentian Family	10	19	63	111	76
Elizabeth Seton	17	23	72	83	86
Inspiring Topics	13	220	55	83	73
Praxis	3	22	70	59	48

Two topics were added by respondents: the poor; Frederick Ozanam.

Generally, my level of interest in the Vincentian Heritage is:

Very low:	4
Low:	19
Moderate:	70
High:	132
Very high:	69

Among specific suggestions by readers were the following:

"Include articles from other English speaking countries, Ireland, Australia, Nigeria, etc."

"How about an occasional article in Spanish?"

"Can you do anything on the *missions ad gentes* or home missions?"

"I encourage continued contributions from a variety of CMs, DCs, and other Vincentian group members to reflect articles and issues from those who have grass roots Vincentian experiences. I appreciate this type of article more than the very scholarly ones."

"(1) Encourage a broader base of CM/DC writers; give guidelines regularly for submission of articles; (2) dedicate an issue to Perboyre; (3) continue use of pictures and quotes of Vincentian Heritage."

"I like short, less forward articles, something I can read in fifteen minutes. Long 'scholarly' presentation can be multiple choice: (1) boring; (2) intimidating; (3) take too much time."

"Articles on current liturgical changes or spirituality."

"More history a la: CMs/DCs in history; CMs/DCs in America; CMs/DCs in Ireland; Double Family martyrs; what if Saint Vincent lived in our times?"

"What might be interesting and inspiring is the history of successful works among ethnic groups and/or the poor in various houses or cities around the world. Also, collaborative works with the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in the U.S."

"I think many CMs would enjoy reading about priests and brothers (American) that were outstanding in their careers, i.e., some of the great Vincentians who started the Miraculous Medal Novena, DePaul, Niagara, St. John's."

"Perhaps China would be an interesting topic; there is tremendous history there."

"More on the Saint Vincent de Paul Society and Blessed [sic] Frederick Ozanam."

"Please give us more on Ozanam, including a good bibliography on him and his writings. May we also have some articles on Sister Rosalie Rendu? Do you think DePaul University might give us some information on the art work and cards for F. Ozanam?"

"Perhaps you could add Blessed [sic] Frederick Ozanam to the Vincentian Family."

"A greater sense of *future* orientation/theology, especially as to where the spirit of Louise and Vincent *leads*. Our place in relationship to the Church/the world."

“Information on Venerable Felix de Andreis, C.M.”

“Like to see more on charism as should discern in *today’s* world—new twists, new challenges in the realities of our world today.”

“Cover whole Vincentian family, including lay organizations.”

Observations

Clearly our respondents are interested in the life and work of Frederick Ozanam and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. With regard to his friend and collaborator, Sister Rosalie Rendu, D.C., the Vincentian Studies Institute plans to publish a biography of her written by Sister Louise Sullivan, D.C. Research and preparation for that biography is currently under way. The V.S.I. is also planning to publish the letters of Felix de Andreis, translated and annotated by John E. Rybolt, C.M.

The Vincentian Studies Institute would like to repeat its call for articles from all those interested in topics relative to the heritages of Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, Elizabeth Ann Seton, and Frederick Ozanam. Readers are also invited to submit articles of a more personal and reflective nature that deal with the experience and implementation of the Vincentian charism in the modern world.