

5-1997

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Recommended Citation

de Tarrazi, Amin A. (1997) "Frédéric Ozanam: A Lay Saint for Our Times," *Vincentiana*: Vol. 41: No. 3, Article 3.

Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/vincentiana/vol41/iss3/3>

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FRÉDÉRIC OZANAM
A lay saint for our times

by Amin A. de Tarrazi
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of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

The life, the work, the witness and the message of Frédéric Ozanam are so rich and diverse that it is impossible to summarise them in a few pages.

One can, however, attempt to reveal the most significant aspects of them in order to discover, to love and perhaps become inspired by them oneself, like so many generations of "Vincentians" who, from 1833 to the present time, have found a mentor, as he himself had in St. Vincent de Paul, *"a life which must continue, a heart which must restore his heart, an intelligence that must seek enlightenment, a model on earth and a protector in heaven."*

Antoine Frédéric Ozanam was born 23 April 1813 in Milan, where his parents, originally from near Lyon, were living temporarily for professional reasons during the Napoleonic wars.

His family, which was deeply Christian, gave him a love of God and of the poor from a very young age and taught him to search for and find Christ in those who carry the heaviest burden of human suffering and social injustice.

A Happy Childhood Shaped by faith

Young Frédéric had a happy childhood. As a pupil at the Collège Royal in Lyon he distinguished himself with a lively and penetrating intelligence, a period marked by the sort of uncertainty that sometimes leads one into contact with philosophy. But his teacher, Father Noirod, a holy priest, of whom Sarcey was able to say *"that great moulder of souls"*, soon helped him to leave behind the labyrinth of contradictory opinions and confirm him in fidelity to the Church.

Ozanam also confided, *"I knew the doubts of the present century, but all my life convinced me that there is no rest for the spirit and the heart except in the faith of the Church and under its authority."*

Out of this adolescent crisis there remained intact a great openness of heart which he made a way of life and which he expressed in a burning desire to help troubled souls

to draw on the sources of the faith. This objective, to which he remained faithful all his life, was not just pressed on him by his own personal experience; events would soon emphasise its great necessity.

On leaving the Collège Royal at the end of his secondary studies, and still attentive to his parents' wishes, he went to Paris to study Law. Ozanam is struck by a society that was in the throes of great upheaval. The revolution of July 1830 had brought dark days upon the ancient Bourbon Line that had hoped to strengthen the throne with the support of the Church.

The Shock of the Big City

Scepticism predominated in the teaching of the university. Frédéric Ozanam, isolated and discouraged, wrote to his friend Falconnet on 18 December 1831, "*Paris disgusts me because there is no life, no faith, no love; it is like a huge corpse to which I, young and alive, am chained, whose coldness chills me and whose putrefaction is killing me.*"

He soon rallied; in André-Marie Ampère, the great scientist whom he was pleased to call "*the Good Monsieur Ampère*" or "*Papa Ampère*", he found a friend who showed him a fatherly care, took him from the loneliness of his small boarding house and lodged him in the room of his own son Jean-Jacques and in casual conversation each evening showed him the horizons of science, concluding with the assertion, "*Ozanam, how great God is! How great God is!*"

In this milieu Ozanam regained his confidence; he overcame the aversion which the city aroused in him; he began to hope again in a better future; he was happy to draw up the plans of the "City of God" which would rise on the ruins of the earthly Babylon and was able to write joyfully to his friend and confidant of his gloom and apprehension: "*Learning and Catholicism, these are my sole consolations!*" From then on his sense of direction was marked by an unshakeable certainty: Christianity was the only remedy for the healing of the ills of contemporary society; it was necessary to demonstrate the scientific and historical truth. It was essential to reconcile religion and learning.

Before his departure for Paris, this young man who was not yet eighteen years old, had already begun a huge work which he intended to call, "*A Demonstration of the Truth of the Catholic Religion by the Antiquity of Historical, Religious and Moral Beliefs*". In time the title was modified, but the student, and later the professor, remained faithful to the project of the schoolboy.

A Thirst for Historical and Religious Culture

Ozanam wanted to share this passion for history, the source of belief, with his friends. Not content to work fifteen hours a day learning foreign languages and initiating himself in the secrets of religions other than Catholicism, he gathered companions from among students at the Sorbonne. With them he threw himself into endless work, responding to the Professors of the faculty who questioned their convictions, daring to refute their arguments before the whole university and bringing two of them, of whom one was Jouffroy, to justify himself or withdraw.

A witness to the truth, he felt intensely the need of his young contemporaries to nourish and deepen their faith. Also, he assumed the leadership of the delegation, which by its stubborn determination was finally going to decide Mgr Hyacinthe Louis de Quelen, Archbishop of Paris to reform preaching. After several attempts which only whetted the student appetite, the archbishop entrusted the pulpit of Notre-Dame to the Abbé Henri Lacordaire. The future Dominican gave them, *"preaching which, new in its form and grounding itself in real and disputed issues, took on and challenged the adversaries of Christianity in order to respond to the objections taught daily in public lectures and reproduced in popular form in books and newspapers."* The celebrated "Notre-Dame Conferences", of which the Lenten Lectures are now a continuation, satisfied the spiritual thirst of a number of young contemporaries.

Encouraged by the acquired results Ozanam increased his efforts, with a view to extending this intellectual and religious movement. This would not be without difficulties. Following the revolution of 1830, French Catholics were very divided. Many saw no security except in the restoration of the fallen regime. Others, including Ozanam, felt that, on the contrary, it was necessary to move beyond the regime issue and focus their efforts on the essentials: the promotion of spiritual and human values based on love and social justice.

Revolted by Miseries . . .

Right from his youth, Ozanam, who was precociously gifted with intuition and sensitivity, found himself moved by the hardships and iniquities affecting those at the lowest social level. Aged just 16, or 19 years before the decree of the Provisional Government abolishing slavery in French colonies and possessions promulgated on 27 April 1848 at the proposal of the Martinique deputy Victor Schoelcher, Ozanam vigorously denounced the inhumanity in the treatment of the Blacks.

"There is no denying the sad and deplorable condition of these unfortunate victims of European barbarism; it will unquestionably continue to be a cause for indignation and tears for the true philosopher and the true Christian, this horrible cruelty of these men who call themselves civilised and who in the name of a holy religion appear on

foreign soil like thieving brigands who snatch sons from their mothers and fathers from their children.

Let us weep for the shame of our persecuting brothers! Let us weep for the evils suffered by our oppressed brothers! But you who are lamenting with me turn your eyes away for a moment from those calamities to find out their cause. Listen and listen well to what is in a father's curse, the vengeance of almighty God from whom all fatherhood proceeds and who punishes the audacity of a guilty son to the very last generation.

There are sacred pages which reveal to us the primitive source of all these horrors. The spirit of light dictated them to the sacred historian for the instruction of future races."

. . . and Injustices

Twelve years before the famous manifesto of Karl Marx in 1848, he was deploring the increasing gap at the heart of society between the strong and the weak. This gave him a prophetic premonition of the terrible and unavoidable confrontations between rich and poor.

"The question which divides men in our time is no longer a question of political systems. It is a social question: that is of knowing which will prevail: the spirit of selfishness or the spirit of sacrifice? Whether society is to be simply a great opportunity of exploitation for the benefit of the strongest or a dedication of everyone for the benefit of all and especially for the protection of the weak...."

These ideas were those professed, notably by, the *Tribune Catholique*, a clergy gazette founded in January 1832 by Emmanuel Bailly. Its "mission statement" contained this significant phrase: *"You will not see us grow passionate about political systems, which whatever they may be are, after all, only temporary and variable"*. Connected with the Catholic Tribune was a sort of literary circle, la Société des Bonnes Etudes, whose aim was to promote among Catholics the taste for philosophical, historical and religious research.

This organisation was Ozanam's dream, a *"coming together of friends for the building up of knowledge"*, in the light of Christian thought. Along with his friends he immersed himself in it and expressed his passion for the history of religions. Ozanam spoke of Indian mythology and Lally of Islam, Lamarche of medieval architecture and Le Taillandier of religious orders. The "Société" thus became the *History Conference*, open to all and where discussion was always totally free. Young, non-believing philosophers were able to come and ask about Catholicism, its teachings and practices. By way of reply they were given an account of its history or an explanation

of the scientific or social significance of the Gospel. Frequently the demonstration was so convincing that challengers admitted defeat.

Faith without Works is a Dead Faith

However, this was not always the case. Sometimes Ozanam's companions, impetuous but unskilled, came off second best in the otherwise very courteous discussions for which they were ill-equipped. One challenge above all got to them. The social work of the Church throughout the centuries was recognised as meriting esteem and respect, but at the present day was it notable for any charitable activity or institutions? Replying to this piercing question left them very embarrassed.

It seemed, therefore, to them that in order to regenerate the faith, argument would not suffice. There was an urgent need, in the words of Le Taillandier, to translate this faith into action, to evangelise like the Apostles, not merely by words, but even more through witness and through authentic charity. So much so that one winter's day, after a friendly meeting in the course of which Le Taillandier showed once more the insufficiency of merely intellectual action, Ozanam, who had remained silent until then, exclaimed enthusiastically: "*A blessing from the poor is a blessing from God.... let us go to the poor*". After which, accompanied by Le Taillandier, he carried off to a neglected man in his area whatever wood he possessed to provide warmth.

Birth of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society

There was now the question of developing this new concept of apostolate. Having heard the opinion of Bailly, who had always been a good advisor, Ozanam, on 23 April 1833, his twentieth birthday, brought together at the offices of the *Tribune Catholique* those of his companions who felt the same desire to serve people in deep need. Although no minutes have been preserved of the meeting, it is possible, thanks to some discreet allusions by those who took part, to reconstruct accurately what happened.

Young Frédéric and his friends agreed with moving humility that the move they had made had not yet borne the fruit they had been hoping for. And having expressed their common conviction that Catholicism should show itself in works which would bear witness to the truth far more than reasoning, they considered the society which surrounded them and sadly noted that misery and injustice were far from having disappeared from the world.

Quite the opposite, the new economic conditions multiplied the sufferings of all classes. Faced with so many anguishing situations, with so much undeserved distress, of so many families stricken by hunger, cold and sickness, these young people made a resolution to answer the call of Christ by dedicating themselves to the poor.

They asked Sister Rosalie, a Daughter of Charity of the Mouffetard quarter, for the addresses of some families in distress to whom they would bring some bread and especially a lot of friendship. Their resources came solely from their student resources. Such was the origin of the first Conference of Saint Vincent de Paul. The History Conference became the Conference of Charity.

In parallel to this, Ozanam gained cultural and professional achievements. As a Doctor in Law in 1836 he began, without any great enthusiasm, a short career as an advocate, and then occupied the chair of Commercial Law in Lyon. As Doctor of Literature in 1839, he gained first place in the new "Agrégation" examination of the faculties of literature instituted by Victor Cousin in 1840. Supplying for Professor Claude Fauriel in 1841, Ozanam became titular of his chair of literature in the Sorbonne in 1844.

In the meantime he married Amélie Soulacroix on 23 June 1841 in the church of Saint-Nizier in Lyon. 1845 brought great joy to his home through the birth of his daughter Marie whom he was to cherish deeply.

From then on his time was shared between his family, teaching, historical research, his literary work and his various civic, social and religious engagements.

Ozanam's passion was learning. Homage has deservedly been paid to the very real literary and scientific value of his books and it was gratifying to find in his "Thesis on Dante" and in his "Franciscan Poets" and his "Germanic Studies" that restrained emotion, that apostolic flame which make for the attraction of his style. Recognition must also be given to the modern character of his method and stretching beyond his attachment to tradition, his intuition regarding the evolution of historical criticism.

Teaching lived out as if it were a Priesthood

In his erudition he was also a remarkable teacher, endowed with a conscience acutely sensitive to professional duties as well as the obligations and the sacrifices which it imposes.

What first strikes one about Ozanam the teacher is perhaps his incomparable conscience. This is presented to us in a most beautiful page from Jacques Ampère who makes a very vivid sketch of the Sorbonne professor. One wonders how this fragile, frail, delicate father, sensitive spouse, scrupulous writer and professor, who had care of some of his in-laws and who gave himself body and soul to a Society which he had founded with his friends, was able to face so many weighty responsibilities.

Ampère affirms that those who did not attend Ozanam's courses could not realise how personal was his talent. He was not, as often among the professors of that time, a man who bluffed his way through courses. Higher studies before 1867, before the creation of the School of Higher Studies, was a teaching intended especially for the general public. The professors were brilliant, they were preparing for baccalauréats or licences, but they sometimes neglected erudite research. But, speaking about Ozanam, Ampère noted: *"It is rare to find united to the same degree the twofold merits in the professor of matter and form, knowledge and eloquence"*. Frédéric prepared his courses like a Benedictine and spoke them like an orator.

. . . and Total Self-Giving

A small event illustrates this tribute. In 1852 the day after the coup d'état a sort of riot broke out at the Sorbonne. Finding the doors closed the students were in uproar (that sometimes happens at that venerable institution) shouting: *"The professors have stopped giving their courses and yet they are paid by the State."* These shouts reached the ears of Ozanam who was already seriously ill. He got up in spite of the appeals of his friends, the tears of his wife and the orders of his doctor who ordered him to stay in his room. *"I wish to honour my profession"*, he repeated. He ran to the Sorbonne and went to his rostrum. Seeing him appear paler, weaker and more worn-looking than usual, with his face showing all too real signs of illness and indeed looking almost like a ghost, the students, seized with pity and remorse, welcomed him with loud applause. This applause was repeated several times during the lesson and changed into a veritable ovation when the young professor, making a direct reply to the hurtful shouts which were upsetting him, said in an exhausted voice : *"Gentlemen, our century is reproached as a century of selfishness and it is said that this general epidemic has stricken the professors. However, here it is that we are going to overcome our disability. It is here that we are going to use up our strength. I make no complaint. Our life, my life belongs to you. We owe its last breath to you, and you shall have it. As for myself, gentlemen, if I die it shall be at your service."*

The testimony of Hersart de Villemarqué confirms that of Ampère: *"God alone knows the immense good that he did during his lessons which caused him so much labour and so much fatigue. This large youthful audience received such inspiration from him! Determination to work, resoluteness, useful tasks, fine vocations! When he was leaving, everyone rushed to have a word from him, to hear more of him. All along the pathways of the Luxembourg it was like a procession as he made his way home. He was worn out, but often he experienced joys far beyond the most enthusiastic applause"*.

The Fight for Truth...

Another major characteristic of Frédéric Ozanam's behaviour in his teaching and in a more general manner in all his dealings in intellectual circles was his respect for others: tolerance.

His natural kindness, combined with his innate integrity allowed him to welcome the opinion of others with respect and goodwill, even if it was contrary to his own; *"Let us learn to defend our convictions without hating our adversaries, to love those who think differently to ourselves.... Let us complain less about the times and more about ourselves."*

Without Complacency for the Intolerant

If he was severe, it was just with the intolerant, who thought they were exclusive holders of the truth. *"...those wearing the high hats of orthodoxy, the council fathers in tails and long trousers, Doctors who pontificate having read the paper in a café... people for whom newcomers are always unwelcome... who make their political opinion a thirteenth article of the creed, who treat works of charity as their personal property and, putting themselves modestly in the place of our Lord say: whoever is not with us is against us"*.

But Respectful of the Opinions of Others

But the drive which he put into the defence of his convictions was always in tune with openness towards those who do not share them.

He never said a word which might have wounded those of his listeners who did not share his ideas. And if he was successful in his clear resolve to propose the truth and only the truth, at least he was careful to do this without being aggressive. He preferred persuasion to any other method which might have failed scrupulously to respect the opinion and the liberty of others.

This constant in his behaviour allowed him to affirm at the end of a too brief existence: *"If anything consoles me on leaving this earth before finishing what I wanted to do, it is that I have never worked for the praise of men but in the service of truth"*.

Without Ever Relinquishing His Humility

With the deep humility which characterised him he himself defined what life had meant for him in a letter of 14 July 1850 to his friend Dufieux: *"If God has granted me a certain enthusiasm for work, I have never seen this grace as a glittering gift of genius. Undoubtedly, in the lower rank which is my place, I wished to dedicate my*

life to the service of the faith, but all the while considering myself as the useless servant, the worker of the last hour whom the master of the vineyard accepts only through charity. It seemed to me that my days were well filled if, in spite of my scant merit, I was able to keep gathered around my rostrum many young people, and to build up for my listeners the principles of Christian learning, and make them respect all that they despised: the Church, the papacy, monks. I should have liked to gather these same thoughts into books more durable than my lessons, and all my wishes would have been more than satisfied if a few errant souls found in these teachings a reason to abjure their prejudices, to clear up their doubts and to return with God's help to Catholic truth. That is what I aimed to do for the last ten years without seeking a more ambitious destiny, but also without my having the misfortune to abandon the combat."

Frédéric Ozanam's influence continued to shine out beyond the limits of the University. The foundation of the St. Vincent de Paul Conferences led him to make contact with the working class and to see the real sufferings of these workers resulting from the industrial transformations which had taken place during the first half of the nineteenth century. At the risk of being accomplices could Christians and the Church remain indifferent to the agonising fate of the victims of the inhuman situations which they were witnessing?

He studied the problem in the minute and conscientious manner which he brought to all his work. His correspondence enables us to track his successive states of mind from 5 November 1836 when he shared with Llama his reflections on "*the social question*" right up to the moment when in a letter of 22 February 1848 to his friend Foisset he completed his thinking thus: "*I ask... that we should take responsibility for the people who have too many needs and not enough rights, who are claiming a fuller part in public affairs and guarantees in favour of work and against misery*".

A Brief Incursion into Politics

New times called for a new programme. Ozanam, with the full approval of the Archbishop of Paris, Mgr Denys Affre - who was to die on the barricades during the revolution of 1848 - busied himself preparing this programme and getting ready to apply it. It is not possible here to go into detail about his remarkably prescient intuitions. Suffice it to say that, among the social Catholics of the nineteenth century he was one of the first to come up with the idea of the "salaire naturel" (forerunner of the basic minimum wage), to demand measures against unemployment and accidents, and to ask that retirement be guaranteed to workers. His call to the voters of the Department of the Rhône on 15 April 1848 echoed these audacious and generous ideas of which a good number found their way into Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, in 1891.

A reflective man, Ozanam was also a man of action.

He wanted to see democracy established in justice and charity. From this perspective he counted on the Society of St. Vincent de Paul whose existence demonstrated a real opportunity.

From an early stage he knew how much he would be indebted to this movement that was so dear to his heart. He wrote to his fiancée, Amélie Soulacroix on 1 May 1841; *"You will know one day how much I owe to this Society which was the support and inspiration of the most difficult years of my youth"*.

More than ever he was convinced that the meeting between those who have and those who have not is the best guarantee of mutual understanding. This is why the rule of the Vincentians makes personal contact with those who suffer and direct service of the marginalised their basic work, the final objective remaining the building up of everyone, spiritually, morally and humanly.

A Hymn to Love

The back-breaking work which he took upon himself and the total dedication that he gave to it quickly took its toll on his delicate health. At the end of 1852, he was forced to seek rest in Italy. The treatment did not have the desired effect and his strength continued to decline. Depressed and resigned, he felt drawn towards eternity. The thought of loved ones whom he was about to leave cast a shadow over his final weeks; it did not prevent him, however, on his fortieth birthday, 23 April 1853 in Pisa, four and a half months before his death, from composing the *"fiat"* by which abandoning himself to the will of God, he offered him his life:

"This is the beginning of the canticle of Hezekiah: I do not know if God will permit that I might finish it. I know that today I have completed my fortieth year, I am more than half way through life. I know that I have a young wife whom I love very much, a beautiful child, excellent brothers, a second mother, many friends, an honourable career, efforts directed precisely to the point where they should be able to serve as the foundation of a long dreamt of work. I am, however, suffering with a serious illness, stubborn and all the more serious in that it probably hides a total exhaustion. Must I then leave all these blessings which you yourself, my God, have given me? Will you not, Lord, be satisfied with a portion of the sacrifice? Must I sacrifice my disordered affections to this? Will you not accept the sacrifice of my own literary self-esteem, of my academic ambition, of my very study where pride perhaps featured more than zeal for the truth? If I sold half of my books in order to give the money for them to the poor and satisfying myself with looking to the responsibilities of my position, I would

consecrate the rest of my life to visiting the poor and teaching apprentices and soldiers. Lord, would you be satisfied and allow me the pleasure of growing old in the company of my wife and seeing through my child's education? Perhaps, my God, you do not want this? You do not accept these self-serving offerings; you reject my holocausts and sacrifices. It is me you want. It is written at the beginning of the book that I must do your will and I have said, I am coming, Lord. I am coming if you are calling me and I do not have the right to complain. You have given me forty years of life.... If I go back over my life bitterly with you, it is because of the sins with which I am tainted; but when I consider the graces with which you have enriched them, I recall my years before you, Lord, with gratitude. When you would tie me to a bed for the days of life that remain to me, they would not be enough to thank you for the days I have lived. If these are the last pages that I write let them be a hymn to your goodness!"

Abandonment to the Lord

Disembarking at Marseilles, on the way back, his condition deteriorated and his death seemed imminent. Ozanam regarded it with the greatest serenity and, like the priest who ministered to him welcomed it having faith in God, he replied simply: "*Why was I afraid? I love him so much.*" A few moments afterwards he died peacefully, without the least disturbance, murmuring: "*My God, my God, have mercy on me*".

On 8 September 1853, the feast of the Birthday of the Virgin, to whom he expressed such great devotion, was the end of a life that was exceptionally full, dedicated totally to the service of Christ and humanity.

He is buried in the crypt of the church of St. Joseph des Carmes at the Institut Catholique in Paris among the student youth to whom he gave the best of himself.

A Radiating Holiness

The cause for the beatification of Frédéric Ozanam, the principal founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, was introduced on 15 March 1925 in the diocese of Paris and on 12 January 1954 in Rome.

Pope John Paul II proclaimed him "Venerable" on 6 July 1993 by decreeing his virtues heroic.

Three years later, on 25 June 1996, he signed the decree recognising the miracle of 2 February 1926 that occurred through the intercession of Ozanam on behalf of an eighteen month old baby who was suffering from violent diphtheria. Fernando Luiz Benedetto Ottoni, who was healed, is still alive.

The Holy Father will carry out the beatification on 22 August 1997 at Notre Dame in

Paris, during his visit for the World Day of Youth.

Frédéric Ozanam, already venerated throughout the world, will thus be proposed as an example to lay people, particularly young people today, seeking social, moral and spiritual guidelines.

Did John Paul II not say in his message to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in 1983, the year of the 150th anniversary of its foundation, that it was necessary "*to thank God for the gift that he made to the Church in the person of Ozanam. We are still astonished by everything that he was able to undertake during the course of his life, that was too quickly consumed, for the Church, for society, for the poor, this student, this professor, this family man of burning faith and genius in the service of charity. His name remains associated with that of St. Vincent de Paul who two centuries earlier had founded the Ladies of Charity, without the same being established for men. How could we not wish that the Church would place Ozanam among its Blessed and its Saints?*"

This wish, shared unanimously, has been heard by the Lord who sealed the destiny of this marvellous Christian with the seal of the Beatitudes, a lay saint for our time.

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The Society of St Vincent de Paul

Worldwide since 1833

Continuing Growth...

1833	1 Conference	7 Members
1883	4,000 Conferences	76,500 Members

1913 8,000 Conferences 134,000 Members
1933 13,200 Conferences 180,000 Members
1983 38,500 Conferences 750,000 Members
1995 46,650 Conferences 875,000 Members

Today there is a total of 47,200 Conferences and 880,000 Members.

880,000 "Vincentians"...

Men and Women of all ages
Formed into 47,200 teams
Called "*Conferences*"
Working on all Five Continents

Hundreds of Thousands of Volunteers...

In all parts of the World
Wherever misery prevails
Everyday meeting people in distress
Victims of Poverty
of Injustice and Exclusion
of Racism and Violence

Formed into Teams...

They faithfully and with goodwill ensure
a free and permanent service
to those who thirst
for friendship and respect

Over 5,000 Pairings...

expressing in a spirit of sharing
solidarity between teams
from neglected and deprived areas

Thousands of Specialised Works...

- X Social Services:* Reception, Direction, Legal Advice.
- X Infants:* Crèches, *homes* (sic), Holidays, God-Parenting.
- X Youth:* Shelters, Clubs, Cultural Activity, Sport.
- * Schooling:* Schools, School and University Bursaries, Sponsorship of Pupils and Students.
- X Professional Training:* Mechanical Training, Electrical Training, Electronics, Boilermaking, Joinery, Building, Farming, Secretarial Training, Fashion, Catering.
- * APs (Old Age Pensioners):* Retirement Homes, Holiday Centres, Day Centres, Leisure.
- X Women:* Moral Support, Institutions for women in distress, deserted wives, single mothers.
- X Seamen:* Various works and services, Shelters, Clubs.
- X Travelling People:* Social, educational and health assistance.
- X Migrants:* Reception, Direction and Various Services.
- X Refugees & Stateless People:* Reception, Direction, Protection of their cultural and folk heritage.
- X Prisoners:* Prison visiting, Post-Release assistance, Rehabilitation of long term detainees.
- X Youth at Risk:* Shelters, Social rehabilitation.
- X Trades:* Crafts, Fashion, Weaving, Printing, Typing, Manufacture of construction materials.
- X Rural Activities:* Cultivation, Breeding, Fish Farming, Bee-keeping, Wells, Water-Conveyance.
- X Housing:* Programmes to assist low income families, Public Housing associations, Refurbishments.
- X Health:* Visiting hospitals, institutions for the physically and mentally handicapped, the blind. Support for the sick (due to cancer, drug abuse, A.I.D.S...). Care at home. Establishing hospitals, dispensaries, dental surgeries, leprosaria.

X ***Solidarity:*** Help for victims of natural disasters, war, violence. Famine relief, Provision of domestic equipment, Reconstruction, Rehousing, Health and Medical Care, Schooling.

Stanislaus Brindley, CM & Paschal Scallon, CM,
Translators.