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# **The Vincentian Marian Youth (Jmv) of Spain**

*by Edurne Urdampilleta*

## **1. *Identity of the Vincentian Marian Youth***

Beginning with the first historical facts, our investigation starts in 1835. As is known, it was to a novice of the Daughters of Charity, Catherine Labouré, to whom the Blessed Virgin Mary confided her messages, one of which was her desire to form an association of "Children of Mary," which over the years has evolved into what we know as the Vincentian Marian Youth. Today's Vincentian Marian Youth is a lay youth movement, part of the Vincentian Family, guided by the direct heirs of the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity. For this reason, our youth, during a long journey to maturity, feel the need and the desire in gratitude to serve and evangelize.

The Vincentian Marian Youth has chosen to work with youth along catechumenal lines, in order that the young members "achieve an integral maturation of faith, seeking by their formation, a joyful spirit of service and a conversion by which they will become witnesses of Jesus Christ in the world."

Systematic formation and personal accompaniment of the youth are very important in this process. For this task we have to thank the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity, without whom the growth of our members would be impossible, granted that faith is in the process of maturation in our day.

## **2. *Relations with Other Members of the Vincentian Family***

\* *Our greatest collaboration is with the Daughters of Charity on two levels:*

- Animation of projects for the evangelization of youth;
- Collaborating with them in their houses in various works of service.

\* *With the Congregation of the Mission:*

Helping on popular missions and missions "ad gentes." We would like to have more relations with Vincentian parishes.

\* *With AIC:*

There is a significant collaboration on the local level where AIC is present which is in 40 of our 300 centers in Spain.

\* *With the SSVdP:*

Nothing significant except for a few personal exceptions.

With the Associations of the Miraculous Medal:

Some families.

### **Hopes for Collaboration**

a. That the awareness of the Vincentian family on all levels be continually stimulated so that future generations feel a global belonging which will enrich them and open channels toward a true associative identity.

b. That the National Councils of the different associations meet to discern and program jointly in order to discover ways to collaborate in the sense we are urging.

c. That the efforts of the past few years to renew and bring up to date the lay Vincentian associations be continued so that the third millennium will see the charism of St. Vincent shared with the laity, so that they also will live in service of the poor: scattered throughout the masses, within the framework of lay Vincentian spirituality.

### ***3. Challenges for the Vincentian Marian Youth in the Third Millennium***

1. That our members continue as evangelizers of youth, adding Gospel tones to postmodern values. That they offer an integral and integrating pastoral project which meshes with the new, more universal culture in an active dynamic, joining action with contemplation, that is to say, that we live rooted in God, just as the Superior General exhorted us as one of his hopes during the first international convention in Paris, August 1997.

2. To move ahead in the social projection of our movement, by our presence in institutions where decisions are made on the causes of poverty, and by insertion into different sectors of society, keeping our sights set on true social change. We want to learn how to do this from other Vincentian Family associations. We already have members who have opted for a committed, radical lifestyle, as is the case of those young lay missionaries of the MISEVI, recently approved by the Superior General.

3. Encouraged by the Superior General, we must enrich our international statutes, and develop on an international level, what will be our first International Assembly to be celebrated here in Rome in the year 2000, at which time our first international President will be named.

### ***4. Challenges for the Vincentian Family***

1. To tighten on all levels (international, national, local) the bonds which unite all our associations, in order to promote mutual acquaintance and unity so that we will become known as the great Vincentian Family in the third millennium. To this end,

we can utilize the ever-widening scope of the mass media: the Internet, digital TV, etc.

2. To create channels of common formation, which will help us to deepen the roots of our charism and strengthen our response to the causes of poverty. For the Vincentian Marian Youth its strength lies in well-formed groups, since one convinced Christian is worth 100 not rooted in faith.

Translated by John Kennedy, C.M.