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Feature: Experiences of Apostolic Work Among the Poor

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FEATURE:

Experiences of Apostolic Work Among the Poor

“If you want peace, reach out to the poor!” was the theme of the Message of the Holy Father for the 15th World Day of Peace on January 1, 1993. This phrase helped inspire the present feature of *Vincentiana* in which are collected some “Experiences of the Apostolate among the Poor”: in *Austria*, with a branch of the gypsy population; in *Madagascar*, with the homeless poor; in *Spain*, with the immigrants; and in the *United Nations*, describing the actual “social agenda” of the CM before that important organism. In these, as in so many places and institutions, the confreres put into practice the exhortation of St. Vincent: “Let us love God, my brothers, let us love God, but let it be with strength of our arms and the sweat of our brows” (SV XI, 45).

There is a direct correlation between the work *with* and *for* the poor and the obtaining of peace. The evangelizing action which we carry out in many parts of the world is our input to peace, to the building of the Reign of God, to the civilization of love: “Blessed are those who work for peace.” Peace is a “ministry,” a hard job which requires strategy, creativity and much patience!

“If you want peace, reach out to the poor!” means that we obtain peace *when* we are capable of abandoning the finite world of our egoism; *when*, knowing the reality of others, especially of the poor, we begin to relativize our own; *when*, finally, with the force of the Spirit, we make efforts in the search for peace, cooperating in the creation of conditions for a world which is more just, more human and more in conformity with the will of the Creator. Our meditation “is completed” thus with an interesting *Vincentian Reflection On Peace*, prepared by Fr. Maloney for *Vincentiana*, at the end of the present feature. Enjoy reading!