

# Mission

Vision, values, and innovation comprise the Mission orientation of the Vincentian Leadership Model. The Mission orientation identifies leaders who lead with vision by inspiring clear vision of the future, lead with values by maintaining high ethical standards, and lead with innovation through new perspectives and ideas.

# Vision

Vincentian leaders lead with vision. They inspire a clear vision of the future, base decisions on a strong sense of mission, and articulate directions for the organization's future.

# Do What Makes You Hot

“Charity when it dwells in a soul takes complete possession of all its powers. It never rests. It is a fire that acts ceaselessly.”  
St. Vincent de Paul

It took two days for twelve college students to drive from East Lansing, Michigan to Miami, Florida. After hours in crowded vans, we arrived in the bustling city among students on spring break enjoying the sand and sun. The purpose of our travel was different from the norm for a college spring break—we devoted our time to volunteer with the refugee and immigrant community in Miami.

As we ventured through the city, combating traffic and heat, our service itinerary led us to Sembrando Flores, a grassroots, faith-based HIV/AIDS ministry, and social service organization, focused on providing humane care, advocacy, and social activism to the at-risk Latino community. The organization addresses poverty, violence, and health issues by providing emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual support to the Miami-Dade community.

Our group sat in a semi-circle on the wooden floor of the offices during a presentation from Executive Director, Nancy Rivera. She spoke kindly and thanked us for coming to volunteer. She explained the mission of Sembrando Flores and the need for health and spiritual support in the Latino community. Her words were sincere as she explained why she does this work. It makes her hot.

She turned the conversation to us — the twelve students sitting cross-legged on the floor. She asked us simple questions: What is your college major? What is your passion? What makes you hot? We each took a moment to think carefully about our responses. Journalism; Pre-medical; Pre-law; Social Work; Gender Studies; Speech Pathology; Business; Spanish; Higher Education; Finance; We listed our areas of study.

Then it was my turn. I hugged my knees as I shared, “I

will be attending DePaul University to study Public Service Management. It is my passion to work in the nonprofit or human service field and make a difference in the world.”

Nancy paused for only a moment before addressing each of us. “You must do what makes you hot. You should not do what makes you cold. You should not do what makes you warm. Do what makes you hot!”

Each of us had tears in our eyes, knowing that we had to use our passion, to find what made each of us hot, and live and work with purpose and with the same fire that radiated from Nancy. As I reflect on this experience years later, I think Vincent may agree with Nancy’s insight, like a great fire, we must do what makes us hot.

After two years in DePaul’s School of Public Service, I found my own personal mission — to do what makes me hot with a fire that acts ceaselessly — by working in international development. Vincent and Louise worked tirelessly to address the unmet needs of the poor — perhaps the fire they exuded for their work is what sustains their organizations more than 350 years after their deaths. They lived for their mission, both their personal mission to serve the poor, and for the mission of long-withstanding organizations that serve communities today.

Regardless of collegiate major or profession, I realize we must live with mission, purpose and fire to do what “makes us hot,” to ignite a lasting social change just as Vincent, Louise, and Nancy do to this day.

*Mandy Sharp*

## **Reflection**

Vincent’s vision was to eradicate oppression and poverty. It became his passion and guided his life.

1. What is your passion? What steps are you taking right now to fulfill your passion? If not, what’s stopping you?
2. How do you communicate your vision to others?

# Inspired by Vincent's Vision

“Do not rest content with doing good, but do it in the way God wishes; that is to say, as perfectly as you can, making yourselves worthy Servants of the poor.”  
St. Vincent de Paul

Upon my arrival at DePaul University in Fall of 1992, I participated in a faculty orientation run by Fr. Jay and a meet-and-greet session with the then President, Fr. Richardson. Emerging from the doctoral dissertation trenches in Hyde Park for my first academic job, until orientation I had no knowledge of St. Vincent de Paul and the Congregation of the Mission—other than harboring a suspicion that there is a complex connection between Hittorff's beautiful basilica of St. Vincent de Paul in Paris, the network of Saint Vincent resale shops, and this large urban university.

Over the next few years, I learned much about the activities of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States, about our University's modest beginnings in the Loop, and its maturation during the 20th century. Importantly, I witnessed a great openness among my fellow academics—regardless of their personal views on religion—to embracing the social missions of DePaul and de Paul. These personal discoveries coincided with a period of great change in DePaul's Department of Geography.

With the consent and support of a senior member of the Department, Don Dewey, my colleague, Patrick McHaffie, and I reinvented the Geography Department in the mid-1990s. Our goal was to create a first-rate academic unit with high scholastic and intellectual standards, that would take seriously social and environmental justice in the curriculum, in our research and publishing, and in the manner we treat each other, our staff,

and our students. A decade or so later, the DePaul Geography Department became nationally known as a haven for “critical geographers” engaged in high-quality teaching and research.

Over the years, we formed working relationships with the West Humboldt Park Alliance, community groups in Pilsen, fair-trade coffee growers in southern Mexico, built up a public participation planning effort in Chicago and Milwaukee, and engaged in educational outreach to geography teachers. The new Department of Geography drew its inspiration from Saint Vincent’s teachings and more broadly, the Vincentian canon that defines the missions of the University. The wonderful colleagues who joined the Department in the last ten years or so were attracted to DePaul in the first place because of its social justice orientation and their own sense of social responsibility. The teachings of Saint Vincent and the mission of this university is lush soil for those who come to our department to live and practice an academic life that serves the disadvantaged.

*Alex Papdopoulos*

## **Reflection**

This author saw a way to connect to their organization’s vision of making a difference in the world.

1. What inspires your vision?
2. How can you take practical steps toward growing your vision into a reality?

# Values

Vincentian leaders have values. They maintain high ethical standards and are driven by values of honesty and integrity. They take the time to find inspiration in meditation or reflection — examining their own values in relationship to how they behave and how their actions affect those with whom they work and live.

# Passing By...

“Say little; do much”  
St. Vincent de Paul

When Fr. John Cortelyou was President at DePaul, I was a graduate student working in the mailroom. I would stop for a light supper in the Lewis Cafe before night class. I noticed a student often conversing with Fr. Cortelyou.

Curious about her continual conversations with Fr. Cortelyou, I asked her how she came to speak with him so often. She mentioned that she met him by accident in the Biology Department, and continued their friendship. She was in a lab having difficulty with her lab experiment. Fr. Cortelyou noticed she needed help. He entered the lab wearing a t-shirt and jeans, and asked if she needed help. He never introduced himself while he assisted her. He helped her with the experiment and left. A professor rushed in to the lab shortly afterwards to see the President on an important issue, but she told him there was no President here, only a lab assistant.

When the professor insisted the person was the President, she felt her face turn red. She did not acknowledge Fr. Cortelyou as President. She thought he was simply a lab assistant passing by. The next day she went to the President's office to thank him and explain that she did not recognize him when he assisted her.

Fr. Cortelyou comforted her by noting that he was a biologist and assisted her in a difficult lab experiment; therefore, he was a lab assistant. He shared his pleasure of helping her and noted that he was not interested in simply walking around identifying himself as the President. This student shared with me how Fr. Cortelyou's humble approach assisting her and having an interest in her academic work put her at ease and allowed her to continue their friendship and receive

academic advice from him—as the President, a lab assistant, and a friend.

*Michael Kazanjian*

### **Reflection**

This story illustrates a servant leader displaying empathy, commitment to the growth of others, and humility.

1. What values motivate your leadership?
2. As a leader, do you look for opportunities to serve others?

# Getting Around Town

“Go on as you are, Mademoiselle. I can give you no better guidance than your own heart has already given you.”  
St. Vincent de Paul

My husband’s theory is that if he does not have money in his pocket, he cannot spend it. My counter theory is that if I do not have money in my pocket, I frequently have to make more trips to the ATM. After checking our account balance and in deference to my husband’s cheapskate attitude—or frugality as he prefers to call it — I withdrew only one crisp \$20 bill on a recent trip to the ATM. I knew that was all I needed for the next few days, as long as I did not do anything too indulgent — like give in to a desire for obscenely overpriced coffee.

I left the ATM with the \$20 bill safely tucked in my pocket and headed toward the subway. I had a meeting at DePaul University’s Loop campus, which required purchasing a transit fare card to take the train downtown. The transit fare card machine does not give change. I really did not want to use the entire \$20 on a fare card since I tend to lose fare cards. It is a waste of money to put more than the exact amount of a round trip ticket on the card and would leave me without any cash. In an attempt to avoid another trip back to the ATM, knowing that two withdrawals in one day would cause my husband to call the bank to see if someone was illegally using our account, I thought about purchasing a cup of obscenely overpriced coffee to get change. I decided that would be wasteful spending. At that point, my boss walked into the train station headed to the same meeting. I asked if she had change for a \$20 bill to buy a smaller denomination fare card. She graciously handed me her fare card to use.

We arrived at the downtown campus early and decided to prepare for the meeting over a cup of obscenely overpriced coffee. It seemed fair that since my boss paid for my train ride I should buy the coffee. Another colleague was standing in line

ahead of us at the coffee shop and insisted on purchasing our coffee.

After the meeting concluded, I stopped in the cafeteria to buy a sandwich — partly because I was hungry, and partly to get a smaller bill to purchase a fare card. I ran into a friend who insisted on buying my lunch since I bought her lunch last time we were together. We walked to the subway together and again I faced the fare card dilemma. I still had the \$20 bill that I did not want to use to purchase a fare card. My friend let me use her card.

I am not a moocher — I was actually quite uncomfortable accepting the generosity of my friends and colleagues throughout the day. On the other hand, I envisioned myself surprising my husband with the news that I made my way around town all morning and afternoon without spending a dime. I took two train rides, had coffee, ate lunch, and still had the \$20 safely tucked in my pocket. This frugality thing was not so bad!

As I descended the stairs to the subway platform, I noticed something strange. The usual sound of voices—people chatting with companions or on cell phones — was missing. Instead, I heard violin music. It is not unusual for musicians to perform in the subway, instrument cases open on the ground waiting to catch spare change passengers might be inclined to toss. Sometimes their talents make waiting passengers hope the train comes quickly. Sometimes, as on this day, the wait for the train becomes a community experience rather than a test of endurance. The violinist was playing Pachelbel Canon in D Major.

The beauty of the piece and the talent of the musician created a moment of calm in the “quick, get where you are going” pace of the day. People of all ethnic backgrounds, ages, and walks of life stood in silence listening to the unexpected concert. I was not the only person who watched a few trains come and go before reluctantly boarding one to get to my next appointment.

I was not able to tell my husband how I made it through

the whole day and still kept the \$20 safely tucked in my pocket. Instead, I was able to tell him that thanks to the kindness of those around me, I was able to save \$20 all day to do something exceptionally worthwhile with it at the end of the day—drop it into the violin case.

*Roxanne Owens*

## **Reflection**

This is a story about the values of generosity, spontaneity, and stopping to appreciate the beauty of everyday experiences.

1. Do you stop to think about your values and how they guide your decisions?
2. When was the last time you spontaneously displayed generosity?

## Innovation

Vincentian leaders lead with innovation, offering new perspectives and innovative ideas. They welcome new ideas and input from others. They also look outside of their organization for ideas and opportunities to improve their organizations.

# Charity translated as Social Entrepreneurship

“Charity is inventive to infinity.”  
St. Vincent de Paul

I still remember the surprised smiling face of Howard Rosing, Director of the Steans Center for Community Service Learning, when he helped relocated communities in the South of Manila, Philippines, with Adamson University’s faculty and volunteers. Our sister Vincentian University in the Orient gave us a lesson through their t-shirts imprinted with “ADD-YOU,” the slogan of Adamson University, in the front and “Vincentian social entrepreneur” on the back.

Fr. Afilian Fajardo, C.M., better known as Fr. Nonong, is a contemporary example of a leader that makes you think of what Vincent might do today to alleviate and transform poverty. After my course on Vincentian Leadership and Poverty Reduction at Adamson University in the summer of 2007, Fr. Nonong and other faculty at Adamson University founded the Vincentian Center for Social Responsibility (VCSR). Their goal is to find concrete and systemic solutions to the many needs of the informal settlers relocated by the Philippine government in the attempt to improve their railroad systems. Like Vincent, Fr. Nonong works with innovative ideas and tireless efforts to not simply serve these socially disadvantaged populations, but to find the right channels at the government level, with businesses, civil society, and through the academic community that could work together to alleviate the conditions of the poor.

We know Vincent was a compassionate servant, an indefatigable communicator, and an effective administrator. We know that he used all his creativity and intelligence to experiment and collaborate toward innovative initiatives that could make a difference in the lives of the poor in Paris, rural

France, and worldwide. Fr. Nonong is like Vincent translated into the 21st Century.

He talks about the social entrepreneurship, academic social responsibility and intersectoral partnership with the same convictions and clarity as experts in sustainable development. As Vincent was able to dialogue with the monarch of his time, Fr. Nonong has been very effective in collaborating and dialoguing with the Vice-President's office of the Philippines, the Archdiocese of Manila, and other national and international key players. We learned a great deal about the social enterprises and how the poor of Manila benefit from collaborative initiatives between a university, like Adamson, small and large business, the community-based organizations, and leaders through coordination from VCSR.

Fr. Nonong's leadership capacity, organizational skills, and managerial abilities along with his unique IT language. He talks about the upgrade CM 9.27, referring to the need of the Congregation of the Mission to rediscover St. Vincent's legacy, after his death on September 27, 1660 and how this will have no value unless contextualized in innovativeness to serve the poor and transform the root causes of poverty.

Social entrepreneurship for Fr. Nonong is not just another fashion concept of development; it is position. It is about working to empower leadership capacity of impoverished communities. It is about giving the poor a voice and the capacity to elevate their claims, needs, and hopes to the appropriate policy channels. It is about avoiding dependency or despair. It is appreciating the potential and capacity of our human and divine inventiveness to infinity. The work of charity, poverty reduction, and social justice is and should become more entrepreneurial, creative, and innovative. Vincent continues to inspire us and give us hope that a better world is possible. He is telling this through the examples of people, like Fr. Nonong, serving as social innovators for eradicating poverty and working toward the common good.

*Marco Tavanti*

## **Reflection**

1. Think of a time when you used creativity to solve a problem or thought of a new idea. How did you find your answer and implement it?
2. Do you openly welcome new ideas and perspectives from colleagues?

# The Legacy of Vincent dePaul in New Orleans

“Say little; do Much”  
St. Vincent de Paul

It will soon be five years since Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast and three years since the School of Public Service (SPS) responded to a need in New Orleans. While the physical damage was great in all these areas, the effect was intense in the City of New Orleans as the levees failed, causing massive flooding in many neighborhoods and forcing many residents of these communities from their homes. Ultimately, more than 1,836 people lost their lives and more than \$81.2 billion dollars in damages from the storm made Hurricane Katrina the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history.

Despite the extent of the disaster, inadequate assistance from government agencies left many residents to fend for themselves. Media coverage over the next weeks and months showed the increasingly desperate faces of New Orleans citizens. It became clear that a disproportionate number of the people victimized by Katrina were extremely disadvantaged even before the storm, and lost what little they had.

Concerned individuals continue to ask why the gravest effects of this storm devastated the poor, and why the response from government continued to be slow. On the other hand, individuals across the nation and around the world responded, and many non-profits stepped up to fill in the gaps in services.

I believe that these are the conditions under which St. Vincent de Paul would have responded to a great need — and, in fact, I believe he did through the students and faculty of the School of Public Service (SPS) at DePaul University. One of the poorest neighborhoods in New Orleans before the storm was Mid-City, located less than half a mile away from

the Superdome, and just outside the historic French Quarter and the Central Business District, where flooding ranged from three to more than seven feet high. Before Katrina, poverty marked this neighborhood, with a population, that was 50.8% African American, with a median annual household income of \$6,875 annually and an individual poverty rate of 54 percent. A focal point of hope for poor residents in this neighborhood was St. Joseph's Church in the heart of Mid-City. Fr. Perry Henry, C.M., a former trustee of DePaul, is the Pastor of St. Joseph's. Less than a month after Katrina struck, Fr. Henry contacted the President of DePaul, Fr. Dennis Holschneider, C.M., to request technical assistance in urban planning, community development, and strategic planning for the Mid-City neighborhood. Faculty and students from SPS responded to this call.

Over the last five years since Katrina hit, more than 125 students of SPS traveled to New Orleans to work with Fr. Perry to establish a strategic plan for St. Joseph's, which was later adopted by the Mid-City Collaborative. Through this collaboration, a variety of non-profit organizations work to carry out the goals of that plan and established a community center to deliver services. The dedication of the Rebuild Center at St. Joseph's Church was August 26, 2007. As the faculty member leading the SPS response, I believe St. Vincent de Paul continues to inspire our work. The Rebuild Center provides personal assistance, in a spirit of justice and charity, and assures human dignity and integrity to those who are suffering and suffered from the effects of Hurricane Katrina, as well as problems they struggled with before the storm. I believe that each one of our students traveled to New Orleans with the spirit of St. Vincent in their hearts and it is a great blessing to be a part of this work.

*Gloria Simo*

## **Reflection**

In the midst of destruction and despair, this author found a creative response to assist those in need and live out the Vincentian mission.

1. What helps you be creative when looking for solutions to problems?
2. How do you inspire creativity in others?