



Press Release

From January 8th to the 12th, the leaders of 160 organizations and institutions of the Worldwide Vincentian Family, which represent more than two million men and women, will meet in Rome for the first time in their history.

Coming from all parts of the world, these representatives will gather together in the Patristic Institute Augustinianum in order to strengthen their relationships, to confront a series of concerns and to lay a foundation for greater collaboration.

Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, stated: *The meeting that we will have as a Vincentian Family during these days presents, in the first place, a challenge to us. A challenge because for the first time we have achieved or at least attempted to gather together all the representatives of the 160 branches of the Family that are spread throughout the world. At the present time we have the following numbers: 200 participants, 97 superiors general or representatives of some branch of the Vincentian Family ... that is, congregations of consecrated life and lay associations. There are also a dozen representatives from works in which the members are engaged. We know that it will be most important to share our experiences with regard to the journey that we have undertaken and to address themes that are close to our hearts as part of this Vincentian Family. In light of our Homeless Initiative we also continue to reflect on the ways in which we can create a culture of vocations in those places where the mission represents a place of discernment. We also hope to share our reflections with regard to transmitting our charism and spirituality and at the same time to identify future paths that can help us to be a movement in the Church and to ensure that our charism responds to the concrete needs of the world in which we live. The basis of all of this work is prayer ... prayer which is the heart that palpitates in all our activities. In reality, it is prayer alone that, as our Founder St. Vincent de Paul pointed out, enables us to recognize the face of Christ on the face of every poor person whom we meet.*

The Vincentian Family came into existence as the result of a twofold experience of Vincent de Paul (1617). In the village of Folleville, France, Vincent came to recognize the spiritual poverty of the country people and then in Châtillon Vincent confronted the material poverty of these people. Those two events marked the beginning of Vincent's personal conversion which enabled him to respond to the urgent needs that he had discovered. Vincent's focus was on the whole person and thus on every form of poverty: spiritual, emotional, physical, material. From this small mustard seed that was planted in 1617, the Vincentian Family has become a large tree composed of more than 160 branches (lay associations and congregations of religious life) with more than two million members in one hundred fifty countries. At the same time there are countless men and women who, even though they do not formally belong to some particular branch, are inspired by the example of Vincent de Paul and his service on behalf of those who are poor.



At the beginning of the fifth century of life, the Vincentian Family looks toward the future with the awareness of the necessary urgency of an ever closer synergy with all that came into existence from the “seed” that was planted by the founder. The program, which will consist of four sessions, will begin with a papal audience. Then in the afternoon the participants will begin their formal work. The President of the Executive Committee of the Vincentian Family (who is also the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission), Tomaž Mavric, CM, will open the meeting. He will be followed by Father Joseph Agostino, CM (International Coordinator of the International Vincentian Family Office) and by Father Rober Maloney, CM (former superior general of the Congregation) who will speak about the history of the Vincentian Family. The moderator of the gathering is Sister Mary McCormick, SCNY. On January 9-11 the participants will celebrate the Eucharist in the morning at the Holy Spirit Basilica followed by conferences and dialogues that are programmed for the morning and afternoon sessions. Each day a different theme will be discussed (a detailed program is attached and includes the names of the presenters). The January 9th session will begin with an introduction about the mission of the Vincentian Family and the presentation of the Team of the International Office. Then there will be a discussion on the theme of communication in the Vincentian Family. There will also be a sharing on the experience of the Film Festival, *Finding Vincent*, which took place in 2018. The session will conclude with a presentation on the Homeless Initiative. On Friday there will be a discussion about the creation of a culture of vocations and about transmitting the charism. Saturday the participants will address the question: how do we move forward together ... this session will include a panel discussion and there will be time to reflect on the potential of the internet and the challenge that this presents for the future. Sunday morning will be dedicated to gathering together suggestions and proposals as well as assigning specific tasks and responsibilities. Father Joseph Agostino will take care of thanking people and other commentaries. This historic event will conclude with the celebration of the Eucharist, presided by Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM and animated by the music group, Gen Verde.

Accreditation Procedure

Journalists and media operators will be able to follow the opening session in the afternoon of January 8 by sending a request through the Holy See Press Office’s online accreditation system (press.vatican.va/accreditations), once the event is available on the calendar.

Interviews with participants

Interviews will be allowed during the work breaks. For further information, please contact Elena Grazini of the Vincentian Family Press Office, email: elena@elenagrazini.it – Cell. +39 338 190 24 36

PRESS
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