

## A Member of the Vincentian Family – What Does it Mean?

*"Understanding God's passion for justice and becoming a willing partner with Jesus and Vincent in making present the Kingdom of God on earth require a different way of thinking and doing," challenges Father Gregory Gay, CM.*

We are part of group who, for over four centuries, see the world through the eyes of the poor. Each October, in Princeton, a group of people gather as part of the Vincentian Family East to network and share what is happening in their organizations. Mary Ann Daly, SC as executive director of the Federation, three DC's from different regions, a SC(NY), a SC(NJ) and SC(H) were present as well as a Vincentian priest, a representative from the Ladies of Charity and three members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The focus of this meeting was Advocacy. Collaboration in the broader context of the worldwide Vincentian family offers a sense of the good news that is being proclaimed through word and action near and far. Below are some highlights.

- The SVDP International Group (100,000 in the US) in conjunction with DePaul University in Chicago has prepared a brief dvd/podcast that highlights the agenda of those who are poor in their own words. A copy will be mailed to each presidential candidate. It will also be available on SVDP website soon. By alerting the candidates to our concerns it is hoped to give the poor a place in the 2008 campaign. Joe Flannigan, National president made the group aware of the important national meeting on Catholic Social Ministry to be held in February in Washington DC. A subcommittee of SVDP is Voice of the Poor. One of the collaborations it sees as significant is working with Catholic Charities. CCUSA has a 2006 position paper on Poverty in the US proposes we cut poverty by 50% by 2020.
- The Daughters of Charity have created a Vincentian Integration Experience, which will have components in Paris and Chicago. This group of about 10 Sisters will take part in a yearlong initiative in which they will share community, ministry and spirituality. Then they will bring the fruits of this experience home to their local communities and perhaps they will be the ones who will take on some of the current formators responsibilities.
- LOCUSA-The Ladies of Charity group celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. They have just instituted a standing committee on advocacy and systemic change. A recent action was to make a statement through their NGO to the UN around responsibility of those countries (including the US) who have not fulfilled their financial promises related to the Millennium Development Goals.
- MSBT- Trinitarians were founded by a Vincentian priest, Father Thomas Judge CM, in 1916. Vincent's spirituality continues to influence the group's life and mission. This can be seen in their ongoing service to the poor and marginalized, as evidenced by the fact that they have recently opened a mission in Jamaica, West Indies.
- The New York Charities and New Jersey Charities both have recently completed chapters. Among the new initiatives the NY group wants to move forward on are trafficking, immigration and the sanctuary movement. Deepening in reverence for the earth is part of the NJ group's commitments.
- During the past year, the Global Concerns Resource Team of the Sisters of Charity (Halifax) have offered days of reflection throughout Canada and North Eastern US to create awareness around The Root Causes of Poverty and The Issue of Human Trafficking. To be part of this Vincentian Group is at once a source of support and challenge. Such a gathering of "family members" confirms Vincent's claim that love is indeed inventive to infinity.

For all-- A Vincentian Family Gathering-**Solidarity in Action** will be held in New Orleans, LA from April 10-13. Go to [www.vfg2008.org](http://www.vfg2008.org). Consider being part of this energizing experience!