Reflections on St. Vincent and St. Louise

As I pondered the reflection on St. Vincent as Apostle of Charity and Friend of the Poor, the 350th Jubilee Reflection #3 for December 2009 by Fr. Antonino Orcajo, CM of the Province of Madrid, Spain, I asked myself “if St. Vincent were alive today, what would be his reaction to the present day in the world?”

I think he would be both dismayed and surprised: dismayed that we still endure wars, diseases, and natural upheavals; surprised at the progress that mankind has made; saddened to know that poverty still exists and that the world’s poor have not been the recipients of human progress.

Jesus said: “The poor will always be with you.” Alas, poor in ways that St. Vincent could never have imagined.

St. Vincent’s example and wisdom will always be our guide in ministering to the poor. I value his counsel: “A sure way for a Christian to grow rapidly in holiness is a conscientious effort to carry out God’s will in all circumstances and at all times.”

(Common Rules)

Submitted by Esther Newberry,
Affiliate—Northville, MI

As the Vincentian Family celebrates the 350th anniversary of the deaths of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, Sister Louise Sullivan and Sister Elizabeth Charpy, both Daughters of Charity, have written an essay on “Who Is Jesus for Louise de Marillac?” To this purpose, they consulted the Spiritual Writings of St. Louise.

They find that, for Louise, it is in contemplating the life of Jesus on earth that true charity is discovered. She recognized that “The Incarnation of the Son of God was, in the eternal plan, for the redemption of the human race.” The rupture caused by Adam’s sin had to be repaired. Contemplation of the Incarnation started “as soon as human nature had sinned” when the Trinity, looking for a way to express their love for humanity, decide together “that one of the three Persons should become Man.” In this decision is the essence of God’s love and God’s humility! “God is no longer the distant, demanding God” but, in love and humility, has taken on our human nature — has become one of us!

God’s “gentleness, cordiality and forbearance” should be evident in our lives. “The service of love of every member of the Vincentian Family is a continuation of the Redemption.” For each of us, the Incarnation, God’s becoming one of us, should elicit wonderful sentiments of thanksgiving and love, and the desire to become the persons that God created us to be.

Quotations in italics are from the Spiritual Writings of St. Louise

Submitted by Ruth Lang, Affiliate—Dallas, TX

To explore the monthly reflections see: http://famvin.org/anniversary/en/reflection/official-documents
On July 21, 1828 the Council of the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg unanimously voted to take charge of the St. Louis Hospital in Missouri as Bishop Rosati, CM had requested.

Four Sisters of Charity arrived to open Mullanphy Hospital, the first Catholic hospital in the United States and the first hospital erected West of the Mississippi, in a two-room log cabin in the center of St. Louis.

A new two-story brick hospital was completed in time for the outbreak of the cholera epidemic of 1832. The Sisters offered their hospital, their services and even their quarters to cholera patients. One stalwart assistant was a Vincentian brother who brought the sick to both hospitals, on his back, and remained day and night to help in nursing them. He removed the dead bodies.

In 1850, the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg affiliated with the Daughters of Charity of Paris and the Daughters continued their service at DePaul Hospital in St. Louis.

In 1909, there were 1,715 Daughters of Charity serving in eight archdioceses, nineteen dioceses, and in the Vicariates Apostolic of North Carolina and Puerto Rico. The Community conducted: 43 hospitals, 5 psychiatric hospitals, 32 orphanages, 14 infant asylums, 6 orphanages combined with schools, and 5 industrial schools.

In response to such growth, on July 16, 1910, Fr. Fiat, Superior General, wrote to the Daughters of Charity of Emmitsburg of the opening of a new Seminary in St. Louis and the creation of the Western Province that comprised the houses in Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, California and Puerto Rico. July 31, 1910 was the official opening of the Western Province which consisted of 700 Sisters serving in 59 missions.

The Eastern Province included houses in Maryland, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia and North Carolina. There were 1000 Sisters serving in 69 missions.

In 1914, the Daughters of Charity opened the Catholic Social Center in Chicago's West Side to promote the physical, spiritual, social and educational welfare of persons of any race creed or color. Since 1947, Marillac Social Center has focused on strengthening and empowering children and families through early childhood education, teen mentoring, family support services, and companionship and assistance to the elderly. They strive to be a beacon of hope for the over 9,000 individuals served yearly.

Sister Helen Miller served at Marillac Social Center as a social worker for the youth from 1985-1993. She spent much of her ministry at Rockwell Gardens housing project, teaching young single mothers how to care for their children and homes.

She stated: “We stayed during the riots. We stayed after the riots. The Sisters who came before me have been my protection. I walk in their footsteps.”

“I can’t help but think that we have to keep trying to educate people. My wish is that they could get out of poverty.”
Daughters Celebrate over 100 Years in Healthcare in Michigan

by Esther Newberry, Affiliate

In 1845 the Daughters of Charity established St. Vincent’s Hospital in Detroit. In 1965 the hospital moved to Southfield as Providence Hospital. When the Daughters and the Sisters of St. Joseph formed Ascension Health in 1999, their collaboration paved the way for the partnership that is today St. John Providence Health System.

This year, St. John Providence Health System celebrates over 100 years in healthcare in Michigan and the 350th Anniversary of the deaths of Sts. Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac.

On January 16, 2010, a Mass was offered at Our Lady of Victory in Northville, Michigan to honor the 350th anniversary and the Daughters of Charity. In his homily, Fr. Denis Theroux highlighted the local history of the Daughters and how the spirit of Charity and Mission, a mission of love, with the history of service to the poor and needy, is alive.

Esther Newberry, Affiliate, hosted a dinner at Table 5 in Northville; attending were: Sisters Xavier Balance, Lucille Marie Beauchamp, Jane Burger, Caroline Clark, Marillac Grabinski, and Kathleen Stafford.

St. John Providence Health System of Michigan continued the celebration at a Liturgy with Archbishop Allen G. Vigneron on April 14, 2010, the annual Friends’ Ball on April 24, the dedication of Centennial Gardens at Providence Hospital, Southfield and Providence Park, Novi and a community-wide event scheduled later in the year.

Daughters of Charity Celebrate 105 Years at Providence—Waco, TX

by Beverley Keahey, Affiliate

The Daughters of Charity were invited to establish the first hospital in Waco, Texas by its civic leaders in 1904. In January of 1905, trusting in Divine Providence, four Daughters of Charity began their ministry. Celebrating 105 years of compassionate, loving service at Providence, the Daughters of Charity and Affiliate and CEO, Kent Keahey, welcomed over 5,000 friends, employees, supporters and Affiliates to a Gala Celebration on April 10, 2010.

Following a black tie dinner for over 1,000 supporters, another 4,000 Central Texans joined in the tribute and celebration with a concert by the hit band, Chicago. Every five years for the last 20 years, Providence and the Waco community have recognized the healing ministry of Christ that the Daughters of Charity have provided to all the people of Waco--but most notably to the poor and vulnerable among us.

St. Vincent Health’s $34.77 Program — Indianapolis, IN

by Mary Nell Williams, Affiliate

Twenty one years ago several associates at St. Vincent Health, Indianapolis, Indiana decided to address the emergent financial needs of their peers. The $34.77 Program was established in May, 1989. The Program was named in honor of the amount of money the first four Daughters of Charity brought with them when they began St. Vincent Hospital on April 26, 1881. In 1989 the organization consisted of four facilities in and around the greater Indianapolis area with a total of 4,300 associates. The organization has continued to expand and currently has 19 facilities around the State of Indiana with over 13,000 associates. The funding to assist associates is dependent on donations from associates and physicians, and 100% of those donations are used to assist associates.

St. Vincent Health pays for all administrative expenses. After an initial contact with and assessment of the associate’s current financial situation with Mary Nell Williams, Coordinator of the Program, the best method of assistance is determined. Assistance may include an interest-free loan given for emergent issues such as housing, utilities, car payment and car repairs. The guidelines of the program prevent assistance for issues such as credit card and personal loan debt. The Program has been a blessing for every associate in the organization. Reducing the stress within one individual, ripples out to their family, their internal work, community and to the community in general. To date, over 5,100 associates have received over $4.1 million, as a result of the generosity of associates and physicians and the continued support from St. Vincent Health.
Message from Sr. Evelyne Franc, Superioress General

Although the earthquake of January 12 is no longer in the news, Sr. Marie Teresa Tapia, Visitatrix in Haiti, says that the situation of the victims is still extremely precarious and the distribution of aid is chaotic. She emphasizes, though, that signs of hope are equally abundant. For example, our Sisters’ schools have reopened, classes are being held in large tents, and design plans are being put in place for the reconstruction of the John Paul II School next to what used to be the Provincial House. In addition, our Sisters have resumed the majority of their usual ministries and organized missions in the towns at a distance from the capital in order to care for persons who are sick or elderly who have been neglected.

Similarly, creativity and courage are at work in Chile. The Sisters have organized an operation called “Charity and Mission” to visit, care for and comfort the victims of the earthquake that occurred on February 27. They are concentrating their efforts on two regions and have established a plan of action in collaboration with the Vincentian Family in Chile, with the participation of Sisters from other Provinces in Latin America. This well-designed mission project is already off to an enthusiastic start.

We all remain in communion with the efforts of our Sisters in these settings, through our thoughts and prayers, and by our joyful witness as Daughters of Charity, wherever we are.

Excerpt from Sr. Evelyne Franc’s letter April 24, 2010

**Haitian Economic Development -- Your Invitation to GET INVOLVED!**

by F. Dale Whitten, Affiliate

ZAFEN, Creole for “It’s our business,” has been developed to bring together a global community of lenders and donors who believe in the power of entrepreneurship to bolster the Haitian community and to create jobs for those living in some of the poorest conditions in the world. This project was initiated as part of the worldwide celebration of the 350th anniversary of the deaths of St. Louise de Marillac and St. Vincent de Paul. It is a joint project of the worldwide Vincentian Family, Fonkoze—the largest microfinance agency in Haiti, DePaul University and the Haitian Hometown Association. This effort has now been made all the more timely and vital due to the devastating January 12 earthquake.

You are invited to GET INVOLVED by going to Zafen.org where you can make a long-term difference in rebuilding Haiti:

- all funds are directed to projects in Haiti, rather than to individuals, encouraging greater long-term success;
- donors are linked in real-time to projects that need funding; and
- you can plant a seed and watch it grow.

*Prayerfully consider a donation to: www.Zafen.org*

The primary purpose is to demonstrate the tremendous impact that these brave and resourceful Sisters had on our society as they established schools, hospitals, and orphanages in the wilderness, while often courageously facing overwhelming obstacles. The display also depicts the changing roles of women religious throughout the years as they adapt to serve those in need.

Historical letters and documents, diaries, artifacts, photos/audio-visual components, and other memorabilia illustrate the perseverance and dedication of these unselfish women. The size of the display varies according to the location, ranging from 2,500 to 3,500 square feet, with potential for expansion.

The Mater Dei Archive Department was privileged to tour the exhibit when it was in Cincinnati during August 2009. We were amazed at the number of Catholic women religious communities in the United States (over 600!) with 400 communities contributing to this display. The variety of artifacts and ephemera was extremely impressive. In addition, there were also histories presented at different venues relevant to that particular region as well as some interactive kiosks. During the remainder of time, the display will be at the following places:

- Smithsonian – Washington, DC - January 15 to April 25, 2010
- Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage – Cleveland, OH – May 8 to August 28, 2010
- Statue of Liberty National Monument – New York City – September 24, 2010 to January 22, 2011
- Mississippi River Museum – Dubuque, IA – February to April 2011

The Visioning for Mission process for the four Provinces of the Daughters of Charity continues apace. The Steering Committee has been meeting quarterly as well as meeting via teleconference. Since January of 2007 we have had a total of 32 meetings either in person or teleconference. There are more to come.

The news of the moment is the appointment of the first employee of the new Province. The Treasurers are pleased to appoint Tom Beck as the chief financial officer. He comes well qualified for the position and begins in mid-June.

The next momentous time in the lives of the Daughters of the four Provinces will occur when the consultation processes begin for the new leadership team. New consultation procedures and processes are being finalized including a time table set to begin in the Fall of 2010. Again we received input from the Sisters on the processes to use.

A newly formed Transition Task Force has the task of readying the space in the current West Central offices. The plan is evolving and also includes input from the leadership teams re: thoughts on direction, spaces, artwork, and recommendations to be approved within the next six months.

We are currently engaged in the evaluation of processes, policies, financial and legal issues. Our goal in this is a smooth transition. Through it all there is no doubt that the larger community is in prayer and in spirit as we continue to Vision for the Mission. All of the work will culminate in July of 2011 at which time the new Visitatrix and her Council will be installed in Baltimore on July 31, 2011 and the new Province will begin. As always we count on the prayers of our friends among the Vincentian Family!
Members of the Vincentian family are taking the occasion of the 350 Anniversary Year of the death of St. Vincent and St. Louise, to revitalize our spirit and explore the treasure of our common founders. We are challenged by the words of St. Vincent: “The love of God is inventive to infinity.”

From Arkansas…

The Vincentian Family of Arkansas will celebrate the 350th Anniversary at St. Ann’s Parish in North Little Rock on August 7 with a bilingual Liturgy, meal and program. We will celebrate the stories of Vincent and Louise and encourage the branches of the Family to continue to “harvest the seeds they have planted” in their ministries.

From Austin, TX…

About 40 of our physicians, board members, associates, staff and some spouses just returned from a Seton Family of Hospitals Heritage Tour in France. As they visited our Chapel at the Mother House, they heard a presentation on the 350th anniversary. Sr. Teresa George provided more commentary throughout the tour.

From Chicago, IL…

In honor of the Feast of St. Louise de Marillac, Fr. Chris Robinson, CM, and the Vincentians of DePaul University’s Catholic Campus Ministry hosted a celebration for the Daughters of Charity as an opportunity to tell the story of the Daughters and to interact with young Catholics. The event included Liturgy at St. Vincent de Paul Parish and refreshments.

From Milwaukee…

On January 28, the four Daughters of Charity in Milwaukee invited eight council members and officers of the Ladies of Charity to their house for dinner and dialogue on the article, “Spirit of Louise de Marillac,” by Sr. Elisabeth Charpy and Sr. Louise Sullivan. The dialogue included reflections on St. Louise’s life, how devotion to her changed over time, how she inspires their compassion, outreach and collaboration. They also shared their ‘mission moments’ of being inspired by those whom they assist which energizes their spirit and is evidence of God’s marvelous work.

From Detroit, MI…

Here are some ways the Vincentian Family has been celebrating:

January 28 – Sister Marillac Grabinski gave a reflection to the Ladies of Charity using materials from famvin.org

February 18 – Sister Caroline Clark spoke at St. Andrew’s Conference, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Rochester, MI using the 350th Anniversary material from famvin.org.

April 23 during the Midyear National Meeting of the Society of SVDP, Sister Caroline led a prayer service using the 350th Anniversary theme for the Mideast Members.

Sister Caroline presented two retreat/workshops for the Spiritual Advisors during Lent and one reflection centered around the 350th.

For the closing of the 350th Anniversary on the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, the Archdiocese of Detroit Society of SVDP is planning a Mass for all its Members.

From Edinburg, TX…

The Daughters of Charity in Edinburg hosted an open house for Sisters and lay collaborators on May 16 during which all viewed a video of the history of the community.

From New Orleans, LA…

On October 20, the Vincentian Family in New Orleans celebrated the 350th Anniversary. The Congregation of the Mission, Southern Province, presented a plaque to the Daughters that reads: “those whom you serve should feel the effects of your kindness.”

From Evansville, IN…

About 90 members of the Vincentian Family (Daughters of Charity, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Ladies of Charity, Congregation of the Mission, and Affiliates) met to kick off the 350th in October, 2009. Besides a program featuring changes within the various organizations, an opening prayer service developed by Sister Ann Claire Rhoads, DC, of Emmitsburg, MD featured the lives and works of St. Vincent and St. Louise. The Prayer for the 350th closed the celebration. The Fall 2010 Gathering of the Family will recognize the closing of this significant Jubilee. A banner with the 350th logo has been created and displayed in the St. Vincent Conference Room of the Provincialate to remind all groups during the year of this celebration.

On the Feast of St. Louise, the Daughters and staff of Mater Dei/Seton Complex gathered for the annual soup and bread fund raiser for the St. Louise Emergency Fund for employees and visit from St. Louise with her traditional gift of quotations.

From St. Louis and East St. Louis…

The St. Louis area Daughters and the 350th Anniversary Committee celebrated the feast of St. Louise at Marillac Provincial House.

The Vincentian Family of the St. Louis area, which includes members of the Vincent de Paul Society, Congregation of the Mission, Daughters of Charity, Ladies of Charity, Former Daughters of Charity, Affiliates, Vincentian Service Corps, Gateway Vincentian Volunteers and Vincentian Marian Youth, are planning two celebratory events. Members are organizing a day of service for August 21 and Eucharistic Liturgy on August 22 at the St. Louis Cathedral Basilica with Fr. Gregory Gay, Superior General, and The Most Rev. Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis.
**REFLECTION on being an AFFILIATE**

*by Esther Newberry, Affiliate*

To be an Affiliate is both an *honor* and a *privilege*: an honor in the sense of sharing the remarkable history of the Daughters of Charity. What other organization would invite you to join them in their ministry of aiding the poor and the needy? It is a privilege in that we not only share in the prayer life of the Sisters, but we become a part of that life. This prayer life supports and guides us as Affiliates.

But there is another element to be addressed and that is a sense of responsibility. This is the benchmark of all Affiliates. It is important that we respond (root of the word responsibility) to the call of the poor and the needy, not only in a material way, but in providing the warmth of being closer to God.

A celebrated star of stage and screen was asked to define friendship. The reply: “It is the friends that you can call at 4 a.m. that matter.” As Affiliates, will we “respond” to that call?

My wonderful French-Canadian grandfather impressed upon me the saying “when much has been given, much is expected” from St. Luke. He was a man of considerable means and put his faith in action by helping those less fortunate. The saying of St. Luke has become my mantra while working as a utility employee (38 years), a volunteer in Credit Union activities (36 years), and in Social Agencies (30 years).

On May 30, 1983, the Daughters of Charity celebrated the 350th anniversary of the Company. That same day, thanks to the efforts of Sr. Anthony Prugger, DC, I became part of the Affiliate organization.

This relationship has helped expand my opportunities to assist the Sisters in many of their ministries:

- Furbish/refurbish many houses and social ministry locations.
- Provide financial means for the Sisters to develop their artistic abilities.
- Encourage lay people and volunteers to pray for the success of present and future ministries of the Daughters.
- Encourage others to become volunteers.
- Encourage and pray for vocations. There are those in our midst waiting to be asked. I truly believe St. Louise won’t let us down.

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**CHARLES BARNETT—Austinite of the Year 2009**

*by F. Dale Whitten, Affiliate*

Charles Barnett, Affiliate of the West Central Province, was named Austinite of the Year by the Austin Chamber of Commerce in a February 9, 2010, ceremony held in Austin, Texas. Charles is President and CEO of the Seton Family of Hospitals. Seton is a member of Ascension Health and includes 5 major medical centers, 2 community hospitals, 2 rural hospitals, a mental health hospital, 3 primary care clinics, and several other strategically located health facilities. Seton recently entered into a historic partnership with the University of Texas Southwest Medical Center in Dallas to increase the amount of medical education and medical research conducted in Central Texas.

As the region’s largest community service organization, last year Seton contributed more than $419 million to care for those persons living in poverty.

Charles has been in health care for 37 years, most of which were at Seton. He is married to Carol, also an Affiliate, and they have two sons and two grandchildren.
Vincentian Spirituality Retreat — OCTOBER 28-31, 2010
Mater Dei Provincialate, Evansville, Indiana

Once again, the Vincentian Spirituality Retreat will be offered to members of the Vincentian Family and lay collaborators in Vincentian ministries. The Retreat will open with a noon lunch on Thursday and close with Liturgy on Sunday followed by brunch. Two conferences will be offered daily, group discussion, private and group prayer and reflection, and optional daily Liturgy. Bring comfortable shoes for opportunities to walk, paddle boat, labyrinth, and outdoor stations of the cross. The suggested offering is $100 but scholarships are available.

An application will be sent on request by contacting Glenda Gorman.

Vincentian Family Virtual Gathering
by Sr. Catherine Mary Norris

On April 24, over 500 members of the Vincentian Family and our friends gathered in more than 25 locations to view a presentation by Sr. Caroljean Willie, S.C., “Changing Systems, Changing Lives.” Following the presentation, the local gatherings discussed how the Vincentian Family might implement systemic change more deliberately in the work we do with and for people living in poverty in the local areas.

In the second hour, a panel of Vincentian Family “experts” from the US and Canada responded to the presentation and added their insights. The challenge remains to broaden the conversation to include those living in poverty who know their needs better than anyone and want to be part of the solution. Both programs are available at http://VirtualVins.net

Congratulations to Fr. John Freund, Monica Watson and the FamVin team for moving the Family into cyberspace!

Please remember in your prayers the following who have recently died...

Sr. Jane Hamilton—WC—12/5/09
Sr. Rose Ann McNamee — WC—12/13/09
Sr. Clare Hogan—EC—1/30/10
Sr. Mary Ellen Creedon—EC—2/8/10
Sr. Ignatia O’Rourke—WC—3/20/10
Sr. Agnes Savoie—WC—3/30/10
Ms. Alta Underwood—1/3/10
Mr. Robert Alerding—4/1/10

LET US HEAR FROM YOU
If you have thoughts about the Affiliate Newsletter, news items, suggested topics, or a special prayer request, please send them to:

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