



9 September 2012

On the Feast of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

Dear Vincentian friends,

The annual report on the cause for the canonisation of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam which I presented to our President General, Michael THIO, was approved by those attending the General Assembly 2012, from 15 to 20 June, in Bangkok, Thailand.

Since it is essential that every branch of our Society should be informed, we enclosed a copy of the said report.

The Presidents are requested to make sure that it is widely spread to all Conferences in their respective countries.

Also attached is the final official text of the prayer for the canonization, translated into various languages.

All together, let us arouse a fervent surge of prayer and action for the successful outcome for Ozanam's cause.

Amin A. de TARRAZI

Chairman of the Commission
for the cause of canonization
of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam



**Commission for the cause
of Canonisation of Blessed
Frédéric Ozanam**

Paris, 9 th September,
on Blessed Frédéric Ozanam feast day

TO NATIONAL, SUPERIOR,
ASSIMILATED COUNCILS AND TO
INTERNATIONALE STRUCTURE

Dear Vincentian Friends,

At the very beginning of my term of office, our dear President General, Michael THIO, has entrusted me with the responsibility of Blessed Frédéric OZANAM's cause of canonisation.

Having joyfully accepted this mission as an honor, it is, of course, with the same fervour and enthusiasm that I shall undertake it, as I had committed myself for the promotion of the cause of beatification during some twenty years, till its happy conclusion on August 22nd, 1997.

Faithfull to my promise, just after my designation, at the beginning of 2011, I consider it as a pleasant duty to give you an account of the present state of the cause.

1. COMMISSION FOR THE CANONISATION

In full agreement with our President, we have set up a commission for the cause of canonisation, including the following members:

- Amin A. de TARRAZI (France), President
- Father Audace MANIRAMBONA, C.M. (Burundi), Spiritual Adviser of the Council General
- David WILLIAMS (United Kingdom)
- Justin DAVID (India)
- And, of course, Michael THIO (Singapore), President General, ex officio.

Besides, several other Vincentians have been incidentally associated to various works of the Commission.

The latter acts, in close cooperation with the President General, as well as with the Presidents of the various Councils of our Society, in particular those showing a special interest in the cause.

RELATIONS WITH THE POSTULATION

Close, frequent and steady contacts have been established and developed with the Postulation of the cause, ensured by the Congregation of the Mission.

Father Giuseppe GUERRA, C.M., with whom I worked for some years during the beatification process, sustains presently our endeavors with a constant availability, in link with Father Luigi MEZZADRI, C.M., Postulator.

He follows with the deepest care the case of recovery of Brother Joe FLANNIGAN, former President of our Society in the United States, whose medical file has been handed over to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, in Rome. At this stage, we have not yet any assurance that this case could be considered as miraculous, as long as the Roman authorities have not disclosed their decision.

1. THE MEANS OF THE CAUSE'S PROMOTION

We have already mentioned them in our 11th February, 2011 circular letter sent to all our Society's Superior and assimilated Councils.

Let us recall them briefly:

- a) Seize all opportunities to make Frédéric OZANAM better known, through the channel of the Church, as well as through the various medias (press, radio, television, internet,...).
- b) Encourage the publication of works dedicated to OZANAM, in all fields and for all categories of readers.
- c) Organize religious celebrations, retreats, conferences, symposia, discussion groups.
- d) Produce special events, plays, films, fostering a deeper knowledge and understanding of our Society's main founder s' figure.
- e) Unceasingly pray, with fervor and perseverance. It is, in fact, necessary to repeat that prayer remains, at all events, the essential and privileged way to reach our Lord's loving heart and to obtain from Him the blessing of the miracle for which we eagerly wait, at the time He considers appropriate. But prayer does not exempt us from appealing to other means, among which the one we have providentially inherited from Frédéric and Amélie OZANAM.

➤ *The Book of the Sick*

The Congregation for the Causes of the Saints taking exclusively into consideration medically unexplained cases of physical healing, it is essential that we may approach the sick and their families with all suitable delicacy and tact, allowing to propose them Blessed OZANAM's intercession.

It happens that we providentially have at our disposal a priceless instrument to approach those in pain: "*The Book of the Sick*", a most subtle choice of biblical texts (drawn from the

Old and New Testaments), meditations and prayers selected by Amélie and Frédéric, during the latter's ultimate stage of his own illness

Such a moving testimony of faith, love, hope and self-abnegation to God's will is a major asset to facilitate our relationship with our suffering brethren, by providing them comfort, confidence and, why not, healing, through OZANAM's intercession, if they accept it.

We, therefore, considered opportune to re-issue the "*Book of the Sick*" of which the last edition, long ago out of print, dates back a century...

For the new issue, in French language, we have respected the original historical version, adding to it a brief biography of OZANAM, enhanced by some of his most significant thoughts. We have also included an allusion to one of the most illustrious pilgrim to Lourdes: Pope John Paul II in person.

The fundamental idea is, in fact, to achieve a maximum of translations of "*The Book*" which English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic and later on, we sincerely hope, the most spoken Asiatic languages.

This bold project, presents some practical difficulties about which we must be aware.

Regarding the English version, a consensus has not been reached, up to now, among the various English speaking countries, on a unique version.

Considering the number, as well as the diversity, of these branches, one can understand the difficulty in finding an agreement upon this proposition.

Thus, in the absence of such an agreement, it seems more realistic to some of the persons involved, to let each country decide for its own edition and feel free to use the translation appearing the most adequate for the biblical texts selected by Frédéric and Amélie.

Whatever be the choice, let us keep in mind, in the true spirit of Vatican II Council, two main preoccupations: the concern for ecumenism and youth.

Beyond the problem of the choice, it is imperative that decisions should now be taken in the shortest delay to avoid any loss of a precious time.

➤ ***Prayer for the canonisation***

A prayer had been drawn up, just a century ago, by our predecessors, imploring the Lord to grant our Society the blessing of a miracle for the beatification of Frédéric OZANAM. The prayer received the "*imprimatur*" of Cardinal Léon-Adolphe AMETTE, Archbishop of Paris, on 4th October 1912.

The so long desired miracle occurred as soon as February 2nd 1926, Feast of the Virgin Mary, on the person of the little Brazilian boy, Luiz Fernando Benedito OTTONI, aged 18 months and suffering of an acute form of diphtheria. But the miracle was recognized as late as June 22nd, 1995 by the unanimously positive vote of the Theologian Advisers, ratifying the judgment of the "*Consulta Medica*".

No doubt this prayer, said by generations of Vincentians, may have been determinant in the positive issue of the process.

It therefore seemed quite natural, after the beatification of Frédéric OZANAM, by Pope John-Paul II, on 22nd August, 1997, at Notre-Dame of Paris Cathedral, to think of a new prayer for the canonisation.

A number of good draftings have spontaneously flourished throughout our Society, but we were still missing an official and universal prayer, uniting all members of our Society in a common, fraternal and spiritual impulse. The task has, indeed, not been easy, due to the diversity of traditions, cultures and sensitivities.

The enclosed prayer we presently suggest, with the full agreement of our President General, is the synthesis of a long, patient and careful thought of several protagonists.

Mgr Renauld de DINECHIN, Auxiliary Bishop of Paris, well known specialist of OZANAM, inspired our initiative while David WILLIAMS and Austin FAGAN enlightened us with their valuable contributions.

As for me, I have humbly done my best to complete, adapt and harmonize the various suggestions.

We, of course, do not claim having reached perfection, but we believe it is about time to agree on this wording, pondered over at length, in order to go forward.

4. INSTITUTION OF A LINK BETWEEN THE CAUSES OF BLESSED FREDERIC OZANAM AND BLESSED ROSALIE RENDU

Ardently wished by both Saint-Vincent de Paul Society and Daughters of Charity Company, this twinning has been jointly decided, on the occasion of a meeting gathering Sister Evelyne FRANC (accompanied by three of her sisters), Michael THIO and Amin de TARRAZI.

Both causes shall remain practically distinct, especially for matters regarding the procedure before the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, in Rome.

On the other hand, they shall be closely linked at the spiritual level. The respective prayers shall be exchanged and freely recited on either side. Four major dates have, nevertheless, been held as common official days of prayers:

- 27th September, feast of St Vincent de Paul
- 15th March, feast of St Louise de MARILLAC
- 7th February, feast of Blessed Rosalie RENDU
- 9th September, feast of Blessed Frédéric OZANAM

The whole « Vincentian Family» shall be associated to these days of intensive spiritual communion.

5. LOOKING AT THE FUTURE

Please forgive this long report, but it was rather essential to evaluate together the progress of the cause, if not really free from inevitable disappointments, at least fairly promising.

May you allow me, in the light of the experience and the teachings of the past, to express few wishes and recommendations.

Let us not renew the mistake we made along Frédéric OZANAM's process of beatification, believing that prayer was sufficient to obtain the miracle required by the Congregation of the Saints.

If prayer remains at the very heart of our task, it is not sufficient!

As a matter of fact, the promotion and the postulation of the cause imply a considerable amount of administrative work summoning up our constant vigilance.

To reach our goal, we are bound to take any initiative, seize any opportunity, helping to enhance OZANAM's radiance and meeting the deprived liable to draw in his life, his example and his achievements, the courage of carrying on serenely their earthly pilgrimage.

All of us are fully committed in this exalting adventure !

May Blessed Frédéric OZANAM's birthday bicentenary, in 2013, warm up our enthusiasm and strengthen our zeal so that, thanks to our joined endeavours, we shall be able, as soon as possible, to invoke St Frédéric OZANAM !

Fraternally and faithfully yours,

In the name of the Commission for the canonisation

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amin A. de Tarrazi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent underline under the name "Tarrazi".

Amin A. de TARRAZI

PRAYER FOR THE CANONISATION OF BLESSED FREDERIC OZANAM

In the hope of obtaining a miracle through his intercession

Lord,

You made Blessed Frédéric Ozanam a witness of the Gospel, full of wonder at the mystery of the Church.

You inspired him to alleviate poverty and injustice and endowed him with untiring generosity in the service of all who were suffering.

In family life, he revealed a most genuine love as a son, brother, husband and father.

In secular life, his ardent passion for the truth enlightened his thought, writing and teaching.

His vision for our society was a network of charity encircling the world and he instilled St Vincent de Paul's spirit of love, boldness and humility.

His prophetic social vision appears in every aspect of his short life, together with the radiance of his virtues.

We thank you Lord, for those many gifts and we ask, if it is your will, the grace of a miracle through the intercession of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.

May the Church proclaim his holiness, as a saint, a providential light for today's world!

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.