

Welcome

Welcome to all of you on this special day in this chapel at Gijzegem. We are also deeply connected on this day to all our fellow sisters in Brazil, Paraguay, Congo, South Africa, Cameroon and France.

We include them in our prayer and celebration. May the Lord strengthen our unity and connection. Whether you come from far away or close by, one thing is clear: you are most welcome!

Today we want to celebrate with you, our staff, our volunteers, and friends, the 250th birthday of our Foundress Elisabeth de Robiano. She was at the foundation of our Congregation, the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul, Servants of the Poor of Gijzegem.

Brother Nathanaël, we are grateful that you wish to be with us on this jubilee day and to preside over this Eucharist. We know how in your native village, Zandhoven, you were inspired by the Sisters of Gijzegem. Your love for our Congregation and especially for our Congolese sisters, can still be experienced today. We therefore welcome you in a special way.

E.H. Dean Vandenhoven, and all concelebrants who, in one way or another, have a great connection with our sisters, we also welcome you warmly.

Father Joe Agostino, we are extremely honored to have you in our midst. As the person in charge of the Vincentian Family, you always bring our spirituality to the forefront, and thus we feel truly connected to the great international family. In recent years, you have somewhat become our inspiration. We are happy that you, together with Fr. Emile, accepted our invitation.

Thanks, also, to the great care of your Superior General, Fr. Tomaz Mavric, who is not here today. We have succeeded in starting a new community with Vincentian spirituality in Taizé. Thanks to the commitment of our Congolese sisters, our sisters are part of the ecumenical work in Taizé. We are also grateful for the presence of this delegation.

Today we think back gratefully to our foundress, Elisabeth de Robiano, and to our spiritual father, St. Vincent, from whom we learned about our commitment to God and a very great human commitment.

Honoring Jesus Christ as "the source and paragon of all love; prompts us to serve Him in the poor.

For more than 200 years, we continue to work to build God world, for which He needs everyone:

- both the workers of the first hour and those of the last,
- both those with formation and experience and those newly arrived who still have much to learn but may be able to provide fresh ideas.
- both people with time and people with busy lives.
- He needs pastors and leaders but also quiet workers and prayers.

All are needed for the building of God kingdom on earth.

We thank the Lord for so much grace and ask that He continue to be the source of inspiration for so many young people who dare to follow Him.