**Chapter II**

**AIC’s Mission**

* **AIC’s Vision and Mission**
* **The Foundations of AIC’s Mission**
  + - **The Gospel**
    - **St Vincent’s values**
    - The Social Doctrine of the Church
* AIC’s Journey

**AIC’s Mission and Vision**

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| **Vision**  AIC intends to be a Christian transformative force in society, to give priority to involvement with women around the world, through projects and actions that include the participation of the beneficiaries.  AIC carries out local activities, collaborates on a local and global level, participates in networks and involves itself in public political programmes or in civil society.  **Mission**  **Following the teachings of the Church and the example of Saint Vincent de Paul:**   * To fight against all forms of poverty and exclusion, through transformative initiatives and projects; * To work with our brothers and sisters living in situations of poverty, encouraging the discovery of everyone’s individual strengths, supporting education and promoting a decent life; * To denounce injustice and put pressure on civil society structures and decision-makers to fight the causes of poverty. |  |

**The Foundations of AIC’s Mission**

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| AIC’s identity is based on **three sources**:   * The Gospel * St Vincent’s Values * The Church’s Social Teaching   **The Gospel**  We want to keep the message of Christ alive today: **follow** him, until we **meet** him and **remain** with him. Like secular NGOs, we live in solidarity in a globalized society, but for us in AIC this solidarity is based on love of our neighbour, received from Christ, and always goes the extra mile, beyond what our merely human strength could achieve.  When teaching the first volunteers, St Vincent based his teaching on Christ, asking them: *“What would Christ do if he were in my place?”*. Today, this means:  **Follow** Christ (Mt 25:4): *“As often as you did not do it for one of these little ones, you did not do it for me”*. Christ identified himself by preference with the poor.  **Meet** Christ (Jn 3:16): *“He laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for one another”*.  **Remain** with Christ (Jn 15:10): *“If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love”*.  **St Vincent’s Values**  St Vincent promoted several values by which he encouraged the women in first groups that he founded to live. As AIC volunteers, we are also invited to live with:  **Simplicity** (Ecclesiastes 7:29): *“See this alone I have found: that God made human beings straightforward, but they have devised many schemes.”*  St Vincent tells us: “*For my part, I can state that a true and practical faith, and a real religious spirit is commonly found among the simple and the poor... everyone is attracted by simple people, speaking with sincerity”* (SV:XI:462).  **Humility** (Mt 11:29): *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls”.*  St Vincent tells us: *“If we are told “Who goes there? Humility! Let that be our watchword.”* (Coste XII, 203). “*Leave God to find God. The poor evangelise us by their presence alone”, and they are our lords and masters* (SV:IXA:120) *whom we ought to love with tenderness and deep respect. “It seems that the poor man only receives, because he is in distress. And yet, he gives us his ability to receive*.”  **Charity**(Mt 7:12): St Vincent tells us: *“When charity dwells in a soul, it takes full possession of all its powers: it gives it no rest, it’s a fire that is constantly active”* (SV:XI:132) *“Charity cannot remain idle, it must push us to procure salvation and consolation for others”* (SV:XII:265).  This has an interpersonal dimension, which is respect for the other, a community and political dimension - in that human beings are fulfilled through belonging to a human organisation - and a religious dimension - universal love, without measure (Mt 5:43), selfless (Lk 14:12-14) and truly willing to serve (Mt 20:25-28). | **1st Source:**    **follow**  **meet**  **remain with Christ**  **2nd Source:**  **Virtues that belong to evangelisation:**  **Simplicity:**  **Sincerity when we act**  **Humility in your encounters with others.**  **“The poor person gives us his ability to receive”**  **Charity: Loving our neighbour as ourselves** |

**Questions to reflect on in groups:**

1. How do you live AIC’s mission in your group? Do you have the impression that you aren’t putting certain aspects into practice? If so, which ones?
2. How do you bring the desire to look for Christ to life in your service with others (or in your Vincentian mission) to **follow** him, until **meeting** him and **remaining** with him?
3. Give some concrete examples of the way in which you each live by the Vincentian values (simplicity, humility and charity) in your group and on a personal level.