



FAMVIN NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VINCENTIAN FAMILY



IN THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Meditation | PAGE 2 |
| Q and A | PAGE 3 |
| Country Profile | PAGE 5 |
| Special Events | PAGES 4, 7 |

Above: At the International Meeting of the Vincentian Family in Miami, Florida, USA

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW FAMVIN NEWS!

We are pleased to introduce you to your new e-publication FamVin News! Each issue will carry news of the Vincentian family, features of ministries around the world, a Q and A with a family member, profiles of countries where we serve those in need, photographs, a meditation and more. We plan a quarterly distribution to start, with every hope of producing a monthly issue as soon as possible. Most of all, we want to tell your stories to everyone, stories that touch the heart and inspire all of us in our commitment to those who live and struggle on the margins.

It is the fruit of a journey that we have been following since 2021 as the International Communications Commission of the Vincentian Family. We ask you to be the protagonists; our intent is to give a voice to those who have no voice and to make the work of the Branches of the Vincentian Family known throughout the world. To do this, however, we need you and your contribution.

We invite you to email us your news of events, projects, successes, photos, or small videos (for Famvin.org) that illustrate your work. We also encourage Letters to the Editor. You may suggest a feature story to us or a person of interest for our Q and A section. The Q and A can be a member of FamVin or a person whose life has been enriched and improved through Vincentian ministry. To start we will appear in English, Spanish and French.

TO CONTACT US OR TO SUBMIT EDITORIAL MATERIAL, EMAIL: NEWS@FAMVIN.ORG

Enjoy your first issue! Tell us what you think. We welcome recommendations for improvement. Rejoice that this small publication will unite us in Vincentian spirit and Vincentian heart as we touch the lives eager for our love.

Vincentian Family Communications Commission

ARCHITECT OF GOD

BY FR. HUGO VERA, CM

If there was anything I was certain of at the age of 17, it was that I wanted to have a career that would give me a lot of money, get married, and have three children.

I am the middle child of three boys, from a "normal" family; my mother a teacher and my father a businessman. I lived and grew up in a city in the north of Argentina, on the border with the capital of Paraguay. I spent my childhood in a school run by the Daughters of Charity, so a certain life of faith was familiar to me.

From a very young age I was dreaming of things that I wanted to be when I grew up. I was ruling out all the options that would not give me the amount of money that I thought I had to have. I had discovered some subjects that I really liked: mathematics, drawing and aesthetics. This made me think of a career that could include all that and if I did my job well, it could give me a good income. It was architecture. I was a senior in high school, dating for two years, and with everything planned to make my dream come true. I never thought that someone could undo it in a few minutes, and that someone was God.

It was a day in June, when a Vincentian priest came to my school for a retreat. The first thing that struck me was that he was "young". Yes, I only knew older priests and I had never seen anyone like him.

During the day I was observing him and I began to wonder, "If he, being as he is, can be a priest, why can't I?" And from that moment everything changed.



If he can be a priest...
why can't I?

In July of that year I arrived in Buenos Aires (1,200 km from my home) to get to know the Seminary and one thing caught my attention: "They are normal!" Yes, it seems strange to say, but I imagined arriving at a monastery, not a place where they were playing soccer. But what struck me most was seeing them happy even without money, just wanting to give their lives to God in the poor. And it was at that moment when, as if it were a miracle, I was able to unite two key points in my story: my mother's faith and my father's charity. From that moment a new adventure began, with challenges, hopes, joys and also pains.

This path has had everything that life can offer, including moments of crisis: from wondering what I am doing here, to wanting to say enough is enough. But at every moment I felt that it was the Lord who was building in me, and that he was asking me to do the same with others' lives. Rebuilding broken hearts, building hope, designing life projects, illuminating darkness, creating solid foundations, taking advantage of all spaces, working with the right materials and being efficient in the use of strength and energy. And all while receiving the best pay a person can get, joy.

Years later, I know that I never gave up being that architect that I once dreamed of, only my "friend and companion on the way" transformed me into an "architect of God", because He does not change you, He transforms you. ■





Q AND A

MEET YOUTH LEADER KAT BRISSETTE OF RHODE ISLAND, USA

BY ROSEMARY LALEVÉE
CARROLL

Kat Brissette (*above photo, at left*) is constantly on-the-go as a full-time graphic designer for a toy company and wearer of many Vincentian hats. Kat has been a Vincentian with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for 10 years. She serves internationally as SSVI International Council General (CGI) Youth Territorial Coordinator for America 1, nationally on The Society of St. Vincent de Paul USA's Board of Directors, as well as Chairperson of the National Young Adult Committee, and locally as her Society of St. Vincent de Paul Conference Secretary. In her free time, she works as a Youth Ministry Coordinator at St. Luke's Church in Barrington, Rhode Island.

Q. Describe your work with Vincentian youth.

A. Locally, I help run our youth and young adult conference called Next Gen. One of our biggest projects is providing toiletries to our conferences spread throughout the State. Each year this program we call Necessities for Neighbors provides thousands of

toiletry bags to neighbors in need through our twenty-four SVDP Conferences and eleven food sites. In addition, I help run Poverty Simulations, Workshops, community service events, and mini retreats with young Catholics wanting to put their faith into action and serve their neighbors in need. In my roles Nationally and Internationally, I help support other young people in their Vincentian work across the USA in our America 1 Territory (which includes Haiti, St. Lucia, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the United States), as well as internationally alongside our CGI-Youth Committee.

Q. In what ministries are Vincentian youth engaged nationwide?

A. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul provides so many ways for young people to live out their Vincentian Vocation. In the USA, we consider youth as under 18, and our young adults are 18-35. The Society is present in most dioceses in the USA. SVDP is known for our home visits, going out in pairs to visit neighbors in need, just like our founder Blessed Frederic did when he began the Society in 1833 in Paris, France. Some younger youth members do shadow home visits, however, they also reimagine the home visit and get

creative with personal encounters with our neighbors in need, often serving at our "Special Works." Many of our youth volunteer in our soup kitchens and food pantries, help sort donations at our thrift stores, help out at our shelters, tutor neighbors at our study programs, help deliver Christmas presents to low-income families, write letters to the elderly, host community events such as sleep-outs for homelessness, and so much more. More and more of our youth are also engaged in advocacy.

Q. Is the Vincentian youth movement growing? What factors lead to the number of active Vincentian youth?

A. I think the Vincentian youth movement is growing, and I pray that this continues! Over the years we have seen our Society age. This may have been due to the time commitment of conference life and amazing people end up doing it all. I believe this generation is a generation of action, and we see them show-up and want to make a difference. We need to continue to support, encourage, and engage our young Vincentians! They are our present and future. Over the years we have begun to make progress helping to attract and form young Vincentians, and the seeds we have planted are blooming.

Q. Tell us about the youth ministry you lead at St. Luke's Parish in Barrington.

A. I am the youth ministry coordinator at St. Luke's Parish in Barrington where I work with middle school and high school students who are looking to grow in their faith and have a support system of other young people trying to live their faith. As a Vincentian, I couldn't help myself but to introduce my charism to the teens. The teens have started their own SVDP Conference, and help our Diocesan Council and nearby conference when they can.

Q. Based on your experience with youth, what do you predict for the future of Vincentian charism in the USA?

A. Young people are looking for ways to connect and grow in holiness with other young people and are striving to find

continued on p. 4

Q and A, Kat Brissette continued from page 3

tangible ways to put their faith into action. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was founded by a young college student and his friends, and Blessed Frederic's story continues to inspire young people all over the world. Many of our Vincentian saints are so relatable, and young people aspire to be more like them. There is so much poverty in our world today, spiritual, emotional, and financial, and there is such a need for Vincentians!

“

I WAS INSPIRED BY THE SELFLESS VINCENTIANS

Q. Who or what inspires your Vincentian call?

A. Simple answer is the Holy Spirit I have always had a calling to serve the poor. From a young age I always wanted to help others. It is just what we are supposed to do. My mom is a single mom of four of us. My mom and my grandparents' faith and example has been my guide. I grew up around many religious sisters and priests who live their charism. I also am blessed with gifts. I have wanted to serve those in need and to grow in holiness, and dream of having a family of my own. My mom first introduced me to SVDP when she began working for them as an Executive Director. I was inspired by the selfless Vincentians. After meeting them and seeing what they did, I knew I wanted to be a part of it! I often say my full-time job is my side hustle, and my Vincentian Vocation is my full-time gig.

Q. What is the personal prayer you say for those living with a Vincentian heart?

A. Lord, you see the hearts of our young people. We love you and we want to serve you. We want to take your love to others. Use us, guide us, and help us trust in your Divine Providence. Give us the courage to do your will. Our hearts are with your poor. Help us be your hands and feet. Give us your eyes and heart. Help us to see you in those we serve and help those we serve see you in us. Amen. --Prayer of Kat Brissette. ☒



INTERNATIONAL VINCENTIAN YOUTH MEETING



**FROM JULY 29 TO AUGUST 1,
THE CITY OF FELGUEIRAS
(DIOCESE OF PORTO,
PORTUGAL) WILL RECEIVE
1200 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM
ALL FIVE CONTINENTS TO
PARTICIPATE IN WORLD
YOUTH DAY LISBON 2023.**

Young people, members of the Vincentian Family from all over the world, will gather in Portugal July 29–August 1 in the city of Felgueiras, in the diocese of Porto, for a large international gathering in preparation for World Youth Day 2023 to be held in Lisbon, August 1–6.

"We have almost one hundred young people from VMY Slovakia and we are on our way as pilgrims not only for WYD2023 in Lisbon, but also for the International Vincentian Youth Encounter," explains Milan Kovac, president of the Vincentian Marian Youth in Slovakia. We are very excited to be there and live our Vincentian charism. It is a great moment, with God and with the Church. The organizing committee, formed by members of the Vincentian Marian Youth, St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Daughters of Charity, and the Congregation of the Mission, foresees an influx of about twelve hundred young Vincentians, made

possible thanks to the generous and active support of the municipality of Felgueiras. Two years ago, they signed an agreement with us for logistical collaboration as a sign of their welcome to us, to their land and to their people. The motto of the meeting is a phrase of St. Vincent de Paul that testifies well to the spirit of missionary ministry and the charism of the Vincentian Family: "I am neither from here nor from there, but from wherever God wants me to be." The young people who will participate in the international meeting will deepen the meaning of the Vincentian missionary charism in meetings and celebrations.

"I am looking forward to the international Vincentian gathering to celebrate our being Vincentians, to share our experiences of helping the most needy in our communities, to live the Gospel with joy and fullness!" explains Charlie Bennett of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of England and Wales. "This opportunity to share experiences, knowledge, and challenges in living the Vincentian mission is both an opportunity for growth and a moment of joy."

The entire Vincentian Family, made up of more than one hundred sixty branches, is called to participate with its young people in this extraordinary international formation and celebration event. ☒

EVENTS CALENDAR

July 29 – August 1, 2023
International Vincentian Youth
Meeting, Felgueiras, Portugal

October 26–29, 2023
North American Vincentian Family
Gathering, Chicago, USA.
navincentianfamilygathering2023.com

November 14–17, 2024
2nd Convocation of the Vincentian
Family, Rome
<https://famvin.org/en/famvin-2024/>



COUNTRY PROFILE: INDIA

BY MELODEE DE CASTRO

The Vincentian Family comprises organizations inspired by the life and work of St. Vincent de Paul. The Vincentian Family is a global Catholic movement rooted in the spirituality and example of St Vincent de Paul. With a membership of over two million people, there are hundreds of Vincentian projects across six continents helping hundreds of thousands of people each year.

In order to realize the Vincentian Charism effectively, the leaders urged the need of strengthening unity and collaboration, and finding ways of reaching together to the poorest of the poor.

EVOLUTION OF THE VINCENTIAN FAMILY INDIA (2007-2023)

It is the Vincentian spirit that inspired the major superiors of few Vincentian branches to the Vincentian Family in India (VFI). The first attempts were made by Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM and Bro. Joseph Pandian of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul as early as November 2006. The total of 17 sequential annual meetings was key for VFI's steady growth through the years.

The 1st VFI meeting in February 2007 was composed of the major superiors and heads of the four major branches (CM, DC, SSVP and SCV). At the second annual meeting with 11 branches represented, the first executive body was organized. They met twice a year and was initially composed of Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM, Rev. Fr. Mathew Kallamackal CM, Sr. Salvia SCV, Sr. Rose Kidengen DC and Bro. Joseph Pandian.

The guidelines for the Vincentian Family India were drafted during the 3rd annual meeting (Kannyakumari) in 2009. These guidelines were then presented and approved for implementation during the 4th annual meeting

(Gopalpur-on-sea) in 2010. It was also when the proposal of having an ongoing formation program began. This was initially conducted by Rev. Fr. Varghese Thottamkara CM and then continued by Rev. Fr. Shajan Puthuserry CM.

On the 5th gathering (Manathavady) in 2011, the plan of promoting the Vincentian Family at the grassroots level surfaced. Fr. George Ayaloor CM organized the seminar on systemic change. At this time, the call to establish a secretariat at Bangalore was first suggestion. Likewise, the suggestion for a News Bulletin for VFI named 'Vinfam India' happened at the 6th gathering (Bangalore) in 2012.

A common project for promoting the dignity of women was proposed at the 7th meeting (Ranchi) in 2013. At the 8th gathering (Angamally, Kerala) in 2014, the need for a commission of systemic change was recognized. Then international coordinator of the Vincentian Family, Fr. Gregory Gay CM graced the 9th annual meeting (Mysore) in 2015. Appreciating the steady growth of VFI, he called for better collaboration among branches. At the 10th annual meeting in 2016 at Gopalpur-on-sea, Odisha, the strong proposal to establish the secretariat resurfaced with partial support from VSO and VFO of the Congregation of the Mission. Br. Tomy Varghese SSVP was elected as the Secretary and Br. Mathew MC SSVP as joint secretary.

continued on p. 6



Country Profile: India, continued from page 5

At the 11th Annual Gathering ('Niveditha' Aluva, Kerala) in 2017, the Daughters of Charity of South Indian Province agreed to offer half acre of land to house the secretariat previously to be located in Mysore and transferred to Bangalore. For the purposes of maintaining the autonomy as well as financial transactions, VFI shall be registered as Trust. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM, Sr. Rose Chirayil DC and Br. Tomy Varghese SSVP shall be its President, Vice President and Secretary cum Treasurer respectively, officially registered as VFI.

The 12th annual gathering (Gopalpur-on-sea, Odisha) in 2018 facilitated interaction of VF members with Sr. Marge Clifford DC of the Vincentian Family Office in the US. The gathering was instrumental to the decision to adopt the riot-affected village in Khandamal, Odisha and change it into a model village on systemic change principles. It was at the 13th annual gathering (Chandapura, Bangalore) in 2019 that the decision for the 'Goat Rearing Farm Scheme' in Khandamal came about and implemented successfully. The 14th annual gathering (Edappally, Cochin, Kerala) in 2020 welcomed the idea with enthusiasm about the possibility of organizing 'big' gatherings in the future.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 15th gathering had to be held online via Zoom. During the exchange, it was



realized that the action plan could not be implemented due to the prevailing situation. But the housing project of Kandhamal in Odisha still continued with the help of FHA. Ms. Natalie Monteza, the Campaign Coordinator of FHA, also addressed the gathering. She appreciated the efforts of Vincentian Family India, particularly Fr. Francis Puthenthayil, in realising the goal of constructing twenty-nine houses in Kandhamal and assured all possible further assistance.

At the 16th annual gathering, a video message from Very Rev. Fr. Tomaž Mavrič CM, International President of Vincentian Family and Sr. Marge Clifford DC, Executive Body member of the International Vincentian Family were presented.

The theme of the gathering highlighted a focus on Vincentian Identity.

At the most recent (17th) annual gathering of VFI in Vincentgiri, Kerala on 25-26 of February 2023, specific directions and ways forward were specified as follows:

1. Continue the housing projects of Kandhamal
2. Develop Vincentian Theology. To this effect a commission was set up with three members: Fr. Joy Thuruthel CM, Sr. Nimmie SCN (Provincial of Bangalore) and Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM.
3. That the CIF programme conducted in Paris be held in India
4. Exploring the possibility of raising fund for establishing Secretariate at Hallehalli in Bangalore. This effect Bishop Thomas Thiruthalil promised that he would support for the Lybrary.
5. More Formation programmes especially on Vincentian Spirituality and Systemic Change. 📖



INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF THE VINCENTIAN FAMILY IN MIAMI, FLORIDA, USA

BY LILY DE LEÓN

The First International Meeting of the Vincentian Family in Miami, Florida, USA, was held on June 30, July 1 and 2. The theme was "Walking together with Mary and St. Vincent". The event was organized by the Vincentian Family in Miami and managed by the Vincentian Coordinating Team of Florida (ECOVIF), made up of AIC, DC, SSVdP and Confraternity of MinuKids. It was held as part of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in South Florida, the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Daughters of Charity in Miami and the blossoming of the new Vincentian Branches: AIC - AMM - MinuKids.

It is worth mentioning that until 2020, only the Daughters of Charity and the St. Vincent de Paul Society were known in Miami. However, in recent years, the Vincentian Family has grown, bringing the presence of the Ladies of Charity (AIC), the Association of the Miraculous Medal (AMM) and the birth of the Vincentian Girls and Boys (MinuKids). Also, now there is 'Casa Maria del Caminante' [The House of Mary, the Wanderer], headquarters of the Vincentian Family in the city.

“

In recent years, the Vincentian Family has grown

The weekend of the Meeting began with a solemn Eucharistic Vigil that started with the Rosary for Peace, prayed by children, youth and adults who came from different parts of the United States and Latin American countries. This was followed by the Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament led by Father Fabian Barrera, CM.

Archbishop Thomas Wenski, Archbishop of Miami, presided at the opening Mass, which was concelebrated by Vincentian priests Fabian Barrera, CM and Guillermo Campuzano, CM.

continued on p. 8



Meeting in Miami, continued from page 7

The presentations and topics prepared for the occasion were developed as a form of Vincentian Formation, focused on deepening and making known the teachings of St. Vincent.

- Walking together in the light of St. Vincent – Father Guillermo Campuzano, CM
- Walking together with Mary and her Miraculous Medal – Father Fabian Barrera, CM

The final presentation, Walking together with St. Vincent Today, was given by Father Juan Carlos Gatti, CM, Sister Fanny Mora, DC and Mrs. Lily De León, AIC. These three presentations took the participants on a tour of the works of the international Vincentian Family (FAMVIN) and the Vincentian Family of Latin America (FAVILA): The work of the Vincentian Priests, the Daughters of Charity and the lay people committed to the charism that enamored people like St. Louise de Marillac, St. Catherine Laboure and Frederick Ozanam, among many others. At the same time, it was an invitation for those who feel the call to be Laborers in the field of the poor, where the Harvest is plentiful, and want to join this 'Vincentian Movement' which has given birth to such projects as the Vincentian Confraternities, groups of professionals from different backgrounds who come together to serve those in most need.

The meeting was addressed to all people of good will who would like to get to know and deepen the spirituality of the organized charity of St. Vincent de Paul and who would like to associate themselves with the Vincentian Family in order to support projects and social works in favor of the most vulnerable people in society, both in the United States and abroad. To achieve this goal, we demonstrated the relevance and strength of St. Vincent de Paul's charism today, incarnated in the service of thousands of lay and consecrated volunteers who serve Christ in the most disadvantaged through projects of relief, promotion, accompaniment, integral service, education and humanitarian assistance.

Among the participants were: Mrs. Monica Cobo, representative of the Latin American Council of the Vincentian



Family (FAVILA); Mrs. Tayde Callatay, International President of AIC, and Mrs. Guillermina Vergara, International Vice-President of AIC. Also, several MinuKids and Vicen-Teens (Children and Adolescent Digital Evangelizers) families from Chile, Peru, Panama and Colombia were present.

Thanks to the efforts of every one of those who organized this First International Vincentian Meeting and the graces poured out by the Holy Spirit, a great 'Vincentian Movement' has been unleashed from Miami, as Father Tomaž Mavrič, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, the President of the Vincentian Family Executive Board, has called it. Father sent his greetings and blessing for this event that not only strengthened the faith of those who already identified with and lived the Vincentian Spirituality, but also touched the hearts of many people who were unaware of the charism and legacy of St. Vincent de Paul, the Saint of the Poor, and brought out in them the desire to love, serve and honor God in the person of the poor. ■

A publication of the International Vincentian Family. Direct all correspondence to: news@famvin.org