



LETTER TO YOUNG VICENTIANS OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

Paris, 1 July 2020

Dear friends, Young Vincentians, other members of the SSVP

I am writing this letter so that we can live together the 4th of July, the date of the commemoration of the International Day of Vincentian Youth of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, a date that motivates us to understand that, from its origins, our institution was initiated by young people, surrounded by young people, and grew up through the courage, boldness and testimony of many young people, who gave themselves to the mission of being Church alongside the most needy, the Poor.

The year 2020, is a year that will be marked in the history of humanity, we are living in a period of Covid-19 pandemic, which affects not only health, but also the economy, politics and social life. And, of course, the poor are the most affected in this period. To all of you I send my wishes for comfort, my affection and my prayers, especially for the missing victims, for their families and friends who are still feeling the pain of loss, we believe in the Resurrection, and this faith helps us and will continue to help us overcome this moment.



Knowing this, I want to encourage all Vincentian Youth around the world, to **share Hope and Charity**, in the week of July 4th, which marks our day as Young members of the SSVP.

The International Committee for Youth, Children and Adolescents of the International Council General of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, has understood that it is good to maintain the celebrations of 4 July of this year, as a way of honoring all those who are on the front line in the fight against the pandemic and also to motivate you, young Vincentians, to be a channel of hope for a new time and to continue to exercise our mission of embracing the world in a great network of charity.

The theme we chose for this year is **“Young Vincentians: sharing Hope and Charity”**, a theme that helps us to understand two pillars that are characteristic of the Young SSVP member. Youth is a channel of **hope**, especially in these times of uncertainty in which we live. The Holy Scriptures affirm this when they say: "Suffering produces perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope. And hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:3-5a).

The Catechism of the Holy Church says the following about the theological virtue of Hope: “The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity...” (Catechism 1818).

In this sense, we want Young Vincentians to be able to spread Hope around the world, using at this time when we need to distance ourselves physically, social networks, the internet, in short, different platforms, so that it is possible that many people receive messages that calm their heart and renew their hopes.

Charity is well known to us Vincentians, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, teaches us that “Charity is Love”, and Saint Paul in one of his letters says that “Charity will never end”. We want to encourage Young Vincentians, in this time of pandemic, whenever possible, with due care for safety and health preservation, to continue the mission of helping those who need it most, the Poor: do not abandon them. This is the time for us young Vincentians to show our leadership at this time, to assume responsibility, to take care that the poor are receiving the necessary help. We need to be creative to maintain the SSVP mission around the world.



So, dear friends, dear young people, let us live the 4th of July and every other day sharing Hope and Charity, I reaffirm the position of the SSVP Council General International: you, Young person, are very important, this day was thought to remember, to celebrate the importance of the Youth for the entire structure of the SSVP.

We need young leaders, young people who take responsibility in the various Councils and Committees, young people who stand in favor of the Poor, young people who are weekly in the Conferences (physically or virtually) making the choice to change the reality of poverty for families in need. SSVP does not only need young people to report once a year, SSVP needs young people with a voice, with action, with courage, with boldness, with joy, with a commitment to continue the mission initiated by Frédéric Ozanam and his companions.

SSVP needs you, Young one!

I want to leave 4 pieces of advice for all the Vincentian Youth of the SSVP, so that they can fulfill their mission well every day:

I - Live the **Joy** that is characteristic of young Christians. (At the World Youth Day 2016 in Krakow, Pope Francis reminded us that the young Christian cannot be sad, he must live the Joy that flows from God's merciful heart).

II - Live the **Charity** that is so necessary for SSVP members. (Virtue chosen by our founders to achieve holiness).

III - Live the **Boldness** that belongs to the followers of Frédéric Ozanam. (Ozanam was a daring young man, who knew how to respond with courage and wisdom to God's call to care for the poor and to care for the Church).

IV - Live the **love of the Eucharist** that belongs to those who have Blessed Frassati as their patron. (Our life, our spirituality, our mission have meaning only within the Catholic Church, and the Eucharist is the center of the Church's life, and Frassati had a great love for the Eucharist and the Mass).

Let us live these 4 councils every day, so that we may succeed in our mission to renew the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and continue the work started by those 7 young people in 1833.

May Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, patron of Vincentian youth, intercede to God for each one of us, Young Vincentians of the SSVP, so that we may be healthy and willing to fulfill our mission of sharing Hope and Charity in everyone, today and forever.

Happy International Day for Young Vincentians!!!

Hugs from the International Youth Committee of the Council General International of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

Confreire Willian Alves
*International Vice President for
Youth Children and Adolescents*