



# OZANAM NETWORK



Council General International - Society of St Vincent de Paul



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**Chairman:** Carlos Lafarga  
**Graphic Designer:** Markinhos Perassoli  
**Translation Coordinator:** Ana Cuervo  
**Ozanam Network Graphics:** Javier Guijarro

#### Acknowledgements to our Translators' Club for their work::

Rachael Barton	Fábio Fronza	André Luis
Annie Callaghan	Cleitom Gomes	Marguerite McMillan
Eneida Fernández	Anne-Marie Huggon	Antonio Sebastian
Clermont Fortin	Lucas Lomar	Joanna Waller



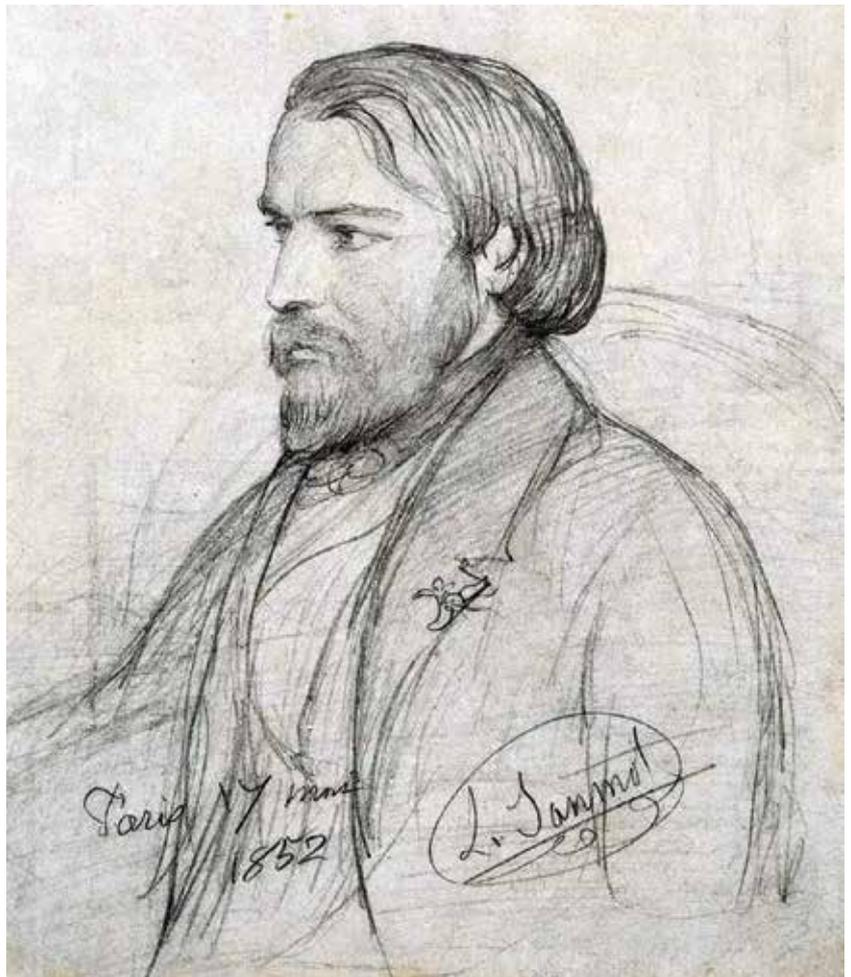
## The Stages of Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam's Canonization

In 2022, we are reliving with much joy the 25th anniversary of the beatification of dear brother Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam, whose ceremony took place in 1997 at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, when Pope John Paul II, in the presence of Catholic youth, introduced to the world to the virtues of the main founder of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

One of the priorities of the current mandate of the Council General International, besides the most common strategic areas (formation, communication, youth and good governance), is the process of canonization of Ozanam, initiated in 1925, by the hands of the 7th President General International, brother Henri de Vergès, with the support of the Diocese of Paris.

In 1926, the first testimony by a sick child came from Brazil. In 1990, the Vatican published the document "Positio Super Virtutibus" showing the heroic virtues of Ozanam. Thus, the Holy Church could declare Ozanam "Venerable" in 1993. In 1995, the Vatican published the document "Positio Super Miraculo", indicating that the 1926 healing occurred through Ozanam's intercession.

After the beatification in 1997, the Council General International intensified the spiritual campaign for canonization. In 2014, a new possible miracle attributed to Ozanam occurred again in Brazil, through the miraculous healing of a baby. This probable cure is under analysis by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, which is promoting the latest studies on the theological and medical aspects. A commission of experts is analyzing the documents in detail.

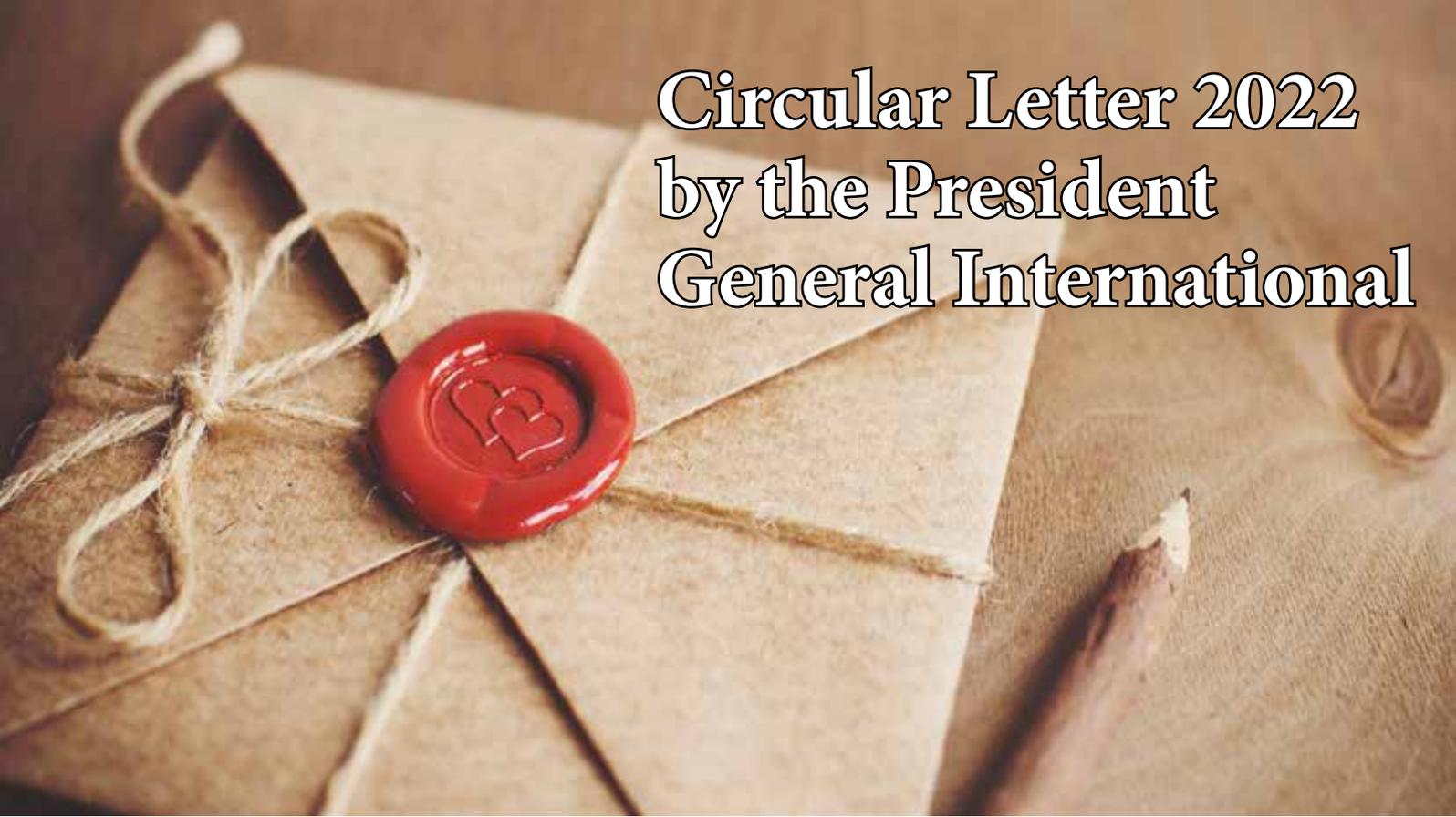


The Council General, our entire Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and the Vincentian Family throughout the world, continue to pray for the canonization of Ozanam, a man who was an example as a son, father, Christian, professional and husband. To this end, a fast has been instituted on the 23rd of every month to strengthen the spiritual campaign in search of the long awaited canonization.

The Council General considers the support of the canonization procedure as an absolute priority of the institutional action of our Confederation. It has been a long wait of almost 100 years and we pray God, if it is the providential will, that Ozanam be sanctified, for the honor and glory of the Lord.



# Circular Letter 2022 by the President General International



## An in-depth reflection on today's challenges

This year's Circular Letter, written by the President General International, has been published. The work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, still marked by the pandemic, has not been hindered; instead, it has become a real challenge, as it was for the founders of the Conferences, who endured similar situations in their times.

The President General states that "inequality and deprivation have increased, among nations and within them" and that "God expects much of us, the members, now more than ever, as the consequences of the pandemic, as well as so many tragic deaths, are disastrous for the whole mankind".

In this regard, brother Renato Lima elaborates on the myriad of initiatives undertaken by the Council General International in these times, which is clear evidence that we can keep on serving in hope, despite all the hardships, and reach out to the most vulnerable.

The President General also addresses the importance of education to alleviate poverty, the care and respect of the environment, the Vincentian behavior, and the good practices in the management of charitable works and at the Councils.

Furthermore, the President General makes some recommendations for members: Observing the SSVP's Rule, body and soul; working in harmony with the precepts of the Church; and always being charitable towards our companions on this Vincentian path, so that Conferences may truly be a "place of holiness".

Like in previous Circular Letters written by our dear President, he kindly requests each and every Vincentian to nurture the "moral duty to care for the Vincentian Family, as a priority in our strategy" wherever Conferences are present and take care, with the same zeal, of younger Vincentian members, while giving unlimited support, organising projects and programmes especially for them, seeking creative ways for training them, investing in their future and opening up more spaces for them to take decisions within the SSVP at a national level.

## CIRCULAR LETTER

Moreover, upcoming presidential elections at the Council General are therein addressed, and ideal conditions thereof are put forward by Renato Lima. The candidate, among other attributes, should lead a Vincentian life, be charismatic and kind, have managerial skills, and speak several languages.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the commitment made by the President General and his team, who are working hard so that the Church can declare Bl. Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam, our main founder, a saint, and the initiatives launched by this Presidency to make the history and origins of our institution known, like the themed years dedicated to each of the co-founders of the SSVP (2022 is devoted to Le Taillandier).

In his final message, the President General stresses that, with God's help, the Society has expanded and grown throughout its history, always with a defined goal: "the holiness of its members and standing beside those who suffer on a path of charity".

The Circular Letter is recommended reading during meetings at the Conferences and Councils. Due to its length, it should be read out piecemeal for deeper reflection.

*In his final message, the President General stresses that, with God's help, the Society has expanded and grown throughout its history*

*The President General also addresses*

- *the importance of education to alleviate poverty,*
- *the care and respect of the environment,*
- *the Vincentian behavior, and the good practices in the management of charitable works and at the Councils*



[Click on this link to read the President General's full Circular Letter.](#)



## Council General Launches the International Competition for Writings on Le Taillandier

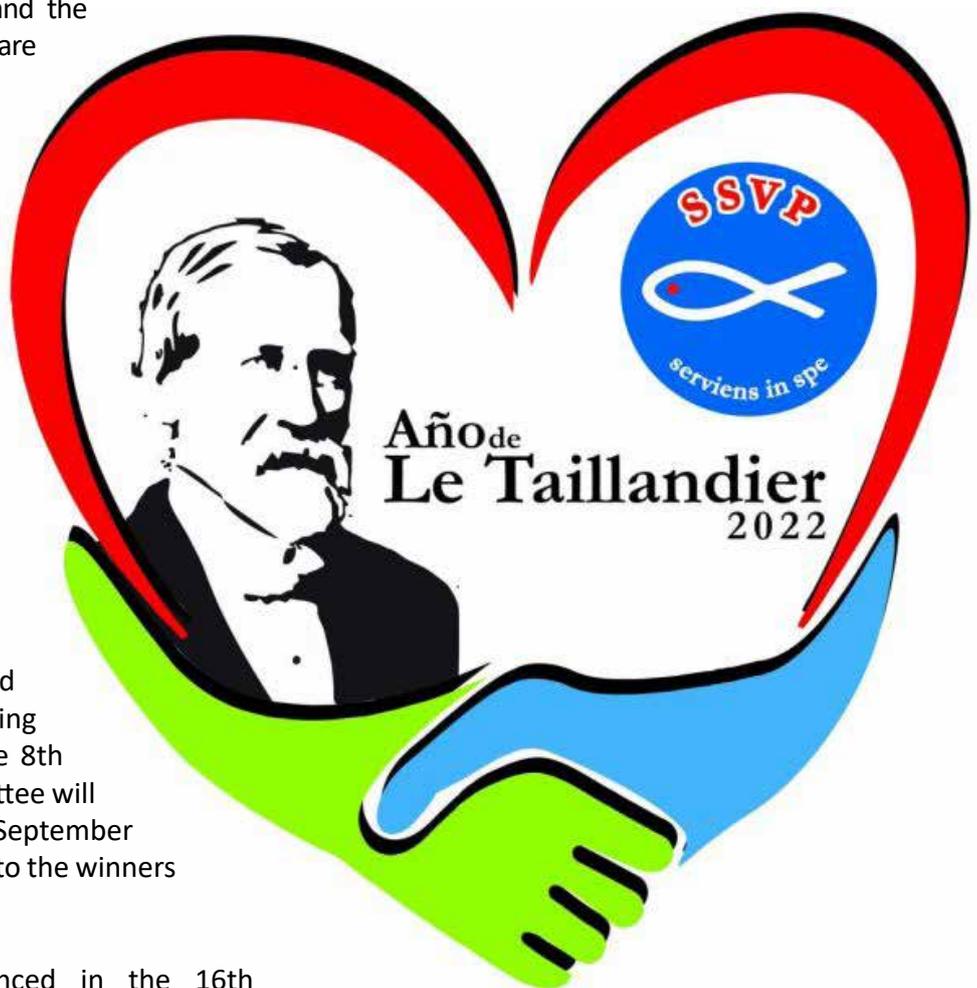
As a way of promoting further the “International Year on the Theme of Pierre Auguste Le Taillandier”, the Council General of the SSVV hereby opens the International Literary Competition on “The First Conference”

The procedures, with the rules and the appendix for this competition, are available on the CGI website ([www.ssvvglobal.org](http://www.ssvvglobal.org)). The written entries must be no more than 20 pages long. Cash prizes will be awarded for the three best entries (1000, 750 and 500 euros, respectively). The SSVV Conferences to which the winners belong will also receive a cash award to the same value, to be spent on behalf of the families and individuals they help, or on Vincentian works.

Entries may be submitted in one of five languages: Portuguese, Spanish, English, Italian and French. The closing date for sending in dissertations / studies will be 8th July 2022. The organizing committee will announce the final result on 9 September 2022, and the prizes will be sent to the winners immediately afterwards.

This competition was announced in the 16th President General’s programme for his term of office, which instituted the “themed years” in order to spread knowledge of the life, work and legacy of the founders of the first Vincentian Conference in 1833. Council General hopes that many Vincentians, especially young people, will take part in the Le Taillandier competition,

So come on! Let’s ask Superior Councils to help CGI spread news of this competition to the Conferences and Councils in every country, as well as to Vincentian schools and colleges, and to Catholic universities.



*The organizing committee will announce the final result on 9 September 2022*

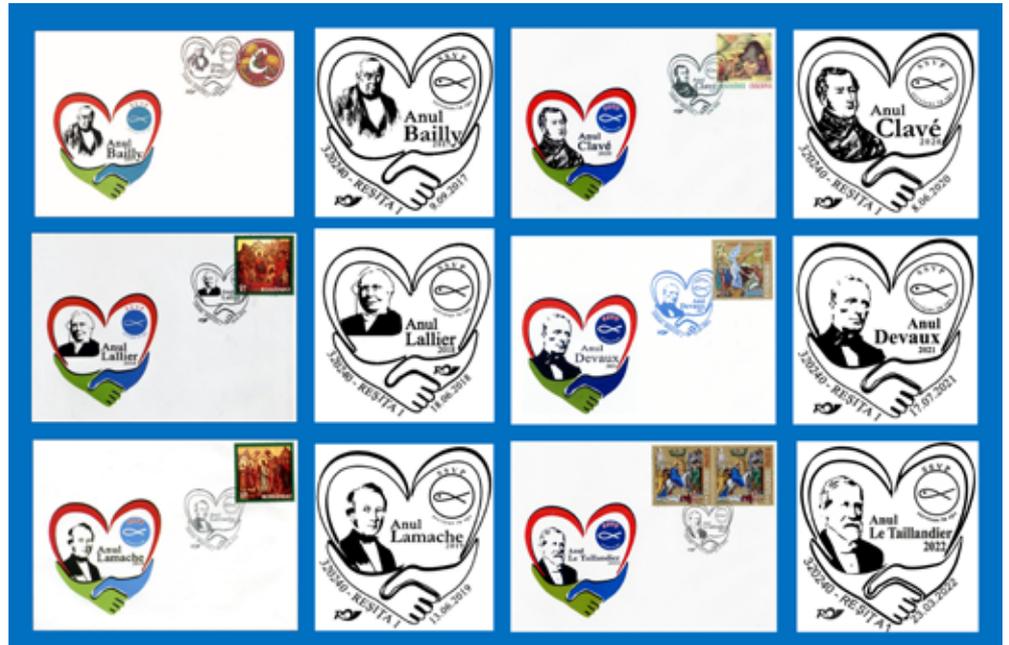
Click here to read the [rules](#) and [annex](#) of the literary contest.

For more information: [cgi.formation@ssvvglobal.org](mailto:cgi.formation@ssvvglobal.org)



## Stamp dedicated to the founders of the SSVP

The SSVP International Territorial Vice-President for Europe 2 has produced a commemorative stamp for each SSVP founder according to the Thematic Years that have been celebrated since 2017

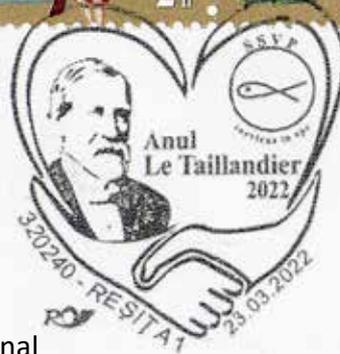


Since 2017, our brother Renato Lima de Oliveira has proclaimed the celebration of a Thematic Year for each co-founder of the SSVP. This initiative was carried out with the idea of valuing the role of each founders of our Society. In the Circular of January 31, 2022, the 16th President General officially declared 2022 as the Year of Le Taillandier.

In his letter, the President General emphasized that among the seven founders, Blessed Frederic Ozanam is the one for whom we have the most historical and biographical information. But we must give the same recognition and prominence to the other founders, as without them we would not be here today, nor would we exist as a Society.

For this reason, and to support this initiative, the International Territorial Vice President for Europe 2, Erwin Josef Țigla, has produced a series of commemorative stamps since 2017. These stamps shows the logo of the Thematic Year that has been realized for each SSVP founder.

On March 23, 2022, the stamp dedicated to the Year of Le Taillandier was put into circulation.



# Inauguration of the headquarters of our Cofederation

The event took place on April 23, the day of the foundation of the SSVP and the birth of Ozanam

On April 23, at 18:00 Paris time, the new world headquarters of the International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was officially inaugurated. With the new headquarters, the SSVP is better prepared for the challenges of the future.

The event was broadcasted on Ozanam TV, and was attended by a large number of guests, including Monsignor Eric Soviguidi, representative of the Holy See at UNESCO; Monsignor Matthieu Rougé, Bishop of Nanterre; Michel Gueguen, Vicar General of the Diocese of Paris and Secretary of the Notre Dame de Paris Foundation; Prince Dominique de la Rochefoucauld of the Order of Malta; Luis Fernando of the Order of Malta; Luis Fernando Andrade Serra, Ambassador of Brazil in France; Sr. Françoise Petit, Superior General of the Daughters of Charity,

who attended along with representatives of other branches of the Vincentian Family; members of the International General Council and national presidents from different countries.

The facilities were blessed, a commemorative plaque was unveiled and a cocktail was offered to the guests with all the facilities open to the public.

Let us first recall some of the history. In 2005, the General Council, with the financial support from members countries of the Confederation, set up the “Henri de Vergès” Foundation (7th President General) for this specific purpose. It acquired a 700-square-meter building on Rue de Londres (London Street) (9th arrondissement of Paris). In 2016, our neighbors submitted a proposal to purchase our headquarters.



# INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



Inauguration of the headquarters of our Cofederation

Thereafter, the 16th International President General, fellow member Renato Lima de Oliveira, appointed a commission for the purchase of a new headquarters. The commission spent two years to evaluate the various real estate options, visiting numerous locations in Paris. After all this zeal for our heritage, at the Plenary Session of the General Council in 2019, held in Oporto (Portugal), the sale of the London Street building and the purchase of a new building on Rue de Glacière (13th arrondissement of Paris) were unanimously approved by all countries



The “Amim de Tarrazi” Foundation (13th President General), similar to the previous entity, was created. The arrival of the pandemic in 2020 prevented the inauguration of the new headquarters on April 23 of that year, so it has had to wait until now.

transportation (bus and subway). The structure of the building is recent, from the 90's, and therefore the cost of any repairs will be very small (it would have been quite high at the previous location, due to the age of the building, which was already in need of renovation).

The new headquarter is modern, double in size (1,400 square meters) and is accessible to people with physical disabilities. The site is very well located, close to hotels and restaurants, with easy access to

The current headquarters consists of three floors: the basement (where the general archives of the SSVP are kept, the letters of the SSVP, Ozanam's letters and the annual reports of the countries); the



## INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Inauguration of the headquarters  
of our Cofederation

ground floor where the general services are located and the second floor (rented to a private company, which guarantees additional income for our Council). The space is secure and has a permanent surveillance system.

In the building we have the following facilities: a pantry and a kitchen adequately equipped; a winter garden (to be called “Stéphane’s Garden”, in honor of our beloved Stéphane Joachim, a member of our staff who passed away last January); toilets; Amin de Tarrazi’s” Library; a photographs gallery of past International General Presidents; an auditorium with translation booths for up to 32 people; a chapel with relics of saints; meeting rooms; staff work rooms and a visitors’ reception area with a world map showing the 153 countries of the Confederation and the possibilities for expansion.

It is worth noting that the headquarters has a museum, called “Espace Historique Ozanam”, which contains objects, documents and utensils belonging to the



# INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



Inauguration of the headquarters of our Cofederation

Ozanam family as well as valuable information on the other founders of the Confederation As well, two exhibitions: a permanent one on the canonization of Ozanam (timeline) and a temporary and dynamic one on the five years of the current Council General's term of office.

During the inauguration ceremony, President General, Renato Lima de Oliveira, together with the Secretary General of the Council General, Marie Françoise Salesiani-Payet, cut the inaugural ribbon that allowed the guests to enter the new headquarters, which were blessed by the Bishop of Nanterre, Monsignor Matthiew Rougé, On this day the aforementioned "Ozanam Historical Space", the exhibition on the development of the canonization process and the exhibition "SSVP in Action", which defines the main activities of our institution around the world were blessed. In addition, the blessing of the new chapel took place.



# INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Inauguration of the headquarters  
of our Cofederation

**ALL ENJOYED THE OPENING ADDRESS OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BY THE PRESIDENT GENERAL ON THIS DAY OF CELEBRATION FOR ALL VINCENTIANS AROUND THE WORLD:**

My friends, good evening. Today is a very special day: the 189th anniversary of the foundation of our Society, the birthday of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and the inauguration of the new international headquarters of our organization.

I just want to offer thanks at this very moment. First of all, to thank God for having created all the conditions for us to be here today. With the acquisition of this new headquarters, the Council General has doubled its office space and acquired a valuable asset for the future.

I want to thank the Special Commission that was formed in 2017, coordinated by Brother Bertrand Ousset, for his professionalism in the work done and for overcoming all the challenges.

I want to thank the countries that are part of our Confederation, especially the members of the International Executive Committee, who unanimously approved, in Porto, Portugal, in 2019, the sale of

the old headquarters in “rue de Londres” and the purchase of this one, in “rue de la Glacière”.

I also thank our brothers and sisters of the United States and France for their generosity for the donation of the OZANAM HISTORICAL SPACE, which is a real gift to all of us.

the International Structure and the staff in Paris, who supported this idea from the beginning and worked hard to implement it so that we are celebrating here today.

This Head Office is yours. This headquarters is for the present and the future. It represents the sign that we are going to grow with all the conditions to be able to keep providing, always and more, services and projects for the National Councils that are part of our Confederation.

The Council General is this: at once, guardian of the Rule, keeper of unity and caretaker of the message of the seven founders, while at the same time embodying communications, strategies and vision for the future.

My heartfelt thanks to all who came today for this ceremony, to all who came to witness this historic moment of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

And now, I invite you all to participate in the cocktail party for today's solemnity. I feel fulfilled today and I am the happiest President General in the world.

Thank you. Enjoy the evening.





## OTHER VINCENTIAN ACTIVITIES DURING THESE DAYS OF CELEBRATION

In addition to the inauguration of the headquarters, during these days of intense Vincentian work:

- the meeting of the Twinning Commission was held on April 21;
- the meeting of the International Commission for Aid and Development (CIAD), on April 22;
- the regular meeting of the members of the Board, on April 24.



## INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Other Vincentian activities during these days of celebration



- and the inauguration of a plaque and a bust of Ozanam in the Church of Saint Rosalie (in the 13th arrondissement of Paris, very close to the new international headquarters and new site of the Vincentian pilgrimage in Paris) on April 24.



## 2016-2021 Report

The Council General International is pleased to publish its 2016-2021 Report, produced by the International Communications Department. This report is aimed at providing a global overview of the main activities, projects, and events organized throughout these years. Click here to read the full report.

Enjoy your reading!



[Download](#)



## President General Takes Part in Several Activities in Paris

The events took place from December 8th to 12th

After having attended the International Board meeting in Lyon and visited the cities of Pau, Tarbes, Horgues and Lourdes, our 16th President General (PGI), brother Renato Lima de Oliveira, had an extensive work agenda in Paris, from December 8th to 12th, 2021. A brief report, written by the PGI himself, summarizing the visits, events and meetings held, is published below. Enjoy your reading!



Memorial Ceremony at Notre-Dame cathedral



Sainte-Rosalie parish

### 1. Memorial Ceremony at Notre-Dame cathedral

As you all know, in 2019 a massive fire ravaged large parts of Notre-Dame cathedral. Fortunately, St. Vincent de Paul Chapel and the plaque commemorating Ozanam's beatification were unscathed. Hence, an international fundraising scheme was launched by the Church to rebuild the cathedral. It is expected that our Council General will soon make a donation, along with the financial support sent by the countries. The close bond between Notre-Dame cathedral and our Society is clear, and it was there that, in 1997, St. John Paul II declared Ozanam Blessed. Sister Marie-Françoise and I attended the ceremony led by General Jean-Louis Georgelin, head of the public entity tasked with rebuilding the

# INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



President General Takes Part in Several Activities in Paris

cathedral, who was appointed by French President Emmanuel Macron. The General briefed everyone on the progress made so far, and we presented him with Ozanam's beatification medal. He told us: "When I was young, I was part of a Vincentian Conference".

## 2. Sainte-Rosalie parish

We joyfully met with Fr Arnaud Mougín, priest at St Rosalie de Palermo parish, where Blessed Rosalie Rendu, Daughter of Charity, first spiritual superior at the Conference of Charity in 1833, is also worshipped. The meeting was also attended by sister Marie-Françoise Salesiani-Payet, Secretary General. This parish is less than 200 meters away from the Council General international's headquarters. Given the geographical proximity and the close relationship with the legacy of Rosalie Rendu, Father Arnaud accepted our proposal to unveil a commemorative plaque depicting an image of Ozanam in April 2022. On Sunday, December 12th, I attended the Holy Mass and met with some members of the local Conference, which is very



Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal chapel

active and distributes, every week, food to the homeless in Paris.

## 3. Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal chapel

On December 8th, the feast day of the Immaculate Conception (the SSVP's patroness), I had the joy of participating in the Holy Mass at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal chapel. After the celebration, I had a meeting with Sr. Françoise Petit, Superior General of the Company of the Daughters of Charity. We talked about common projects and the future of the Vincentian Family. I took the chance to report on the next stages of Ozanam's canonization, with a second miracle being examined by medical experts at the Vatican. Sister Françoise was very pleased to learn about the progress of the cause.



Visit to the Lazarist Fathers



## 4. Visit to the Lazarist Fathers (Vincentians)

As usual, I visited the headquarters of the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian Fathers). I met there with the superior of the Mother House, Fr Roberto Gomez, and the CGI's spiritual advisor, Fr Andres Motto. I presented the Congregation of the Mission with a bust of Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam. According to Fr Motto, also coordinator at the Center for International Formation (CIF) of the Vincentian Family, the bust is to be located in the new Ozanam Auditorium, which, with the financial support of our Confederation, will be renovated and expanded throughout 2022. It was agreed that, in 2022, September's Board meeting will be held at the new auditorium, located at the CM Mother House.

## 5. Staff meeting

There was a fruitful staff meeting at the international headquarters. We thanked everyone for their commitment, which has resulted in the smooth running of the CGI and the attainment of the global strategic planning. "Professionalism, harmony and confidentiality



Lunch with Philippe Menet

are the most sought-after elements in any work environment today, and we count on your good work at all times," I emphasized during the meeting. Our employees are very efficient, speak several languages, are knowledgeable about the Society's values and help us immensely to ensure that the CGI pursues its role safeguarding unity and the Rule. On a weekly basis, the Secretary General meets with the staff, always complying with Covid-19 safety and health protocols established by the French government.

## 6. Lunch with Philippe Menet

I had the joy of meeting my dear brother Philippe Menet, aged 87, who has written several books and articles on the history of our Society and the seven founders. In Menet's words: "Charity arises from our faith. The stronger the faith, the better Vincentians we will be.". During the meeting, I learned a lot from this great friend, a great researcher who is brimming with enthusiasm for the SSVP. "My father introduced me to our Society. Since then, I have sought to serve God through charity," said our beloved writer. This year, brother Menet has produced a novena dedicated to Ozanam, which was disseminated by the Council General International



Visit to the Religious of St Vincent de Paul



Interview on KTO Catholic TV Channel

on the feast day of our main founder. To my friend Philippe Menet, thank you very much for your company and your teachings.

## 7. Visit to the Religious of St Vincent de Paul

Upon Brother Claudiney Ribeiro's invitation, I participated in the Holy Mass at Our Lady of Grace church and visited the student residence of the Congregation of the Religious of St. Vincent de Paul (RSV), a Vincentian branch founded in 1845 by Le Prevost, Clément Myionnet and Maurice Maignen. I visited all the facilities of the building and was impressed by the social work -especially that related to sports- that the Congregation does for the community. I was welcomed by several members of the Congregation (Father Noël Nana, Father Louis N'Djore and Brother Patrick Gotillot), who were pleased to hear about the institutional cooperation agreement signed by the SSVP and the RSV. On my next trip to Paris, I will be visiting other parishes run by the RSV. In May,

at the invitation of the RSV's Secretary General, Fr Yvon Sabourin, I will be giving a talk on the common roots of both institutions.

## 8. Interview on KTO Catholic TV Channel

At the invitation of journalist Stéphanie Dupasquier, I gave an interview on KTO TV channel, the most important French-speaking Catholic TV channel, with a wide audience in France, all over Europe and in the French-speaking countries of the world. During the 30-minute special interview, I answered questions regarding the

Vincentian charism, the SSVP's mission and values, the challenges of youth, Ozanam's canonisation, the plight of refugees and migrants, and the impact of the pandemic on humanitarian organizations. Furthermore, images and videos were displayed during the interview, sent by our Confederation's



Marie-Françoise Salesiani- Payet and Renato Lima



countries in response to my request for pictures of charitable actions with those in need.

Link to the interview: 

## 9. Audience with France's Order of Malta

One of the highlights of our agenda was a working meeting on Saturday with the newly elected President of France's Order of Malta, Dr. Cedric Chalret du Rieu. During the audience, I presented him with Ozanam's medal and our latest activity report. I informed him that in 2023 we will be signing a cooperation agreement to fight poverty with Rome's Order of Malta, which will support the SSVP's work, given the extensive experience of the Order of Malta in this regard. Moreover, we addressed the issue of bringing France's Order of Malta closer to the French-speaking countries around the world, especially those where the SSVP is present. Good news on this initiative will be announced soon.

## 10. Arrangements for the inauguration of the General Headquarters

On April 23rd, 2022, the general headquarters (at 65 rue de la Glaciere, 13th arrondissement, Paris) is inaugurated. During my one-week stay in Paris, I told everyone about the inauguration

ceremony and invited them to the event. I take this opportunity to thank the CGI's special advisor, Gonzague de Raulin, for organising the agenda and accompanying me on the visits.

## 11. Additional activities

Right after the trip to Paris, I visited Lisbon, with a very busy schedule. I participated in the distribution of Christmas baskets to the poor, organised by St. Francis of Assisi Conference. I also visited the headquarters of the Superior Council, giving my fraternal embrace to the national president, Alda Couceiro. We talked about my possible trip to Madeira and the Azores in 2022 or 2023, and about the importance of Vincentian formation, emphasizing on our book which is being distributed across Portugal. Another highlight was the visit to Mrs. Henriqueta, widow of the 13th President General, brother César Augusto Nunes Viana. Finally, I met with the Lazarist Fathers at St. Thomas Aquinas parish, where I took part in the community mass and had the opportunity to give a talk on the CGI's activities. I thank God for His protection during all these events amidst these difficult moments of global health crisis.

*Renato Lima de Oliveira*  
16th President General



Visit to Lisbon



## Pilgrimage in memory of Félix Clavé

It is the merit of the current President General, Renato Lima de Oliveira, to have worked throughout his mandate to make known to Vincentians the 7 founders of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. During his 6 years, the initiatives to discover their lives and personalities were numerous

After a year dedicated to Clavé, a pilgrimage was organized in December 2021.

This founder from Tarbes in the South-West of France, is a literary man, a poet in love with beauty and ideals. He is first seduced by the progressive doctrines in vogue at the time, which aim to give spiritual power to scientists, then converts to the Faith of his childhood and joins the youth of the Conference of Charity.

He then become a dedicated Vincentian, pious and zealous in leading others on this path of charity, which nourishes and inspires him. He quickly found a conference in Paris, at his neighborhood parish, Saint Philippe du Roule. He is also involved in the creation of a first conference in Algeria in 1846 before settling in Mexico.

Much against his will, he finds himself embroiled in the Lafarge affair. A woman, found guilty of the murder of her husband by poisoning, is the subject of a resounding trial in 1840. During the trial, there is also talk of a sordid case related to the theft of jewels in which Marie Lafarge accuses Félix Clavé of having blackmailed one of her friends. In the end, Marie Lafarge is sentenced to forced labor for life and the innocence of Félix Clavé is demonstrated. However, the damage is done and Clavé never fully recovers from this event.

He marries in 1847 (at age 36) but his mental health deteriorates in 1853. He is interned in an asylum in Pau on October 4, 1853. He passes away there on October 18, 1853.

It is this defamed, humiliated, forgotten founder, erased from memory that President Renato Lima de

Oliveira wanted to honor. Who knows if the sufferings of Clavé offered to the Lord did not secretly contribute to the development of the Society in the world?

On December 6, 2021, after a meeting of the CGI in Lyon, a few members of the Council, accompanied by Father Motto, Spiritual Advisor of the General Council, undertake a pilgrimage to the places where Félix Clavé lived. First in Pau where a meeting is organized with the conference members of this town. Everyone warmly welcomes the CGI delegation. The President General encourages them to continue their activities and not to be won over by the inward-looking spirit engendered by the pandemic. A lot of interest, joy and questions around the action of

the CGI are demonstrated during this meeting. Due to the busy schedule, the small group takes leave, with regret, on the beautiful smile of the president of the conference and travel to Horgues where the Clavé couple lived for 5 years. Welcomed on site by the president of the Tarbes' conference and a young Vincentian, the group then visit the local church to seek the mercy of the Lord, Félix Clavé, people suffering from mental illness, the Society in the world, the people visited and the members. It is a very moving moment. Horgues is a small village near Tarbes. In the background and despite the gray sky, the beautiful Pyrenees Mountains stand out. What beauties! A long way from Paris here. When one goes to this region with southern accents, so close by its

culture to neighboring Spain, he understands a little better the personality of Félix Clavé, his culture and his love of beauty. Despite very thorough searches, the tomb of Félix Clavé was never found. From Horgues, the pilgrims go to Tarbes, rue Brauhauban, birthplace of Félix Clavé.

The pilgrimage ends in Lourdes where the CGI delegation presents the intentions of the General Council. The great feast of the Immaculate Conception being celebrated two days later, it is relatively calm at this time. The benches are wet and partly empty; a few faithful are praying in silence. Everything is peaceful, enveloped in the sweet presence of the Virgin. The following day, the members of the group attend Mass to again beg the Lord, through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, to bless the Society, to keep it always faithful to its unique vocation: to love Christ and to serve Him in the person of the poor, our lords and masters.

From their visits to Pau, Tarbes and Horgues, they keep in their hearts the magnificent encounters with the Vincentians of the region, the endearing figure of our founder Félix Clavé, the smile of the Virgin, and patroness of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul who continues to accompany the Society with his prayers.



*Anne Wintenberger*

# President General Appoints New Members at the International Structure

Appointments are valid until September 8th, 2023

On a regular basis, the President General International (PGI), brother Renato Lima de Oliveira, publishes the list of members, from all parts of the world, who have generously accepted the invitation to hold office at the Council General International.

for America 2; sister María del Carmen Guzmán Sotto from Guatemala, as SSVP's representative at the Vincentian Family Latin America (FAVILA); and sister Josmary Centella as head of the Department of Children and Teenagers.

These appointments are valid until September 8, 2023, the date on which the 16th PGI's term of office shall end. The document is published after due consultation with Council members and countries making up the Confederation.

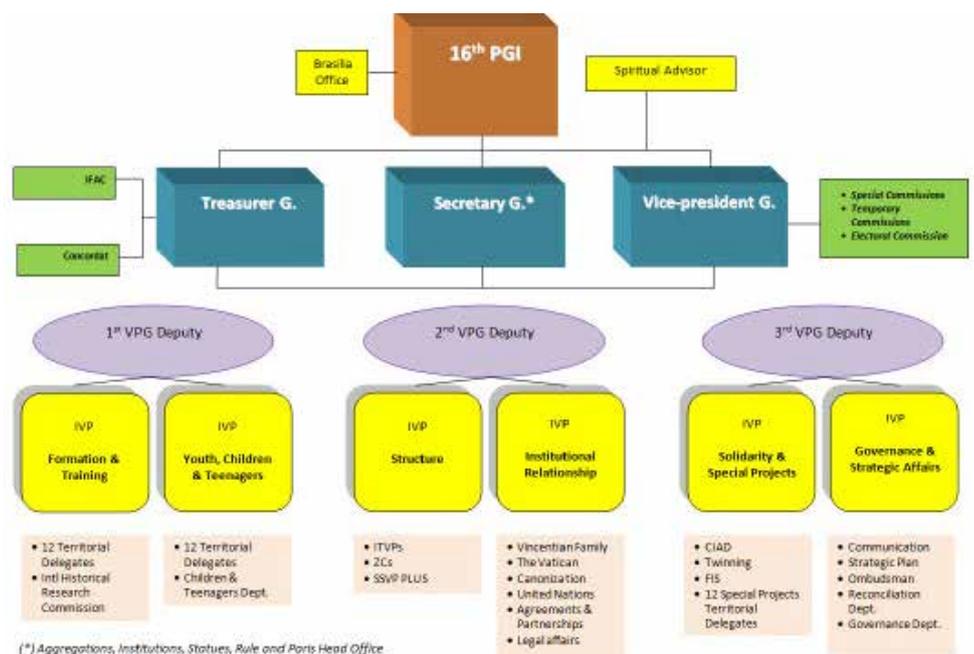
As for the 10 countries chosen by President General, as set out in the Statutes of the Confederation, under the International Executive Committee, they remain the same until December 31st, 2022, and will change as of January 1st, 2023. The current countries are as follows: a) Members with 1 to 500 Conferences: the Netherlands, Uruguay, Tonga, Indonesia and Mozambique; b) Members with 501 to 999 Conferences: France, Canada, Portugal, South Korea and Philippines.

Brother Renato Lima stated: "I thank all the people who have taken part in the International Structure over these first five years of office, and I express my immense gratitude for the services rendered. I would like to kindly ask those who are still with us to keep on working with the same affection and loyalty, and welcome those who have just joined the Structure".

 [Click here to read full report: Structure 2022 - 2023.](#)

Indeed, there are a myriad of tasks and missions to be carried out by the Council General. Behind each one, there is a committed Vincentian who will do his or her best, with God's help, to fulfill the strategic planning of our organization. Being a member of the Council General is an honor, a great responsibility and an immense privilege.

New for this period include the appointment of brother Adrian Abel from England as President of the Commission for International Aid and Development (CIAD); sister Lucha González from Mexico, as Territorial Vice President





**Julio Cesar Marques de Lima**  
International Territorial Vice President for America 3  
and SSVP Plus' Project Manager

## SSVP PLUS Project: SSVP's Growth Prospects and Challenger

The SSVP Plus Project is an initiative arising from item 4 of the Strategic Plan of the Council General International (CGI). This project seeks to expand the SSVP into new territories, while establishing new Vincentian Conferences in new regions, thus enhancing the Society's global presence. Further to reaching out to the poor somewhere else, this project is aligned with Ozanam's and the rest of the founders' dream.

There is a Project Manager, who oversees and supports the activities undertaken by the CGI's International Structure. Territorial teams, led by the International Territorial Vice Presidents, strive to implement proposed actions in those countries and territories, which were previously listed and classified according to a three-level complexity, where the SSVP would like to establish one or more Vincentian Conferences. To this regard, the SSVP Plus Manual was recently published, which provides the steps, resources available and communication guidelines to the teams belonging to the territorial vice presidencies.

Since its inception, seven new territories have become part of the SSVP's International Confederation:

Liberia, Albania, Cyprus, Cayman Islands, Vatican, Tanzania and Cape Verde. Over the next two years, there are two ongoing initiatives based on establishing the SSVP in 18 new territories, which are located in three main regions: Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Yet, there are challenges to be faced by the territorial teams in each of the regions.

As for the Middle East and northern Africa, Ella Bitar, the Territorial Vice President has worked hard, with actions being carried out in countries where it's difficult to establish Vincentian Conferences since there is only one small Catholic community, such as Morocco, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. The Territorial Vice President has recently





visited the capital of Tunis, where she liaised with representatives of the Vincentian Family and those from the local Catholic community.

With regard to Africa, a new Conference has just kicked off in Cape Verde, a recently established Vincentian territory. As far as the Vice Presidency for Africa 2 is concerned, church representatives have been approached in Guinea Conakry, albeit there are chances as well in Equatorial Guinea. Concerning the Vice Presidency for Africa 3, actions are under way in Gabon and Niger. The establishment of the SSVP in Seychelles holds a good chance given the large number of Catholics in the country.



As for Europe, the SSVP Plus Project is being implemented in several territories: Greece, Andorra, Liechtenstein, San Marino, Scandinavian countries, Slovenia and Belarus. Regrettably, the Covid-19 pandemic and the political issues in some countries have hindered the project in these regions. For the time being, the key goal is visiting four Scandinavian countries during the first half of 2022.

The CGI's Board has steadfastly supported the project and allocated the resources required for teams to carry out the actions in different territories where initiatives are being developed to establish new Vincentian Conferences. Growth prospects are good; and, thanks to the commitment made by the CGI's International Structure, the SSVP will keep on expanding in new territories worldwide.





## CGI Board meets for the first time this year

Important matters were approved during the meeting

On March 5, the Board of the Council General International held its first meeting of the year at the General Headquarters in Paris (France) in a hybrid format (face-to-face and online).

Several important matters were submitted for the consideration of the collegiate body:

1. Rules for the elections of the President General in 2023;
2. Approval of the Protocol on Good Governance and Risk Management, which must be adopted by all the countries of the Confederation;
3. Launching of the “Strategy 25” Project, which defines SSVP’s international solidarity actions for the 25 poorest countries in the world;
4. Resolutions on the Ukraine conflict, guiding the Superior Councils on the best way to help;
5. Creation of the Department for Children and Adolescents;

6. The result of the competition for the lyrics of the song “The Seven Founders” in Italian, English and French;

7. Missionary action for the foundation of Vincentian Conferences in four Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland), through the “SSVP Plus” Project.

Also reported during the meeting were the inauguration of the International General Headquarters (April 23); the two new exhibits to be displayed at the headquarters (the canonization of Ozanam and the achievements of the current mandate); the Annual Plenary Session of the Council General (June); the 2nd Assembly “All Africa” (July); the trips of the President General to Scotland and Monaco; and other initiatives.

The next meetings of the CGI Board will be held on the following dates: April 24, June 18, September 10 and December 3.

# Council General collaborates with Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral

Ozanam was beatified by Pope Saint John Paul II in this church in 1997

On April 15, 2019, a major fire destroyed a considerable part of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Paris (Notre-Dame). Fortunately, neither the St. Vincent de Paul chapel nor the plaque commemorating the beatification of Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam were affected. However, the damage to the Cathedral was immense.

During these years of reconstruction, a huge campaign to collect donations was started by the

Church through the Notre-Dame Foundation. In support of this fundraiser, the Council General is allocating 5,000 euros for the cleaning and maintenance of the Ozanam plaque.

“The close relationship between the Notre-Dame Cathedral and our Society is evident, for it was there that, in 1997, St. John Paul II declared Ozanam blessed. It is a very significant Catholic church for all of us. Therefore, helping in the recovery of the Notre-Dame Cathedral is, above all, a moral duty for all of us Vincentians”, commented Renato Lima, 16th President General International.



Visit to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Paris, Monsignor Michel Gueguen

On March 3rd, the President General was hosted by the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Paris, Monsignor Michel Gueguen (photo). Monsignor Gueguen is also Secretary of the Notre-Dame Foundation, created by the Holy Church to collect funds for the renovation of the Cathedral. It was a very cordial visit during which our President General expressed our admiration and gratitude.

Also on December 8th last year, the President General and Marie-Françoise Salesiani-Payet (Secretary General) took part in a ceremony in front of the Cathedral where General Jean-Louis Georgelin, appointed by President Emmanuel Macron to carry out the reconstruction of the site, gave an update of the works being carried out. It is estimated that the renovation of the Cathedral will be completed in 2024, probably in time for the Olympic Games.



# Territorial Meeting - Asia 1



Johnson Varghese

On February 22nd was the first time that Asia 1 had its meeting through virtual mode to discuss, plan and implement the activities for the year 2022

Bro. Joseph Pandian, Vice President General, CGI was the guest for the event. Sister Cheryl Silva, President of the National Council of Sri Lanka, Bro. Sharlain Silva, Youth representative Sri Lanka, Bro. Arnob Biswas, Coordinator Nepal, Bro. Arnold D'Souza, East Nepal, Bro. Bhim Tamang, Youth from Nepal, Bro. Jude Mangalraj, President of the National Council of India and Bro. Jerald Nicholas, Youth representative India, represented their respective National Councils. CGI Delegates Asia 1 territory, Bro. Dr. Francis, Formation and Training, Bro. Gabriel Mondel, Projects and Bro. Leo Levin, Youth Coordinator also participated. Bro. Stanley Michael, Member, International Twinning Commission was also present. Bro. Johnson Varghese, ITVP Asia 1, welcomed everyone for a fruitful discussion.

hurdles that came in our way but nothing is to stop us from being a Vincentian. He requested India to extend its support other nations in Asia 1.

National Presidents/Coordinators and Youth Coordinators were given an opportunity to express their views and present their plan of action for the coming year.

The meeting was helpful for each national council in planning for 2022. Members were of the opinion that each country make extra efforts to bring the conferences back to a normal status at the earliest. Each participant was hopeful that the Society will be able to restart all its activities which were affected by Covid-19 in the past one and a half years. Members also decided to hold an in-person meeting next time with the sanction of the International Council and sought the help of the National council of India to host the same.

Bro. Joseph Pandian expressed his joy to be present at the meeting. He insisted to have a clear picture of plans for the coming year. There were many





## SSVP participates in a new side event at the United Nations



The focus of the discussion was on the impacts of homelessness on women

Last March 21, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) participated in another side event within the scope of the United Nations, to discuss about “Climate Change: Multiple Risks for Homeless Women and Girls”. The event also took place in commemoration of the two years since the publication of a United Nations special resolution on the issue of homelessness.

The initiative came from the “Working Group to End Homelessness”, created by the Vincentian Family in 2017, and which has been carrying out various activities since then, in partnership with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66).

The Council General International attended to this event, in New York (United States of America), through the presence of the 16th President General, brother Renato Lima (who is in New York on the

way to Boston for various Vincentian gatherings), accompanied by the sister Pattie Hughes and brother Ed Keane, both members of the General Council delegation to the United Nations (CGI UN Team).

The conversation was very interesting, as it brought together experts from several countries and from different entities concerned with the social impact that climate change and poverty have on everyone, especially women and girls. The event was moderated by Sister Jean Quinn who focused on the solutions that need to be sought to alleviate the suffering of women in this scenario of homelessness impacted by natural disasters and the harmful effects of climate change.

Balakrishnan Rajagopal (India) presented a very realistic diagnosis of the problem, indicating new ways of approaching this reality. Jennifer Bhuiyan (St.

# INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



SSVP participates in a new side event at the United Nations

John’s University, New York) focused her presentation on the issue of women’s health. Dr. Minnie Oseji (Nigeria) presented a series of concrete actions that can be taken to reduce the harmful impact of climate change.

Sister Aisha Kavalakattu (Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Nepal) recalled the plight of refugees and those affected by natural disasters. Dana Marlowe (NGO “I Support the Girls”) presented measures that

are being taken to give more dignity and medical support to girls and young women. Finally, Leilani Farha (NGO “Canada against poverty”) appealed for governments to become definitively involved in this issue with greater commitment.

At the end of the discussion, there was space for questions and answers. In addition to the SSVP, the Vincentian Family was present through other branches. Several other Catholic entities engaged in the cause of women also attended the debate. All these actions are connected with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially topics #1, 2, 5 and 10.

“Whenever invited, the Council General International will make its contribution to the theme, because there are many forms of poverty, and Vincentians need to be prepared to face and overcome them, together with the poor. This matter is urgent and a priority, because a good part of humanity suffers greatly from the natural disasters that generate migrations and more refugees”, emphasized our President Lima de Oliveira.

**14-25 MARCH 2022**  
**CSW66**  
 COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

**CSW66 PARALLEL EVENT**

*Climate Change:*

**MULTIPLE RISKS FOR HOMELESS WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**NGO WORKING GROUP TO END HOMELESSNESS**

**MARCH 21, 2022 | 2PM EST**

Climate change may be the most important global human rights crisis of our time, particularly in the context of ensuring the right to adequate housing for women and girls. Climate change impacts homeless women and girls most profoundly as entrenched gender inequalities increase the risk of poor health, domestic violence, trafficking and child marriage. Our panel will propose policies and programs to strengthen the resilience and support homeless women and girls during climate crises.

**SPEAKERS**

**REGISTER HERE!**

**Keynote: Balakrishnan Rajagopal, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing (invited)**

**Leilani Farha, Executive Director, Canada Without Poverty**

**Dr. Minnie Oseji, Immediate Past National President of the Medical Women's Association of Nigeria (MWAN)**

**Jennifer Bhulyan, PharmD, Assistant Professor, St. John's University**

**Sr. Aisha Kavalakattu, SCN, Nepal**

**Dana Marlowe, Founder & Executive Director, I Support the Girls**

**Diamond Cotton, Promoting and Protecting Human Dignity**

**Moderator: Jean Quinn, DW, Executive Director, UNANIMA International**



## Next mission in Scandinavia

The idea is to establish our Society to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland

It is part of the strategic objectives of the Council General International in this mandate (2016-2023) to expand the SSVP into new territories. This initiative is being done through SSVP PLUS PROJECT.

This approach is in line with our seven founders' dreams. Since 2016, seven new countries have joined the Confederation: Liberia, Albania, Cyprus, Cayman Islands, Vatican, Tanzania, and Cape Verde.

Despite the pandemic period that the planet is experiencing, this action has not stopped at the borders of the countries. It has continued to develop thanks to the maintenance of communication with the targeted territories. Now, Council General International is reaching the four countries of Scandinavia, in Europe.

This mission will take place in May 2022 under the leadership of International Territorial Vice-president

(ITVP) for Europe 1, brother Laszlo Koenczoel, accompanied by Gonzague de Raulin, special advisor to the 16<sup>th</sup> President General International, brother Renato Lima.

The CGI delegation will visit the four capitals (Oslo, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Helsinki), trying to reach parishes, dioceses, Catholic schools, embassies, Vincentian Family branches, and other possible partners, to get their support to establish the first Conferences. These sets of meetings are on the agenda in each capital.

"I am very happy with the mission that will be done in Scandinavia. God will open all the doors, and surely, with faith, we will reach the goal of founding at least one Conference in the capital of each country. I hope that many newcomers will want to join the SSVP in these new countries, helping not only the poor in their region, but especially the needy in other parts of the world", highlighted President Renato.

Respectful of the action of the Church in these places, the whole process will be done in total articulation and harmony with the Nordic Bishops' Conference. The bishops of Oslo, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Helsinki will kindly receive the CGI delegation. We are particularly grateful to its president, Cardinal Anders Arborelius, for his forthcoming welcome.

“The mission that will be undertaken taking into consideration the guidelines that are contained in the SSVP PLUS PROJECT Manual, which guide the best way to found a Conference in a new country. Besides that action, we must pray that people with a vocation for charity show up. We pray especially for the good development of this mission that we entrust to Blessed Antoine-Frederic Ozanam and to the Virgin Mary”, observed brother Julio Cesar Marques de Lima, in charge of the project.



[Manual SSVP PLUS](#)



## Busy institutional agenda of the President General during the month of March

Very important audiences and visits were done during a week



Working meeting with the staff of the international headquarters

Whenever he travels to Paris to attend the Board meetings every four months, even during the pandemic, our President General, brother Renato Lima, takes the opportunity to make visits and maintain institutional contacts.

In most of the activities he has been accompanied by his special advisor, Gonzague de Raullin, or by other members of the International Board. During the week of March 1-4, President Lima de Oliveira had an intense schedule of activities, which we highlight below (see photos):

- Participation in the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Brother Maurice Maignen, one of the cofounders of the Congregation of the Religious of St. Vincent de Paul.
- Audience with Bishop Mathieu Rougé, Bishop of Nanterre.
- Visit to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Paris, Monsignor Michel Gueguen, secretary of the Notre-Dame de Paris Foundation.
- Audience with the Apostolic Nuncio of the Vatican in France, Monsignor Celestino Migliore.



Visit to the dear mother of dear Stéphane Joachim



Participation in the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Brother Maurice Maignen

# INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Busy institutional agenda of the President General during the month of March

- Visit to the Brazilian Embassy in France, in audience with Ambassador Luis Fernando Serra.
- Visit to the headquarters of the National Council of France and to the National President, Michel Lanternier.
- Working meeting with the staff of the international headquarters.
- Visit to Father Andres Motto, international spiritual advisor of the SSVP.
- Participation in the Ash Wednesday Mass at the Parish of the Holy Spirit, followed by a visit to the Conference of St. John Eudes (of which our Secretary General Deputy, Jean-Marc Ossogo, is a member) and a social action at the train station (Gare de Lyon) with the homeless.
- Working meeting with our brother Bertrand Ousset on the international statutes.
- Visit to the exhibition of Catholic icons at the Petit Palais in Paris.



Audience with the Apostolic Nuncio of the Vatican in France, Monsignor Celestino Migliore



Visit to the Conference of St. John Eudes

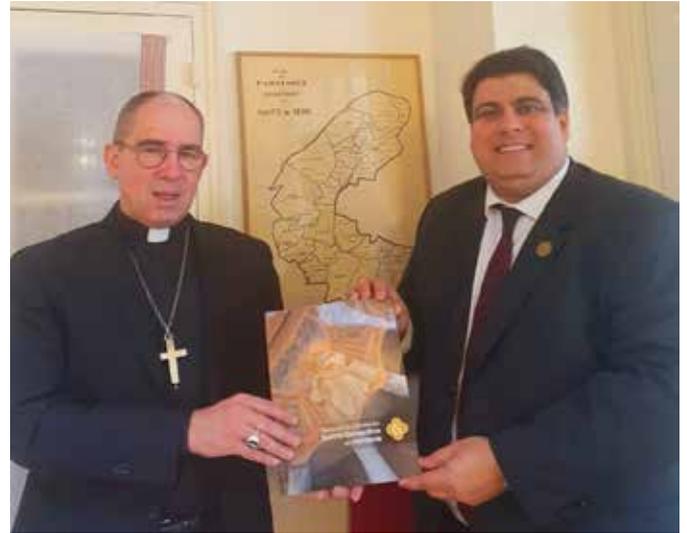
# INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Busy institutional agenda of the President General during the month of March

- Mass at St. Rosalie Parish, where a plaque alluding to the SSVP will be unveiled on April 24.
- Visit to the dear mother of dear Stéphane Joachim, employee of the headquarters, who passed away in December last year.



Visit to the headquarters of the National Council of France and to the National President, Michel Lanternier



Audience with Bishop Mathieu Rougé, Bishop of Nanterre



Visit to the Brazilian Embassy in France, in audience with Ambassador Luis Fernando Serra



Visit to the exhibition of Catholic icons at the Petit Palais in Paris

# The SSVP and the Order of Malta France: a partnership to provide a better service to the poor



### Eleven countries can already benefit from this agreement

Last December, our 16th International President General met the President of the Order of Malta France, Dr. Cédric Chalret du Rieu, with whom he had a pleasant dialogue on the work of both entities and the possibilities of joint actions for the future.

In addition to being very active in its own country, the Order of Malta in France also provides humanitarian services in 26 other nations, either through direct management or through its support to social projects, especially those related to women, children and the sick.

“I must admit that I was very pleased to hear about the extent of the Order of Malta France’s international action. I was impressed by the dynamism of Mr. Cédric and by the affectionate way in which he referred to our Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. I believe that together we can work more effectively in order to help the needy in those countries where the SSVP is also present”, stressed brother Renato Lima.

In agreement with the President of the Order of Malta France, the President General proposed to the Superior Councils of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in 11 countries to contact the local representatives of the Order of Malta France and thus check the possibilities of joint actions and projects. As well as the extension of medical care to the specific needs of pregnant women, children, the elderly and other sick people, the donation of medicines and housing assistance for the homeless.

The territories that can benefit from this partnership are Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Cameroon, Benin, Chad, Palestine, Congo Brazzaville and Togo.

President Renato Lima considers that this collaboration with the Order of Malta in France is an excellent

opportunity to expand the network of charity, with greater efficiency, achieving better results for the care of the most vulnerable people served by the Conferences and social works run by the SSVP. The President also prays to God to give many blessings to our dear brothers and sisters of the Order of Malta France.

This partnership with the Order of Malta France is the first step to achieve a higher level of commitment with the International Order of Malta, whose institutional cooperation agreement is being prepared for signing very soon. “This is the first step we have taken together, starting with France, towards a worldwide partnership to serve those most in need. I am very happy with this good news”, our President stated.



Meeting with the President of the Order of Malta France, Dr. Cédric Chalret du Rieu



## Resolutions for Ukraine

The world is suffering, once again, from yet another war between neighboring peoples. The absence of diplomacy and lack of dialogue have led humanity to yet another bloody conflict, with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia a few days ago

From the beginning, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul International has been in contact with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, trying to seek for information. The priority at this moment is to assess the most urgent needs and to find the safest ways to send the aid to them.

The Board of the Council General International, meeting in Paris (France) on March 5, 2022, expresses its full solidarity to the people of Ukraine and deplors all the human suffering caused this no sense war.

The Council General International gives the following guidance to its National and Superior Councils, Conferences, and members as to their response to this crisis through the following resolutions:

### RESOLUTION # 1

While appreciating the desire of the international Society to respond generously to this grave humanitarian crisis, the CGI proposes that no aid or materials should be sent directly to the Ukraine at this time. The SSVP is quite small there (just 4 Conferences which CGI will explore how best to assist directly). Rather those wishing to help should send contributions to the General Appeal for the SSVP Fund for International Solidarity (FIS) which is currently open. Please, see details of how to contribute to the FIS Appeal on



[www.ssvpglobal.org/fund-for-international-solidarity-annual-appeal-2022/](http://www.ssvpglobal.org/fund-for-international-solidarity-annual-appeal-2022/)



## RESOLUTION # 2

With the expected exodus of people from Ukraine (estimated currently at 1 million displaced persons), the burden of receiving them falls on neighboring countries, particularly Poland, Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary. The Council General International intends to redirect part of the funds from the FIS Appeal to support to the National Councils of the SSVP in those four countries to enable them to respond as the problems encountered on the ground. More than likely this will be humanitarian aid such as food, clothing, medical supplies but our fellow members in situ will be better placed to decide this. Our Commission for International Aid and Development (CIAD) and International Twinning Commission (ITC), in close collaboration with the International Structure, are oriented to help to assess the most appropriate forms of aid in conjunction with the National Councils concerned.

## RESOLUTION # 3

The naked aggression of the invasion of Ukraine has shocked the entire world. Unfortunately, the ordinary people of the country are those who will suffer most. They are in the thoughts and prayers of SSVP members throughout the world. The Council General International proposes that at all Conference meetings while this conflict continues would include

a special prayer for those suffering in the Ukraine and for a speedy end to hostilities, and for the victims of violence and injustice everywhere. Members might remember this intention in their personal prayer also. We pray with Pope Francis and with all Vincentian Family that Mary, Queen of Peace, preserve the world from the madness of war.

## RESOLUTION # 4

The Council General International will provide all the material and institutional support possible to the National Councils in countries neighboring the conflict to help them implement the emergency and humanitarian initiatives that must be undertaken to receive the Ukrainian refugees who are being pressured to leave their beloved country to flee the war, in search of survival for their families. The SSVP will do everything in our power to welcome, with dignity and charity, these displaced brothers and sisters who are on their way from several European countries bordering Ukraine. In this work of welcome, the SSVP will act in straight collaboration with the Vincentian Family, the Holy Church and other humanitarian organizations to better serve our brothers and sisters.

Council General International Board  
Paris, 5 March 2022



## Vincentian direct aid to Ukraine

A través de la Comisión Internacional de Ayuda y Desarrollo (CIAD) se han facilitado donaciones de emergencia para atender a los refugiados y se han establecido contactos con los vicentinos de las zonas fronterizas para fortalecer la ayuda de emergencia

The Commission for International Aid and Development (CIAD) has provided emergency donations to assist refugees and establish contacts with Vincentians in the border areas with Ukraine in order to strengthen emergency aid.

Since the outset of the war in Ukraine, Europe is facing its biggest humanitarian crisis in many years. Everywhere, our Vincentians are doing their best to support the refugees and victims of the war. The Council General International is already supporting their efforts. Although our main tasks will be for the long term, the Council General wants to show immediate and permanent love and solidarity to our brothers and sisters, through CIAD, and to find other ways to show support such as Resolutions, declarations

### UKRAINE

The conferences in Ukraine are currently out of reach as most of our members have been displaced. Nevertheless, other branches of the Vincentian

family are remaining in the country with a small task force to resist and assist. DePaul International is one of them; they have been in Ukraine since 2007, assisting persons in need in several cities. Most staff and the friends they support had to be evacuated from some of the places they lived and worked, but they remain very active in others locations where one of their day centres is now a feeding station, providing an emergency medical service. Their shelters are full of women and children alongside usual beneficiaries. They are supported by the Daughters of Charity. They are also delivering truckloads of food and emergency items to the cities that were evacuated.

CIAD has agreed to support the call for help by providing an immediate donation of € 10,000.

### ROMANIA

There are more than 360,000 Ukrainians in Romania. Vincentians are active in small yet efficient ways throughout the country.



The SSVP Oradea and Turt members are working at the Sighet and Halmeu Customs post and also at a refugee center organized at the 'Sacro Cuore' Monastery. SSVP Lasi members work at refugees centers opened in Lasi by Caritas and local parishes. They are also working at centres opened in Gadium and Sapience, assisting refugees entering Romania through the Siret customs border post.

The needs expressed by the National Council of Romania are for food (of any kind), bedding, hygiene products and, gasoline for vehicles transporting refugees to those places where they can stay.



CIAD has released an immediate emergency grant of € 5,000, and are awaiting a relief plan from our members in Romania before considering larger grants, in accordance with ongoing needs.

### SLOVAKIA

"The people in Slovakia are generous, they help the refugees at the border and all over Slovakia with collections, shelter and other types of assistance. All the conferences are participating in the collection of food and hygiene articles for the Ukrainians. "In locations where the Vincentian Sisters are active, the goods are given directly to them." said the National President, while cooperation is ongoing within the Slovakian Vincentian Family.

They serve Ukrainians refugees in Slovakia including the provision of accommodation, but are also sending aid across border into Ukraine through a Conference located near the border. The aid includes food, hygiene articles and medical supplies.

"In Bratislava, in "Dom nádeje" (Home of Hope, a SSVP Centre) 4 refugees from Ukraine (Kharkiv) are accommodated, another 4 persons are expected. The refugees are a mother with her child and 2 grandparents. Other people are sent to us by the Vincentians from the area where they work. They have

no money and no belongings. From our Vincentian parish they are gradually receiving food, hygiene articles and clothes from the collection".

CGI, through CIAD, has sent to the National Council an emergency grant of € 5,000 that will cover some of their expenses (electricity, gas and heating fuel), donations (food, clothing...) and activities (for example, healthcare and medicines for the elderly) and will be assessing further needs.

In addition, CGI teams are working to contact the Society and Vincentian family members in all the countries assisting the refugees (Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary, and Poland) in order to establish the best and most secure way to provide help. While our hearts command us to act urgently, our responsibility is also to act wisely and for the long term. Emergency relief is not one of SSVP's strengths, but it is our Vincentians who will remain on location "long after the cameras have left".

CGI will not make a separate appeal for the Ukrainian crisis and all the donations we will make to these countries and to support the victims will be drawn out from our "Fund for International Solidarity". Council General has recently appealed to the generosity of the National Councils worldwide to replenish this fund.

# New York and Boston receive the missionary visit of the President General International

Between March 20 and 27, 2022, the North American cities of New York and Boston received the institutional visit of our 16th President General International, brother Renato Lima de Oliveira

In New York, President Renato attended a Mass of Thanksgiving for the 40th anniversary of the “Bread & Life” Project, celebrated by the Bishop of Brooklyn, Robert John Brennan. The ceremony took place on the premises of St. Thomas More Parish, maintained by the Vincentian priests, inside Saint John’s University (Congregation of the Mission), where brother Renato also attended the meeting of the Saint John’s Conference, formed by young people.

Brother Renato also met with the Council General delegates at the United Nations and participated in a side event on the impact of homelessness on women and girls. There was also a working dinner with brother Scott Miller, president of the Archdiocesan Council of New York, responsible for the social action of 31 Conferences in the “city that never sleeps”.

In Boston, President Lima de Oliveira was warmly welcomed by brother Robert Smith, president of the Central Council, which is made up of 12 District Councils, 160 Conferences and several social works, among them the Vincentian thrift store (second hand products) they visited in Stoughton, Massachusetts.



SSVP Boston



Meeting with the Cardinal

# INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



New York and Boston receive the missionary visit of the President General International



St. John's Conference – New York



Sacred Heart Conference – Boston



United Nations Team in New York

Renato also took part at the Central Council's monthly meeting when he gave a talk about the CGI's accomplishments in the last five years. Soon after, he visited the Sacred Heart Conference (East Boston) and was very impressed with the work in progress.

Finally, Cardinal Sean Patrick O'Malley was kind enough to receive the President General, accompanied by Vincentian leaders of the city, when they talked about the process of the canonization of Ozanam and the possibility of founding new Conferences in the region, especially at the Holy Cross Cathedral.

"Whenever I am in the United States I feel fully at home. The loving way I am always received is remarkable. The US Vincentians are exceptional fellow members. The quality of the charity work is impressive, and especially the affection with which the poor are treated. The American SSVP is an example of management and charity for our entire Confederation," attested brother Renato Lima.

Since he was elected in 2016, the President General has visited the following American cities to learn about the work of the Conferences and special works: Baltimore, Washington, New York, Long Island, Phoenix, Saint Louis, Chicago, Trenton, Madison, Detroit, Boston, Providence, and Philadelphia. In May, it will be the State of Florida's turn.



# America 1 Team Is Back in Action



Mike Nizankiewicz

As the Covid Pandemic shows signs of lessening and travel restrictions are easing, the America 1 team is ready to get back into true Vincentian action

On Friday, March 25, the America 1 Team met by Zoom to discuss numerous topics including putting together an action plan for 2022-23, visits to America 1 superior councils, updates by the coordinators among other items.

A planning task force was appointed consisting of Frank Voehl, Zone 2 Coordinator, Patricia Collins, Zone 1 Coordinator and Mary Charles, Training Coordinator. They will draft goals and objectives for 2022-23 and submit it to the rest of the team for input and approval.



ITVP, Mike Nizankiewicz indicated that there are five councils he would like to visit this year: Grenada, Dominica, Barbados, Canada, and the U.S. Council for their annual meeting. Sr. Mary indicated that the borders of Grenada are open and sister Patricia Collins said she would advise on both Barbados and Dominica.

Youth Coordinator Kat Brissette gave excellent PowerPoint presentations on both the recent mid-year meeting of the U.S. Council (which Mike Nizankiewicz attended) and a Youth Involvement update. Links to some of the related activities can be found here.

Bro. Rudolph gave an interesting report on a new building material that could have very positive implications for SSVP for home projects, where needed. The name of the material is Plycem Board. It is waterproof, fire resistant and earthquake resistant. It's made from fiber cement and comes in lengths specified. A Mexican company called Elementa manufactures it in Costa Rica. For those interested, I'm sure brother Rudolph will be happy to answer any questions.

Sister Mary Charles reviewed her plans for ongoing training in the Region. Her next training will be Vincentian relationships with international organizations and the church. In recent months her Zoom training included Safeguarding, and the Importance of Successor Leadership (at the council and conference levels).

Special congratulations go to the Superior Council of Grenada, which is celebrating their centennial anniversary. On behalf of CGI, ITVP Mike Nizankiewicz will be attending their closing celebration on May 7.



Midyear Videos

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/9384603>



National Members Website and Resources

<https://members.ssvpusa.org/>



USA Youth

<https://www.instagram.com/svdpya/>



Canada Youth

<https://www.instagram.com/ssvp.youth.ca/>



## First ITVPs meeting in 2022



Maurice Yeung

In April 2021, the ITVPs met, discussed and decided that every year the ITVPs should meet at least once physically and twice via zoom for improving and enhancing communication; and that one of these meetings should be dedicated to special topics.

The 1st ITVPs meeting in 2022 was held on 9 April 2022 via zoom from 12pm to 4pm (Paris time) and was dedicated to discuss the following two very important subjects - “International Governance Framework” and “Twinning - the challenges and benefits to countries”.

Besides the 12 ITVPs and Brother Maurice Yeung [IVP (Structure)], we had great supports of board members in participating the meeting. Due to clash with a lecture which was a prior commitment, Brother Renato (the 16th PGI) was not able to take part. Nevertheless, Brother Joseph Pandian (V President General), Brother Larry Toumey (Treasurer General) and Bro Sebastian Gramajo (2nd VPG Deputy) were there to share and exchange their views. Also, Sister Marie-Francoise Salesiani-Payet (Secretary General) joined us towards the end of 2nd part.

For the discussion of “International Governance Framework”, we were very grateful that Sister Helen O’Shea (Chair, Governance Dept) took part. Apart from introducing this very important document,

highlighting the rationales and explaining the thinking processes with due consideration, she also answered questions raised during the meeting. The ITVPs team welcomes this document which is an excellent document allowing SSVP to operate in a proper and transparent system. There were very fruitful discussions. A report recapping the salient points of discussion has been submitted to the Board.

On TWINNING, the ITVPs team appreciated very much this very beautiful system / mechanism of funding supports which is arguably very unique to SSVP. It facilitates communication between conferences and councils globally, promoting a spirit of understanding, friendship and solidarity among all Vincentians. It also promotes the establishment of new conferences and Councils, particularly for the new countries under the SSVP PLUS projects by helping them in their formation, training and expansion. Again, there were very useful discussions. A report recapping the salient points of discussion has been submitted to the Board and International Twinning Commission.



## The Council General to hold its annual plenary meeting in June in Paris

Events will be broadcasted live on Ozanam TV

From June 13-17, the Council General International will hold its annual plenary meeting at the Centre Chevilly-Larue in Paris, in accordance with the Rule, Statutes of the Confederation and French law. The Centre belongs to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritan Fathers), and is close to the Orly airport.

The plenary session will be hybrid, which means that participants who cannot attend in person will have the opportunity to follow the sessions online. All Vincentians around the world will also be able to watch the gathering, which will be broadcasted on Ozanam TV, enhancing the transparency and good governance of the Council General.

On June 13th, the program includes the Annual Meeting of the Territorial Vice-presidents. On the 14th and 15th, the Permanent Section and the International Executive Committee (made up of 20 countries) will hold their meetings. On the 16th, there will be a pilgrimage to Paris to the places where St. Vincent de Paul and Ozanam live as well as a visit to the new headquarters of the Council General. On the 17th, the attendees will return to their countries of origin.

During the event, 16 resolutions will be examined to approve the management reports (of the President General, the Secretary General and the Treasurer General), the financial accounts of the Council General for the year 2021, the minutes of the last plenary session (Madrid 2021), the extension of mandates of some Superior Councils due to the constraints of the pandemic, as well as the allocation of resources for specific purposes (such as the canonization of Ozanam and events for the youth).

During the plenary session, the “Charity in Hope” Medal will be awarded to the NGO “Fraternity without Borders”. A cooperation agreement will be signed with this social organization, which is present in eight countries and carries out

exceptional humanitarian work through community and educational projects focused on children in need. There will also be two special presentations, one on the actions of the SSVP in Ukraine, and the other on the “Governance Framework”, which will be approved during the event.

There will also be a debate on the universal logo of the Confederation, the launching of the document “How to found a Conference in seven weeks”, a contest on education will be launched by the International Vice-Presidency of Youth, among other initiatives.

“We are organizing everything with great care and dedication, so that this year’s plenary meeting will be a success. We pray God that the decisions made by the collegium will be the best possible. The venue chosen is excellent for spiritual events with a chapel and all the appropriate structure,” stressed Marie-Françoise Salesiani-Payet, Secretary General.

We ask for everyone’s prayers for the success of the event, and for the participants to have a good trip as the pandemic, thank God, is receding.





## Vincentians and the International Day of Human Fraternity

On February 4th, the members of the Conferences of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP), the branches of the Vincentian Family, the Holy Church and all mankind celebrated the International Day Of Human Fraternity

This day was designated at the UN General Assembly in 2020, at a time when the world was confronting the global crisis caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, which exacerbated poverty, isolation and social inequalities, and resulted in economic recession and, regrettably, in thousands of deaths all over the world.

In these tough times, with a large part of the population experiencing hardship and deprivation, the INTERNATIONAL DAY OF HUMAN FRATERNITY underlines the importance of raising awareness about different cultures, religions or beliefs, since this societal acceptance should contribute to improving the lives of people, like us, members of the SSVP.

Human fraternity is not just about solidarity (tangible part). It is also about listening lovingly to those who suffer, about renewed multilateral cooperation among peoples and the need for greater unity among nations, based on the acceptance of people as they are (promoting tolerance and the elimination of discrimination and prejudice), while tackling together the socio-economic crisis we are going through.

To commemorate this day, His Holiness Pope Francis published the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together. Therein he stated that fraternity is the only possible path for humanity so badly damaged by war and indifference: "Either we are brothers and sisters, or everything falls apart".

Pope Francis stressed, "This time of pandemic has shown that [...] we are not saved alone! [...]" "We all live under the same heaven, independently of where



and how we live, the colour of our skin, religion, social group, sex, age, economic conditions or our state of health. All of us are different yet equal [...] and we [...] must acknowledge that we are brothers and sisters. [...] Fraternity is one of the fundamental and universal values that ought to undergird relationships between peoples."

According to Pope Francis, "the path of fraternity is long and challenging, yet it is the anchor of salvation for humanity. Let us counter the many threatening signs, times of darkness and mindsets of conflict with the sign of fraternity [...]" Finally, Pope Francis encouraged everyone to be committed to the cause of peace, and to respond concretely to the problems and needs of the poor and the defenseless.



Click below to read the Pope's full message

[Italian](#)

[English](#)

[Spanish](#)

[Arabic](#)

[French](#)



## Council General Represents the SSVP in several organs at the Vatican

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is an autonomous entity, with its own Rules and procedures, but, as any religious entity, has a close relationship with the Catholic Church, acting together for the evangelization of the poor, for our personal sanctification, and for the construction of a more just and brotherly world.

To achieve these goals, the Council General International represents the SSVP at three Vatican Dicasteries. Here is a summary of each of these bodies.



### DICASTERY FOR PROMOTING INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

It was created in 2016 by Pope Francis to replace many Pontifical Councils (such as “Cor Unum”, Justice and Peace, Pastoral Care of Migrants, Pastoral of Displaced Persons, and Pastoral Care of Health Services).

All the PGIs of the Society were formerly part of the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum”, founded in 1971 by Pope Paul VI and suppressed in January 2017 by Pope Francis. SSVP’s membership in “Cor Unum” goes back a long time, since 1983.

This attendance continues today in the new Dicastery, since on November 11, 2020, when brother Renato Lima was appointed member of this Dicastery.

Brother Renato or other representatives, like Antonio Gianfico or Sebastian Gramajo, take part in lots of virtual and in-person meetings on behalf of the CGI/SSVP.

Card. Peter A. K. Turkson is the prefect.



[www.humandevlopment.va/en.html](http://www.humandevlopment.va/en.html)



### DICASTERY FOR THE LAITY, FAMILY AND LIFE

It was created in 2016 by Pope Francis to replace two Pontifical Councils: “Council for the Laity” and “Council for the Family” (both were abolished).

The SSVP was already invited to join the former Pontifical Council for the Laity in 1974 and it was always invited to participate in the meetings. PGI participated and represented us in many meetings and events.

In this Dicastery, CGI is considered a guest and President General attended all the gatherings he was invited for.

The prefect is Cardenal Kevin Farrell.



[www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en.html](http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en.html)



### DICASTERY FOR COMMUNICATION

The Dicastery for Communication was initially established under the name “Secretariat for Communication”, by Pope Francis in the Apostolic Letter “L’attuale Contesto Comunicativo”, published on June 27, 2015.

This institution of the Roman Curia was entrusted with the task of restructuring “the whole reality of which, in different ways, to date, have dealt with communication”.

The Prefect Paolo Rufino, who is a layman, invited the President General as an observer since 2019.



[www.comunicazione.va/en.html](http://www.comunicazione.va/en.html)

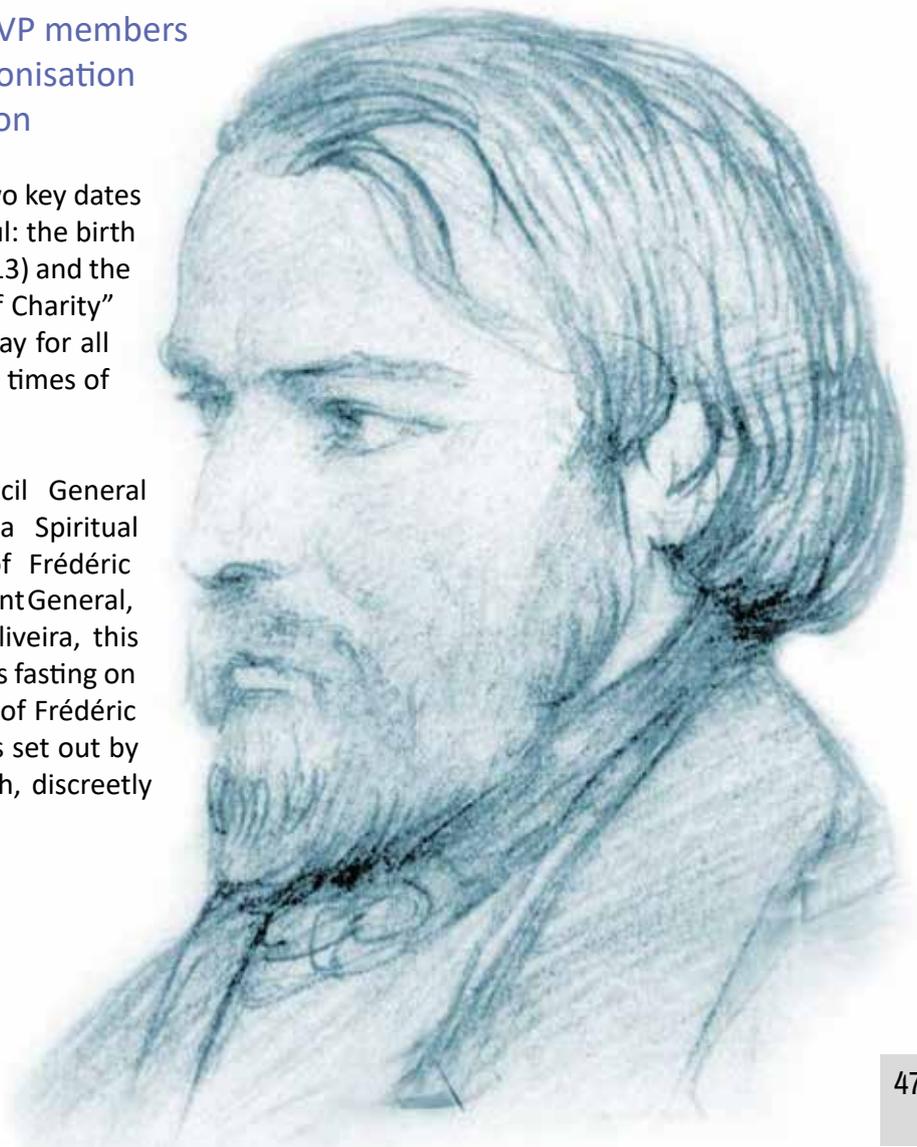


## Fasting: Council General Launches Campaign for Canonisation of Bl. Frédéric Ozanam

Every month, on the 23rd, SSVP members are urged to fast until his canonisation reaches a successful conclusion

On April 23rd, we commemorate two key dates for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul: the birth of Bl. Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam (1813) and the founding of the first “Conference of Charity” (1833). Hence, it’s a very special day for all of us, fellow members, especially in times of pandemic.

To mark these dates, the Council General International (CGI) is launching a Spiritual Campaign for the canonisation of Frédéric Ozanam. As suggested by our President General, fellow member Renato Lima de Oliveira, this campaign is about all SSVP members fasting on the 23rd of each month, in honour of Frédéric Ozanam’s canonization (“fasting” as set out by the precepts of the Catholic Church, discreetly and as is customary in each region).





# The 7 Founders



Devaux

Lamache

Bailly de Surcy

Ozanam

Lallier

Clavé

Le Taillandier

## April 23: 189th anniversary of the founding of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

[Congratulations to all our members throughout the world](#)

France, April 23rd, 1833. A group of young university students, faced with social inequalities and injustices, decided to take action in the hope of changing the world. To this end, the group of friends who wish to share their faith and translate it into action found the first "Conference of Charity

Prayer, friendship and action come together to visit the Mouffetard district, one of the poorest of Paris. It was a Daughter of Charity, Sister Rosalie Rendu, who accompanied and guided them, instructing them in the teachings of St. Vincent de Paul.

In 1834, the Conferences took the saint as their patron saint and dedicated themselves to the Immaculate Virgin Mary. The following year the first Regulations were published and in 1839 the International General Council was constituted.

Today, we have 800,000 members who participate in 48,000 Conferences in 153 territories (and growing), helping 30 million people a year. The Council General International, inspired by the legacy of our seven founders, congratulates all our members around the world on the 189th anniversary of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.



## MISEVI Leaders' Visit to the CGI's Headquarters in Paris

On February 1st, the Council General International (CGI) was pleased to host two of the greatest leaders of MISEVI (Lay Vincentian Missionaries): President Ribel Elias (Lebanon) and Treasurer Monica Villar (Spain)

Ribel and Monica stayed in Paris to take part in MISEVI's annual board meeting and took the chance to visit the general headquarters of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, being welcomed by the CGI's special advisor, Gonzague de Raulin.

At the headquarters, they were shown all the premises, such as Ozanam Historical Space, the chapel, the photo gallery of the Presidents General, and the library. Furthermore, they were told about the SSVP's values and principles, the history of the seven founders, and the achievements of the current term of office. "The magnificent guided tour gave us an insight into the life and family of Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam, and into his personal and family life", emphasized Monica.

President Ribel said: "I really enjoyed this visit. We intend to get closer and strengthen the bonds of collaboration between the SSVP and MISEVI, united in prayer in the name of Saint Vincent and Ozanam, embracing the world in a network of charity. Together, we are more efficient when it comes to undertaking more actions focused on the most vulnerable".

President General International, brother Renato Lima de Oliveira, sent a special message to MISEVI's leaders: "Remain steadfast in your missionary mission, bringing the Vincentian charism to the poor, encouraging, in particular, lay vocations, which are so important for the Church". And he stressed: "Let us pray especially for

the success of MISEVI's actions and for many lay vocations, especially among young people and married couples".

Established in 2001, MISEVI is one of the newest branches of our dear Vincentian Family. In September 2021, it signed a collaboration agreement with the SSVP at the CGI's Annual Meeting in Madrid. This agreement entails mutual benefits, namely, joint formation-related events, institutional collaboration to establish new Vincentian Conferences, and support to expand MISEVI into new territories.

The entity, which is, fortunately, growing fast, is currently present in 18 countries: United States, Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Spain, Lebanon, Egypt, Ireland, Panama, Poland, and Slovakia.



President Ribel Elias (Lebanon) and Treasurer Monica Villar (Spain)



**Andrés R. M. Motto, CM.**  
SSVP International Spiritual Advisor

## Vincentians and mercy

My beloved brothers and sisters in the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, in this meditation I invite you to reflect on the wonderful virtue of mercy. I'd like to start by sharing some memories with you: I was born into a family with Christian virtues. In my home town of Luján, there was also a Catholic school run by the Marist Brothers. My parish was also a fairly well-known Marian sanctuary, Our Lady of Luján. This parish was run by the Vincentian priests (also called Paulists or Lazarists, whichever one prefers). From all this, I learned much that is good, and I thank God for that. But the image of God I learned of most was one of a severe God. I feared rather than loved Him. Many

years would pass until I could experience for myself the God of Christian mercy. I am sharing this story because perhaps some of those reading or hearing this will have had similar experiences. I am therefore inviting you to rediscover the mercy of God.

### Scriptural reflection

One of the aspects belonging to God, identifying Him, is his mercy. Scripture contains many passages which speak of and reveal the mercy of God. Let's look at some examples: "The Lord is a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in love, whose love is for a thousand generations, who pardons faults, rebellion and sinfulness..." (Ex 34,6-7). This is one of the passages best summarising the merciful aspect of God. He is described as compassionate and merciful; a God who knows human beings and can understand and accept them.

Psalm 103, 8-14 explains that God does not love us with a fleeting, superficial love, but loves us so much that he can forgive us without limit. This psalm describes the mercy of God: how it is love, understanding of the person, goodness, forgiveness, forgetful of the wrong done, kind and tender. It shows God who relates to human beings, and grants forgiveness when they repent, not for their own merit, but out of total divine freedom. In this way, he acts out his infinite love for each one of us.

Moving on to the New Testament, Jesus in his parable of the Merciful Father (Lk 15, 11-32) shows us the gracious heart, filled with love, which the Father has for each of us, encouraging us always to return to Him. Jesus is the living expression of the merciful Father, who sent his own Son so that we could have life to the full (Jn 3,16).





## *Mercy itself is a feature which permeates all the works of charity of Vincent de Paul.*

### Reflection about the Church

We need to recognise that, for various reasons over the centuries, Christians were more aware of divine sternness, which produced a religious sense that relied more on fear of God. To make it simpler, I will say that with the arrival of an extraordinary man, Pope St John XXIII, a new way of evangelising appeared, more faithful to the plan of Jesus. That is, a pastoral approach centred on mercy. This was the spirit that gave rise to the Second Vatican Council. As the Pope explained in the opening address, it invites Christians not to condemn others, but to turn to the medicine of mercy. Years later, this movement would become clearer, and was analysed more deeply in a series of papal documents: Saint John Paul II devoted his second encyclical to this topic: *Dives in misericordia*. Benedict XVI developed it further in two of his encyclicals, *Deus caritas est* and *Caritas in veritate*. This all came to fulfilment when Pope Francis proclaimed the Holy Year of Mercy. There was no doubt a continuity in this, but also something new with respect to the previous 40 years. For me, the change revolved around the following. Previous popes took a favourable approach to mercy. But this position was not always consistent with the appointments they made, and with the groups they promoted. Many of these were very strict and inflexible. Much of their effort also went into confirming current discipline and doctrine.

In Francis's messages, the focus of attention has shifted decidedly towards mercy. The reference to truth is there, and is clear to the vast majority. But it does not seem to be sought by one recent theologian, who said something strange, and stated it in a document for the whole church. A Church centred on mercy creates a climate closer to the plan of Jesus.



What is certain is that a lack of mercy has a negative effect on pastoral care. It encourages me to say that it is one of the things which drives people away from the Church, since they hope to find in us normal and merciful people, not judges or fanatics. There are groups which blame Christians for hardness and a lack of

mercy. Who say that sometimes they are associated with hypocrisy and some marked psychologies. Many of these criticisms may be exaggerated or invented. But we know that others are sadly all too true.

### From the Vincentian identity

Our vocation is to bring the mercy of God into the world of the poor. Mercy itself is a feature which permeates all the works of charity of Vincent de Paul. It taught him how to contemplate the life of Jesus. He used to say also that we ask God "for the bowels of his mercy".<sup>1</sup> Frédéric Ozanam, said: "There is no doubt that God's mercy is vast". I repeat that we, in the same way, bring the mercy of God to the working classes, to labourers, as well as to the unemployed, to those who grieve, those who are alone and the sick. That is our pastoral plan.

### Some points for further reflection

- 1.- What was my religious education like?
- 2.- strict or merciful?
- 3.- Can I overcome the faults of a rigidly strict education?
- 4.- What is my image of God?
- 5.- How do I express mercy in my service of the poor?

I invite you to consider this topic more deeply by reading the fine book by Cardinal Walter Kasper, *Mercy. The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*. Paulist Press. New York, 2014.

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<sup>1</sup> ES XI, XI, 180.



## Agreement between Depaul and the SSVP Ireland

On January 10th, Depaul and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP) reached an agreement enabling Depaul to take over the management of the SSVP homeless service in Cork city

Depaul is one of the leading providers of services of the Vincentian Family with regard to people experiencing homelessness across both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Established in 2002, Depaul currently manages over 30 specialised accommodation and outreach services and has been at the forefront of providing additional homeless services throughout the ongoing pandemic. Depaul provides over 600 bed spaces per night. In 2020, it supported over 3,500 people. The SSVP is transferring the management of seven hostels to Depaul due to its high level of specialisation in delivering services.





Taoiseach Micheál Martin, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland, attended the transfer of services at Deerpark House, a centre which he opened in 2002, and said:

“This transfer demonstrates the responsibility, foresight and vision of two organisations coming together to have a positive impact on people facing homelessness.

Our ‘Housing for All’ plan seeks to support our most vulnerable by significantly increasing the number of tenancies for those experiencing homelessness and who have more complex needs. Yet the pathway to eradicating homelessness is bound up with the constructive contributions of organisations like Depaul and the SSVP, working together in a progressive and

transformational manner to meet the ever-changing needs of people facing homelessness.

Having originally opened this centre in 2002 as Minister for Health, I would like to commend and thank the staff and volunteers of the Society of St Vincent de Paul who have worked tirelessly over the years to support those affected by homelessness and housing insecurity.

I know this work will continue through their social housing projects, and through the 1,200 local Conferences working across the island of Ireland. I look forward to seeing the invaluable work Depaul will do in the future for this community and others.”



[Read full text](#)

**DEPAUL**  
Homelessness has no place

**TAKE HIM IN FROM THE COLD**

Help someone like Barry weather through the winter

[Help Now](#)



Syria

## Inauguration of Residential Care Home for the Elderly of SSVP Syria Aleppo

The residence care home was inaugurated with great joy in the presence of five bishops, who represented all Catholic and Orthodox churches in Aleppo

After over eleven years of war, and with the support of the CIAD, Aid to the Church in Need, L'Oeuvre d'Orient and the Pontifical Mission, the residential care home for the elderly of the SSVP Aleppo has been completely rehabilitated. Our seniors are now so happy to be back home, being looked after and cared for by our brothers and sisters of SSVP Aleppo.



# Festival of the Christian Song Sanremo 2022



## A Vincentian group is representing our own charism at the first festival

The first Festival of the Christian Song took place in the wonderful city of Sanremo, from 3rd to 5th February. Among the participants was the Vincentian group *Serviens in Spe*, formed of Davide Rossi, president of a Conference belonging to the Milan Central Council, musician and composer, and the opera singer Carmela Iacono.



They performed the song *The Vincentian Prayer*, from the album “*Ho smesser di esser solo*” (I am no longer alone), on the *Rusty Records* website, on sale from February.

The official communications channel for the Festival was Vatican Radio - Vatican News; and the event, sponsored both by the city council and the Diocese of Ventimiglia-Sanremo, was broadcast by the national television channel *Padre Pío Tv*, by *TivùSat* and by *Sky*; as well as being streamed globally on [www.teleradiopadrepio.it](http://www.teleradiopadrepio.it).

In the words of Silvana Tondi, president of Milan Central Council, “Acceptance of this song for the festival was for us a sign of the value given to our charism, which addresses all forms of poverty found in today’s world; and also shows how everyone can give expression to their service to God, in Davide’s case through his membership of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, and through his music.”





# Venezuela

## The CGI Commemorates the World Day of the Poor



### A project helping 100 families in Venezuela

The fifth edition of World Day of the Poor, initiated by Pope Francis, was celebrated on November 14th, 2021. In his message for this Day, His Holiness Pope Francis called on all Catholics to be open to “[...] a movement of evangelization that meets the poor personally wherever they may be. We cannot wait for the poor to knock on our door!”.



The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul could not be impervious to this request by the Holy Father. That is why, the CGI asked all the National Councils to undertake activities related to this day and, in particular, selected Venezuela to carry out a concrete action.

In collaboration with the SSVP Venezuela’s National Council, a project was developed to financially help 100 needy families, pre-selected by the SSVP Conferences in the country, to cover their most pressing needs in the run-up to Christmas.

Funds were disbursed to the SSVP Venezuela in two installments. Thus, once the first batch of donations was officially reported, the CGI transferred the second one to the National Council, to be then delivered to the needy families. Each of the 100 families received the sum of USD 100, totalling USD 10,000.

According to the SSVP Venezuela National Council’s President, sister Josefina Abreu De Gonçalves, “... the aid was given to poverty-stricken families selected by our Conferences. A representative of each family was accompanied by Conference presidents for a proper use of financial resources (food, medicines and medical check-ups)”.



The SSVP has been present in Venezuela since 1885 (142 years) and has 300 active members from 34 SSVP Conferences that currently serve around 900 people.

## SSVP Brazil's New National President

The swearing-in ceremony, held in Rio de Janeiro, was attended by a large number of Vincentians

The SSVP Brazil's new National President, brother Márcio José da Silva, and the new board members took office for a four-year term on January 9th, 2022. The event took place at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Saint Sebastian (Catedral São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro).

Complying with Covid-19 health and safety protocols, the swearing-in ceremony was conducted by the brother Julio Cesar Marques de Lima, CGI's Territorial Vice President for America 3 (South America), and brought together a great number of Vincentians. Prior to the ceremony, a mass was celebrated by the auxiliary Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro, Paulo Romão.





Proclaiming the inauguration of the new National President, the CGI's Territorial Vice President for America 3 thanked the outgoing National President, brother Cristian Reis da Luz, for the close collaboration between the SSVP Brazil and the CGI during his term. He also stressed the importance of the SSVP Brazil's involvement in forthcoming international projects: "The international SSVP movement needs the SSVP Brazil's active presence and know-how in several fields, while supporting our mission to move forward in the service to the poorest.", he emphasized.

After taking the oath of office, the new President introduced the new national board members for 2022-2026 and delivered his inaugural address. Brother Marcio thanked the outgoing board, who

had led the SSVP Brazil for the last 4 years, and presented the motto for his term: "Being Vincentian, a vocation lived out at the Conferences, with the Poor". Reinforcing this motto, he said: "We must understand that vocation in the journey of faith is defined as a call from God, a call to love and serve the poorest wherever they are, alleviating their suffering, helping them in their plight and serving them in hope".

Currently, the SSVP Brazil is made up of 134,000 members from 15,800 SSVP Conferences. In addition to the work carried out directly with more than 290,000 people assisted by the Conferences, the SSVP Brazil runs 625 Social Works (nursing homes, day-care centers, hospitals, and others).

March 6, 2022

## Women's Day Celebrations of the National Council of India

The National Council of India celebrated Women's Day on Sunday March 6, two days ahead of the International Women's Day. The theme of 2022, Break the Bias, was presented by Bro. Dr. A. Francis, Coordinator, Orientation and Training, Asia I

The celebrations were inaugurated by Bro. Renato Lima de Oliveira, our President General. In his inaugural address he said that the presence of female members was very important and reminisced about Sr. Rosalie Rendu who was the first woman in our Society. She helped our founding fathers establish the first conference in Paris and assisted them in home visits.



Bro. Renato Lima said that the sisters in the Society were very important because of their energy, charity, ability to solve many problems and also because of their compassion for the poor. The Society needs women members in conferences and at all levels of the Society administration. He informed us that Sr. Marie-Francoise is the first woman Secretary General of the Society and we are looking forward to the day when we will have a woman as President General. He also congratulated Bro. Jude Mangalraj, National President of India, and his team for organising the celebrations.



## Spain Aid to the Ukrainian people and transfer of refugees



At the initiative of the Bilbao Particular Council and with the collaboration of the National Council of Spain, convoys of humanitarian aid are being sent to the border



The conflict in Ukraine has provoked an intense movement of millions of refugees fleeing their country to safer destinations. Faced with the need for help, both to refugees at the border and to those wishing to move to Spain, the Bilbao Particular Council organized a convoy composed of 10 Vincentians and volunteers who, in 5 vans filled with food and other essentials, left for the Polish-Ukrainian border on March 14.

On the afternoon of March 15, after a journey of about 2,500 kilometers, the food was delivered to the Polish Vincentian Family in Krakow, which is caring for the refugees. After a few hours of rest at the seminary of the Congregation of the Mission in this town, the convoy left for the border near Dohobyczów (Poland) where they picked up

27 Ukrainians, mostly children, women and elderly people.

On March 18, the convoy arrived on Spanish soil and the refugees were welcomed by families from the Basque Country and Navarra, thanks to the support of two associations of friends of Ukraine from Irun and Bilbao.

The Bilbao Particular Council is already organizing a second convoy that will also have the financial support of the Spain National Council - SSV through the donations that have been generously received for this cause.

## Manual with Guidelines for SSVP PLUS Project

This manual sets out the guidelines for Territorial Vice Presidencies with regard to SSVP expansion into new countries

The SSVP PLUS Manual, produced by the Project's general management, is now available on the CGI's website. This Manual outlines the key guidelines to be followed by the teams belonging to the CGI's 12 Territorial Vice Presidencies when initiatives are undertaken to establish a first SSVP conference in new countries. Target countries for the Project were previously identified and ranked according to the complexity involved in their establishment.

The founding process of the SSVP in new countries is therein elaborated, which consists of three stages: The planning stage (actions carried out to identify local support groups, initial contacts with the hierarchy of the local Church and the first visit to the country); the implementation stage (information on the SSVP being disseminated by the project team, meetings with people who wish to take part in our organization and visits made to local Church's authorities); and the consolidation stage (organizational meetings to establish the new conference, another visit to the new country made by the project team for a proper conference foundation and a formation session organized for new SSVP members).

The SSVP PLUS project is an initiative aimed at expanding the SSVP into new countries, in line with one of the CGI's strategic goals. In this regard, Conferences have been founded in 7 new countries (Liberia, Albania, Cyprus, Cayman Islands, Vatican, Tanzania and Cape Verde). There are ongoing initiatives for the next two years, which would entail the establishment of the SSVP in 8 new countries.

The President General International, brother Renato Lima de Oliveira, underscores the importance of this project for the SSVP: "This expansion project is not only about possibly helping the poor in other parts of the world, it mirrors the dream of Ozanam and that of the other SSVP founders", he stated.



[Manual SSVP PLUS](#)





## Youth Meeting in São Tomé and Príncipe

### Flourishing in faith and service to those most in need

On February 13th, young people from São Tomé and Príncipe took part in a national meeting held in Guadalupe, a town near the capital, São Tomé.

The meeting began very early, at about seven in the morning, with a Eucharist led by Edgarnilson Ceita, who is responsible for the youth at the National Council. He spoke about the young people's work in the country and the enhancement of the service provided to the people most in need so that the SSVP can flourish in faith and love for others.

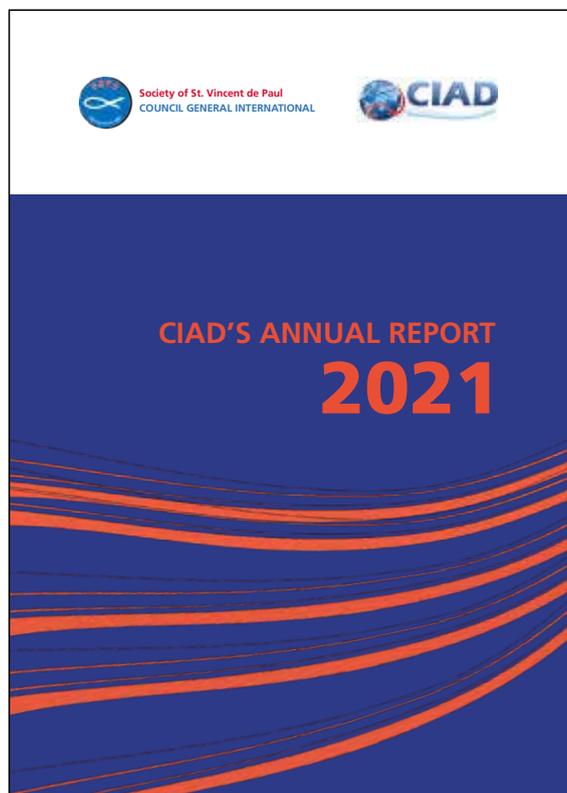
Under the heading, "The Vincentian Mission", more than 20 young people took part in the meeting which included moments of prayer and formation, as well as the home visit made to a woman with cerebral palsy who was presented with a wheelchair. In a spirit of fellowship, the group visited the relative of a fellow member who had been hurt in a road traffic accident shortly before.

Thanks to videoconferencing, the young people were able to connect with Fabiano Folclori, a Brazilian member from São Paulo Metropolitan Council. He told them how wonderful it is to be part of the Vincentian family which is filled with the spirit of love for one's neighbour, affection and understanding between young people as well as the growth in faith.

The SSVP in Brazil supports these young people in their work with the poorest families. Renata Mancini, a Brazilian member and international delegate for formation & training for America 3, is in constant communication with them. They regard her as their "fairy godmother".

The meeting concluded with a lunch which all the young people shared in the house of a member. They could share the joy of coming together as a community.





## 2021 Annual Report

The Commission for International Aid and Development is one of the CGI's international solidarity arms, which supports the SSVP worldwide in emergency humanitarian actions and disaster rehabilitation programmes, as well as in social and sustainable development projects.

We herein publish the 2021 Annual Report. Despite reduced activity due to the pandemic, the CIAD could provide assistance to 31 countries, which approximately amounted to €350,000. The reconstruction of houses in Indonesia, support for refugees in Lebanon, food aid in Madagascar, an agricultural development project in Haiti, or support for a retirement home in Colombia are just some examples of this Commission's work, which is detailed in this report.

You are kindly invited to read it!

[Download](#) 

## CIAD launches its annual call for solidarity

Dear National Presidents, dear Brothers and Sisters,

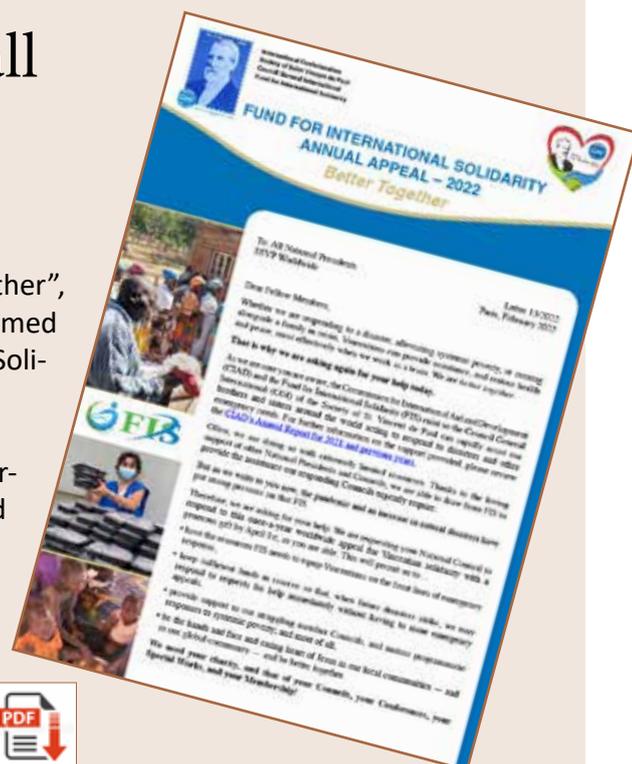
Please find attached the Annual Appeal 2022 - "Better Together", a global campaign addressed to SSVP worldwide, which is aimed at collecting donations for the CGI's Fund for International Solidarity Fund (FIS).

President General, Renato Lima de Oliveira, and the FIS Chairwoman, Carmela Addante, invite you to read it through and disseminate it among your members, Councils and Conferences.

Thank you for your generosity!

Best Vincentian regards

[Download](#) 





## The “Strategy-25” project reduces inequalities

**This initiative focusses to reduce poverty in the 25 poorest countries in the world**

The Council General International (CGI), always concerned about providing better services to our Vincentian grassroots, and in total unity with the United Nations in reducing poverty and social inequalities, has just launched the Strategy-25 Project.

This project was developed by Bro. Arthur Schultze, coordinator of the International Twinning Commission (ITC), at the request of brother Renato Lima de Oliveira, 16th President General International, and it will be a priority in these last two years of this mandate.

CGI used the following criteria to identify the 25 needy countries. a) extreme poverty (countries of less than USD 2.00 per day); b) nations that are receiving little or no funding; c) several member countries with high levels of extreme poverty but they are currently in receipt of reasonable income and acceptable levels of funding; d) countries that are both twinned and not twinned; e) countries with 25% of the people who face extreme poverty; and f) other member countries considered by CGI due to special reasons.

“With this project, the wealthy countries in our Confederation will be able to better direct their generous donations to better focus on the real needs of these 25 countries, which are considered by the World Bank the poorest in the world. If we want to build a real charity network, we need to help those most in need, otherwise we will never achieve the equality so dreamt of by our founders and by all the inhabitants of this planet”, stressed brother Renato Lima.

The Council General International, through its solidarities departments (International Twinning Commission and Commission for International Aid

& Development) will work together to enhance the Strategy-25 Project in these places: Ethiopia, Burundi, Madagascar, Guinea Bissau, Rwanda, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, Togo, Ivory Coast, Senegal,

Liberia, Mali, Eritrea, Sao Tomé & Principe, Mozambique, Congo Brazzaville, Cameroon, Chad, Eswatini, Angola, Namibia, South Sudan, Haiti, Venezuela, Honduras, and Pakistan.

“Poverty is defined as not having enough material possessions or income to cover a person’s basic personal needs, sometimes so extreme where a person lacks food, clothing, and shelter. So, the Strategy-25 Project was created to best assist the neediest by our Society for the next years”, explained Bro. Arthur.

There will be key areas we need to focus on and implement to enjoy success with the Strategy-25 Project: community-based projects; social and educational projects; providing both twinned and non-twinning member countries with financial support; growing communication between twinning coordinators, donors and receivers; identifying new donor countries; and encouraging current donor countries, if possible, to grow their contributions.

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward them for what they have done” (Proverbs 19, 17).





**María Luisa Téllez**  
International Vice-President  
for Formation and Training

## Spiritual consolation

In the coming months, we Vincentians must prepare ourselves for more work and generosity, especially in the western countries of Europe where the war in Ukraine will leave many men, women, the elderly and children in material and spiritual need.

For our part, we should reflect and live in a “war economy” like our brothers. It would be necessary for us to be more austere, to buy only what is necessary, not to waste and, with this saving, to help our brothers, the most impoverished for whatever reason.

But if we are to assist them with material goods, we are also obliged to bring them comfort. The spiritual consolation of a brother who listens to them, who brings peace to them, who is the servant and intermediary of the Lord, of His message.

Of that God who takes care of everyone, although sometimes his “silence” overwhelms us.

For these reasons, we should be the ones, in His name, who approach Him, reminding us of the double obligation we have as Christians and Vincentians. To give the bread, to give ourselves, to learn to listen, to give our time, and to bring God closer to those who suffer so much.

In the next issue of Ozanam Network, in order to improve and develop our ability to offer spiritual consolation, we will give some keys to “Learning to listen”.



Víctor Martell  
Brother SSVF

## Being a Vincentian in my Own Way

The other day I met a Catholic brother I had not long seen, and he told me that he had joined Saint Vincent Conference, belonging to his parish. I was delighted to hear that, because if someone joins in to help those in need, this means that the message has got through to every Christian: Reaching out to the poor is our first mission.

I was dismayed to hear that, due to the pandemic, they were not home visiting. Instead, the needy came to their parish and they were interviewed there to figure out how to help them with the limited resources available. I told him:

Brother, the rules of our Society are very clear, and we should never, under any circumstance, disregard home visiting. You should not be discouraged by the size of a house larger than yours, it's not for us to judge. I recently visited a family living in a big house. When I talked to them, they explained to me that they had lost their jobs due to the pandemic. He and his wife were hired to work in a house; when the owner realized that he could do it himself, they were laid off. As a result, they could not make ends meet (monthly mortgage payment, food...). What should we do? We should give them food, make appropriate arrangements with the bank due to the pandemic, get informed about government welfare programs, and help them find a new job. It is not about paying their salary for one month, because it will



be the same the next month. It is about getting them out of this plight so that their lives change. That is our goal.

My hope is that this pandemic will make us ponder on the need to preach every day to everyone who feels Christian, whose duty is to help those who have none in this time of grief. We should teach something that many have forgotten: the virtue of Charity. Those who read the Bible and speak about it should read Matthew 25, to learn about how to earn Jesus' embrace on the day of his death if they comply with this command. This applies to Catholics, but also to all Christians of any kind.

Our Society does not seek to have members. Being a Vincentian is not an aspiration, but a vocation. It is not just another ministry, it is a surrender to our masters, the Poor, till the end of our days on Earth. This is not an easy task though. We have to make sacrifices. and don't do like that young rich man who, when Jesus told him to give away his money and then to follow him, was stunned and did not follow him. Perhaps, even today, after so many years, he still weeps for not having done so.

May our resolution for this new year be to embrace the theological virtues in our lives. Let us have FAITH in our work, which is blessed by God and, albeit sometimes without enough resources, HE will provide for us. Let us have HOPE for a better world, free of demagogy, where the poor are not ill-treated; and for the end of famine. Let us have CHARITY for those in need. We need to go out and be on the lookout for them. You should keep



in mind that some poor people are too shy to ask us for anything..

My congratulations to those who do it quietly, without boasting about it, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Being Vincentian in your own way is like being Catholic or Christian in your own way. We need to abide by the rules, the commandments... And this is not just a mere task, but our duty.

*Our Society does not seek to have members. Being a Vincentian is not an aspiration, but a vocation. It is not just another ministry, it is a surrender to our masters, the Poor, till the end of our days*



## News from the United Nations in Geneva

The UN Human Rights Council (HRC) has appointed Dr. Ian Fry as the first Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change

Marie-Françoise Salesiani-Payet, our representative to the UN in Geneva, has followed this long process and is delighted to share this good news with you.

We are all aware of what is at stake regarding climate change. Pope Francis has been so insistent that Christians and all people of good will must play their part in this movement that it was only natural that the SSVP should also be part of this international framework, in line with “Laudato Si” and “Fratelli Tutti”.

Vincentians around the world are well aware of the disastrous consequences of global warming, lack of clean water, etc., which weigh even more heavily on the most vulnerable.



Because “nothing in this world is indifferent to us” we have to participate in the improvement and protection of our “Mother Nature, our common Home”.





## MISSION

A NETWORK OF FRIENDS,  
SEEKING HOLINESS VIA THE  
PERSONAL SERVICE TO THE  
POOR AND THE ADVOCACY FOR  
SOCIAL JUSTICE.

## VISION 2023

TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A WORLD  
WIDE ORGANIZATION, WHICH  
PROMOTES THE INTEGRAL  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT OF  
THOSE MOST IN NEED.

## VALUES

- SERVICE
- SPIRITUALITY
- HUMILITY
- CHARITY
- EMPATHY

1

### Formation

Ongoing process for all members

2

### Youth

30% of members under 35 years of age

3

### Twinning

Building a global network of spiritual and material support

4

### Expansion

Presence in all countries

5

### Vincentian Family

Permanent and closed collaboration

6

### Solidarity

International and local partnerships

7

### Global Aid

Revamping fraternal aid and development

8

### Communication

Renew with the use of world-class technology

9

### CGI Structure

Constant search for accountability and efficiency

10

### National Councils

Support to maximize effectiveness



[www.ssvpglobal.org](http://www.ssvpglobal.org)



**Ssvp-Conseil Général International**