

# THE STORIES OF VINCENT, LOUISE AND US

## Keeping their Dream Alive Today

As we remember St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, we are grateful for the **charism** that God gave to them... a **charism** that they transmitted to us, the Vincentian Family of St Anthony's Parish, as a gift to the Church and to the world.

Belonging to this larger Vincentian Family throughout the world sends us back to the origins of the Vincentian story... invites us to read the present in the light of their dream ... to reread their dream in the light of today.

If Vincent and Louise were in our midst today, how would they see our Parish in the light of the Christ they wanted to follow? What word would they speak to us? How would they respond to the new situations that confront us today? What choices would they make?

## New Situations

Ours is a world radically different in many ways from that of Vincent and Louise. New questions force themselves upon us. Vincent and Louise were constantly attentive to ordinary life events as places for encountering God's Spirit. In a world obsessed with the "instant" and the "super fast", how do we slow down our lives and be truly attentive to the Spirit of God?

Ours is a world full of contradictions...we are a world that desires to be more inclusive, breaking down the barriers of race, culture, gender and religion, and yet our experiences of world see a return to exclusion of peoples for these same reasons. Our world has grown more and more secularized and turned in on itself, while at the same time we grow increasingly concerned with a sense of God and social justice.

We celebrate the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deaths of Vincent and Louise in the midst of an unprecedented global crisis ... moral, cultural, economic and spiritual. How are we, here at St. Anthony's, to reread the dream of Vincent and Louise in the light of this reality? What challenges does this pose for our Vincentian service here at St Anthony's?

The People of Israel understood their Covenant with the Lord from the perspective of the crisis they experienced while in exile. In so doing, they rediscovered the meaning of their identity as People of God. Vincent, similarly, explored the Gospel from his experience of the poor and the turmoil that threatened to tear apart the society and Church of his time. In this way, he discovered his vocation in life and gave birth to a dream that deeply marked his time.

## **Forging Ahead ... Together**

We are heirs of a great legacy... sons and daughters of two great prophets of charity. Belonging to a global Vincentian Family, we have a great potential for making a difference in our time as Vincent and Louise did in theirs. We can be **prophets of charity** in today's world.

In an era when poverty, injustice and alienation have assumed global dimensions, the dream of Vincent and Louise dares us to be creative and audacious in our response so that we can create ripples of hope in people's lives.

*"It is certain that when charity dwells in a soul, it takes possession of all its powers; it gives it no rest; it is a fire that's constantly active; once a person is inflamed by it, it holds him spellbound."*

(St. Vincent d Paul, Repetition of Prayer, Aug. 4, 1655)

Adapted from the Reflection by Sr. Julma C. Neo, DC Province of the Philippines