

**President:** Do you promise to be a voice for the voiceless, especially when those who are poor are ignored or unable to speak for themselves.

**All:** I do. May the Holy Spirit guide!

**President:** Do you promise to oppose discrimination of all kinds and work to change the attitudes of those who view the weak or those who are different with prejudice, fear or scorn?

**All:** I do. May the Holy Spirit guide!

**President:** Do you promise to support Catholic Social Teaching looking at issues that cause or contribute to poverty, suffering and exclusion.

**All:** I do. May the Holy Spirit guide!

**President:** You have accepted an important responsibility as a Voice of the Poor. I ask all of us to share in this responsibility with prayers and prudent action, sharing the need to be a Voice of the Poor with others in our Conferences, in our Councils, in our communities. Let us seek the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patroness of our Society, as we say together:

**All:** Hail Mary...

**President:** (*Prayer of Blessing*)

Let us raise our hearts in blessing and prayer. In the spirit of our Brother, Jesus, and in the name of our Patron, St. Vincent de Paul, and our Founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, I commission you as a Voice of the Poor.

**All:** May the Holy Spirit guide!

**President:** We ask for grace that we may become a visible witness of Christ and His Church. Together, as one, may we be a Voice of the Poor, growing in holiness by sharing a vision of the Kingdom of God. May our actions as a Voice of the Poor deepen our Vincentian spirit of friendship, and may we always serve the poor with charity and justice, love and compassion.

**All:** Amen



## Voice of the Poor Commissioning Ceremony

**President:** Come Holy Spirit, live within our lives.

**All:** And strengthen us by Your love.

**President:** We gather together to commission Vincentians to be a Voice of the Poor. Let us pray the words of the Rule of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul which calls us to work for social justice.

*(Alternative sides)*

- Affirming the dignity of each human being as created in God's image, and Jesus' particular identification with those who are excluded by society, Vincentians envision a more just society in which the rights, responsibilities and development of all people are promoted.
- Vincentians listen to the voice of the Church which demands their participation in creating a more equitable and compassionate social order, promoting the culture of life and the civilization of love. In this way, the Society shares the Church's mission to evangelise the world through visible witness, in both actions and words.
- Where injustice, inequality, poverty or exclusion are due to unjust economic, political or social structures or to inadequate or unjust legislation, the Society should speak out clearly against the situation, always with charity, with the aim of contributing to and demanding improvements.
- The Society strives, with charity, to foster new attitudes of respect and empathy for the weak, so that all are able to understand, recognise and defend the right of each person to be responsible for his or her own life. The Society promotes understanding, cooperation and mutual love among people of different cultures, religions, ethnic origins and social groups, and so contributes to the peace and unity of all peoples.

- The Society does not identify with any political party and always adopts a non-violent approach. It is good that some members follow and fully participate in their political vocation in such a way that they bring Christian values to political matters.

*(Part 7 of the Rule of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is handed out.)*

**President:** Receive Part 7 of the Rule of the Society as the sign of your commitment and responsibility. May the Holy Spirit grant you a receptive mind, a loving heart, and a clear voice that speaks in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, and Blessed Rosalie Rendu.

**President:** And so I now ask you:

**President:** Do you promise to support the Society's mission by speaking as a Voice of the Poor to improve economic, social and environmental conditions of the suffering and the deprived.

**All:** I do. May the Holy Spirit guide!

**President:** Do you promise to search for justice by seeking to identify the root causes of poverty and work for their elimination

**All:** I do. May the Holy Spirit guide!

**President:** Do you promise to approach issues of social justice from the perspective of those we visit who suffer from injustice.

**All:** I do. May the Holy Spirit guide!