

**SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SUNDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER, 2001
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
GULF CITY AUDITORIUM LA ROMAIN**

Address By Bro. Anthony Wong Doo

Good morning Brothers and Sisters.

Let me on behalf of the Society extend our gratitude to Bro. Clive Belgrave for responding to the call of the National Council to hold on as interim National President until this new election. Bro. Clive blessed with his vast experience of the works of the Society and his managerial competence guaranteed the smooth continuity of our Society. Thank you Bro. Clive.

I would also like to thank Fr. Joe Harris for his commitment to the Society and for his counsel, advice and encouragement as our Spiritual Director.

I personally feel comforted and assured that Fr. Joe will be there for us through our challenges.

As a person, I think I am always receptive to good and reasonable advice. I hold no pretension of being brilliant. Consequently, I would like to give the assurance and indeed the invitation to all Brothers and Sisters of the Society in Trinidad and Tobago that any suggestions or concerns, whether as an individual or as a group that are brought to my attention will be duly considered by the National Executive and the decision of the National Executive will be communicated back to the source of origin. We are a family.

We are Brothers and Sisters who are committed to bring the Good News to the Poor and I treasure the NETWORKING STRENGTH of the Society which must be sustained with CHARITY and SOLIDARITY.

With your help Brothers and Sisters, I would like to invite the Society to revisit OUR CURRENT mode of reaching out to the poor. Are we truly striving to combine the corporal and spiritual works of mercy?

Let us be wary, that our pursuit of providing the basic necessities of life- food, clothing and shelter - to the poor does not cloud our vision of our spiritual vocation. The discomfort and the despair that the poor experience are understandable and invariably, it is easier to ease the former but the despair remains. Brothers and Sisters this challenge is as old as the CHURCH itself and our

founder Blessed Frederick Ozanam acknowledged the formidable nature of this challenge.

Indeed those of us who were privileged to attend the Feast of the Sacred Heart Mass at Sacred Heart Church, Port of Spain this year heard His Grace Most. Rev. Archbishop Edward Gilbert in his Homily lamented that in his thirty seven years of ministry the sense of hopelessness that some people experience in life is worrying to him.

Therefore the Society of St. Vincent de Paul as a social arm of the Church must constantly address the despair that is inflicted by poverty.

CORPORAL WORKS and SPIRITUAL WORKS must walk hand in hand.

Administratively I would like to initiate the involvement of experienced Brothers and Sisters as facilitators, co-ordinators and motivators in targeted areas of the Society to help to invigorate, expand and enhance the performance of the Society; and to have these members inducted into the National Council thus harnessing the fullest wealth of talent of the Society's human resource.

In closing I would like to pledge my fullest support and that of the Society's to His Grace Most Rev. Archbishop Edward Gilbert in whatever vision that, in anticipation, he would outline in his feature address.

Thank you.