



The Earliest Biographies of Saint Vincent de Paul [2]

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Abstract

This paper presents key excerpts from the earliest biographies of Saint Vincent de Paul, highlighting his charitable genius, ecclesial leadership, and the gradual recognition of his sanctity by the Church. Drawing from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources, it recounts Vincent's decisive response to social misery, especially his organization of care for abandoned infants, his role in founding and consolidating priestly communities, and his profound humility in governance. The narrative also traces the formal ecclesial process leading to his beatification in 1729 under Pope Benedict XIII, emphasizing the verified miracles attributed to his intercession and the Church's theological interpretation of his life and virtues. Vincent emerges as a tireless evangelizer of the poor, a reformer of clergy, and a living embodiment of apostolic charity and humility. The article situates Vincent within the broader renewal of the post-Reformation Church, presenting him as a providential figure whose charism restored hope, discipline, and evangelical zeal in a wounded society, and whose legacy continues to inspire the Church's mission today.

Cet article présente des extraits clés des premières biographies de saint Vincent de Paul, mettant en lumière son génie caritatif, son leadership ecclésial et la reconnaissance progressive de sa sainteté par l'Église. S'appuyant sur des sources des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, il retrace la réponse décisive de Vincent à la misère sociale, en particulier son organisation de la prise en charge des enfants abandonnés, son rôle dans la fondation et la consolidation de communautés sacerdotales, et sa profonde humilité dans la gouvernance. Le récit retrace également le processus ecclésial officiel qui a conduit à sa béatification en 1729 sous le pape Benoît XIII, en soulignant les miracles vérifiés attribués à son intercession et l'interprétation théologique de sa vie et de ses vertus par l'Église. Vincent apparaît comme un évangéliste infatigable des pauvres, un réformateur du clergé et une incarnation vivante de la charité apostolique et de l'humilité. L'article situe Vincent dans le contexte plus large du renouveau de l'Église après la Réforme, le présentant comme une figure providentielle dont le charisme a restauré l'espoir, la discipline et le zèle évangélique dans une société meurtrie, et dont l'héritage continue d'inspirer la mission de l'Église aujourd'hui.

Este artículo presenta extractos clave de las primeras biografías de San Vicente de Paúl, destacando su genio caritativo, su liderazgo eclesial y el reconocimiento gradual de su santidad por parte de la Iglesia. Basándose en fuentes de los siglos XVII y XVIII, relata la respuesta decisiva de Vicente a la miseria social, especialmente su organización de la atención a los niños abandonados, su papel en la fundación y consolidación de comunidades sacerdotales y su profunda humildad en el gobierno. La narración también traza el proceso eclesiástico formal que condujo a su beatificación en 1729 bajo el pontificado del papa Benedicto XIII, haciendo hincapié en los milagros verificados atribuidos a su intercesión y en la interpretación teológica de la Iglesia sobre su vida y sus virtudes. Vicente emerge como un incansable evangelizador de los pobres, un reformador del clero y una encarnación viva de la caridad apostólica y la humildad. El artículo



sitúa a Vicente en el contexto más amplio de la renovación de la Iglesia tras la Reforma, presentándolo como una figura providencial cuyo carisma restauró la esperanza, la disciplina y el celo evangélico en una sociedad herida, y cuyo legado sigue inspirando la misión de la Iglesia en la actualidad.

Keywords: Early Biographies, Vincent de Paul, Canonization, Miracle.

1640

No one before Vincent had effectively provided for such a need, beyond description. With this it happened that dogs devoured some, and others through a fatal sleeping agent by the hired servant girls of a certain old woman to whom they had been brought. Others, for a more horrid purpose, were sold at very low price to sorcerers for their incantations, and nearly all of them died without baptism. Vincent had arranged at the end of 1638 that from the company of the Ladies some [infants] would be accepted, and thus twelve were chosen to protect them and bring them to the Daughters of Charity near the St. Victor Gate. To the first twelve, more and more were added gradually through the piety of those women; but the [81] great misery of those who remained so touched the heart of the servant of God that at the beginning of this year, he called all the women to a general meeting, and spoke to them with such power that they could not resist the spirit who was speaking. There was no exception concerning the miserable infants, and the annual cost could not be less than forty thousand livres. It was commonly said that Vincent's tears were a rich mine for the poor.

1641

In 1641 our Vincent formed the famous community of priests which, under his direction, was founded by Pierre Colombes in his royal parish of Saint Germain, bishop of Auxerre.

Likewise in that same year, in October, he assembled in the house of Saint Lazare the superiors and the eldest priests of his congregation to discuss with them the means to be practiced, based on the rules to stabilize and preserve their spirit, and to deliberate, were it proposed, to reduce the income, and that those who in the future would be received, should make simple vows. [82] All agreed with the sense of their Blessed father to make them in this way, and to add to the three customary vows the fourth one, that is, to consecrate themselves for the whole time of their life in the Congregation to the salvation of the poor country people, and then to request their approval from the Holy See. Meanwhile, with the approval of the archbishop, Vincent made these four vows along with the others of the congregation. This first assembly did not close without the servant of God giving a great proof of his deep humility. In fact, during the final session, held on the 23rd of the same month, he knelt in the presence of everyone and begged pardon for the errors of his government. He resigned spontaneously and with sobs and tears ardently besought those assembled there to move to a new election, and he left the room. The assembly was sorrowful and amazed, and immediately sent some deputies to call him back, but they returned without effect. It was in vain though the assembled confreres went in a group but found him firm in his decision. They accepted it, or rather, they showed that they accepted it, and then all with one voice said: We [83] elect you unanimously as the new general. In this way, they reduced him and placed him again in the government despite his wishes.

In the same year and month, the above-mentioned Venerable Mother de Chantal went to Paris to confer again and spoke openly with Vincent about her interior life. Then, she left with the consolation that she had hoped for, and went to Moulins, capital of the Bourbonnais, where she fell ill on 8 December, and then soon died a holy death. Vincent had a revelation of her death and the glory of that great servant of God. Her dangerous illness came to him while he was recollected in meditation to recommend her to God. He saw a small fiery globe which rose from the earth and moved to join another larger and more splendid one in the highest region of the sky. After that, both together were taken higher and were consumed in a third larger and infinitely brighter globe. At this vision, Vincent heard a voice speaking interiorly to him, that the small globe was the soul of Jeanne Françoise [de Chantal], which was then going to heaven. In the [84] larger one, was the soul of St. Francis de Sales, which had come down to meet her. In the largest one was the Divine Essence, to whom both were happily joined. While offering the Holy Sacrifice for the departed woman, the man of God was likewise shown the same vision. He communicated it with humility and modesty to the archbishop of Paris, and to Father Maurice, a Barnabite. He urged Vincent and told him to write it down, as he did, on paper, but in the name of a third person. This predicted that God would one day manifest the holiness of his servant. He could not read without tears her letters sent to him, as inspired by God. An authentic document of those matters has been preserved in the principal monastery of the Visitation of Annecy, and authenticated by Father Jean Bonnet, the present superior general of the Congregation of the Mission.

On the following Christmas Day, 1641, Vincent introduced into his house of Saint Lazare the pious custom, which the generals, his successors, always observed afterward by daily bringing [85] to the table seat close to him two elderly poor persons, both being served as the Community was. For these men, as well as for all the other poor persons, he showed himself affable and respectful, and he never spoke to them except bareheaded [as a sign of respect].

Louis Breton, named above, fell ill during the mission of Velletri and departed this life in Rome on 17 October of the same year with the reputation of extraordinary virtue. He was buried in the convent of the Reverend French fathers of the third order of St. Francis, near the Flaminian Gate. His remains were later moved into the church of the Madonna, called “of miracles,” as is found in the archives of the said religious, who maintain his honorable memory. Vincent brought as a replacement to the departed a priest of the company, Jean Martin, a native of Paris (his goodness, teaching and zeal are still living in Rome and in a good number of eyewitnesses), so that he laid the foundations of the house of Rome. It was endowed by the most religious Marie de Vignerons, duchess of Aiguillon, and in 1642, with the authority and under the auspices of [86] Urban VIII, of holy memory, the functions of the institution began successfully.

In those same days Vincent founded in Paris another new kind of seminary for adult clerics, already exposed to the sciences and nearly ready to advance to Major Orders. The institution of seminaries, had been recommended successfully by the sacred council of Trent for young clerics, but in the bad situation of the time, as was said above, the establishment of these in France was greatly retarded. Few, in fact, were established, and they did not agree with the planned hopes. The result was that they did not succeed for young boys, still immature in testing their vocation. Rather, they had classes in humane letters, after which (without fulfilling the will of the founders) they moved for the most part into the works of the world. The servant of God who felt a bitter regret at this shared his thinking with Cardinal de Richelieu. He praised him and aided him with large alms, and opened this new seminary where the ordinands would be tested for a notable time about their vocation, and be sufficiently instructed in piety, [87] knowledge,

and the functions of the Church. Besides, this was for the greater profit of the same candidates, and likewise in favor of the candidates of the Sorbonne, and of the priests of the aforementioned hospital of Notre Dame. He introduced there the holding every Thursday of a conference on clerical topics. This new form of seminary was commonly applauded and approved by the bishops of France. They, moved by the example and the advice of the servant of God, established them in their own dioceses, and for the most part they recommended for them the priests of his congregation.

Other communities of priests imitated in a holy way the zeal of our Blessed, and applied themselves with great praise to the same functions that he had introduced. But the true man of God, quite remove from showing displeasure or jealousy, thus imitated the opinion of Moses, and he answered those who were opposed: *Utinam omnes prophetent* [Would that they all would prophesy]. And for as much as was in his power, he always added, both in Paris and in Rome, worthy workers, leaving aside on every occasion his men to all the others. He normally spoke of the "least Congregation," [88] and he likewise normally said that he would more voluntarily lose a hundred of his foundations instead of opposing any one of whatever other institution.

Cardinal Richelieu died in this year, and at his death he left new proofs of esteem and love for Vincent and his congregation by setting up a legacy for the house which he had endowed in the city of family name in the province of Poitou.

1643

From 1639, King Louis XIII had named Vincent as his private almoner, and in 1643 he held a lengthy conversation with him about the ways to reduce the heretics. The same monarch founded the house of the Mission in Sedan for the conversion of Calvinists and decided that he did not wish to appoint to the episcopacy anyone who had not spent three years in a seminary of the Mission. But this most pious king did not have the time to see all his religious plans fulfilled, since he was already struck by a lengthy sickness, and he realized that he was approaching the end of his life. In this condition, he had Vincent summoned. He arrived quickly [89] and the king gave up his spirit to God in his [Vincent's] hands at the palace of Saint Germain on 14 May 1643, on the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, the day, thirty-three years before, when he had ascended the throne.

His successor in the kingdom was Louis XIV, age five, and the queen mother, Anne of Austria, assumed the regency. She was much persuaded by the faithfulness and prudence of Vincent, and she named him as a member of her Council of Conscience. The humble servant of God was quite confused and frightened at this announcement and at the thought that he was not up to this dangerous ministry, but at length he accepted it so as not to disobey the queen. He was also the same in himself, the same in the royal palace as he was in a hovel of the poor, and in no way changed his modest, candid and sincere way of acting. He found a way to please the court without displeasing God. His task was to examine who was proper or not for a benefice, for the episcopacy, and for other ecclesiastical dignities. In this uncomfortable matter, he showed both great discretion and rare constancy. And he did not consider promises, threats or the curses of the grandees, and kept [90] his eye always and only on the good of the Church. Besides this, he declared open war on corrupt habits and doctrine. He removed from the market dangerous books, and he spoke against the form and speech of actors and the theaters. Against blasphemy and duels he had the queen, and the king, publish very severe edicts. He restricted the daring of ministers and members of the parlement who were infected with the Calvinist

plague. In the diocese of Bazas in Gascony, and in the neighborhood of Paris, he pulled up by the roots the sprouts of the renewed madness of the Illuminati.

1644

The man of God was occupied in such high affairs of the church and the republic that he fell gravely ill from a most acute fever that brought him to delirium, but despite his condition, he never said any words that were less than religious. To the renowned Father Jean-Baptiste Saint Jure, S.J., a close friend, when he visited him and asked about his sickness, Vincent responded amid outbreaks of feverish ravings: *In Spiritu humilitatis, & animo contrito suscipiamur a te Domine* (In a spirit of humility and with a contrite heart may we be received by you, Lord). While his illness was growing, and [91] the sick man was approaching the last periods of his life, Antoine Dufour, a young priest of the mission, who was likewise sick, recognized the danger for Vincent. He spontaneously offered himself to God in place of his beloved Father. God accepted the victim, and Vincent began to recover. Antoine grew worse and soon after he died. It was judged that his death had been revealed to Vincent by divine light, since he showed that he was aware of it at the instant that it happened.

Barely recovered from his illness, our Blessed priest was back at his usual works of piety in support of the poor. He managed to complete the hospitals established in Marseilles for the sick galley convicts, and the archbishop assigned its care, along with the burden of giving missions on the galleys, to his priests, for whom at the end of 1643, the aforementioned duchess of Aiguillon had founded a house.

1645-1646

In 1645 and in the following years, the servant of God, recalling well what he had suffered in Barbary, sought from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide [92] the permission to send to Tunis, Algiers, Tripoli, Bizerte, and other places along the Barbary Coast some of the most fervent priests of his congregation as apostolic vicars and missionaries. They would bring and still do bring great luster and aid to the poor Christians who live in great anxieties, hardships, and dangers. The rules of the organization do not allow referring to the great goods that derive from such an institution, nor the names of the worthy workers, whose fatigues, anguish and tortures ruin their lives.

The constant zeal of our Vincent could not have been unknown to the Supreme Pontiff, Innocent X, Urban's successor. Consequently, he was commanded through the lord cardinals of the aforementioned Congregation to send some of his Missioners to the king of Ireland, to restore that desolate church, and divine worship, which had nearly faded away. Obedient to the commission of the Pontiff, the Blessed founder assigned at this time eight priests there, five of whom were natives of that [93] kingdom, and the funds of his congregation maintained them all. They waited for several years to validly promote through those provinces all that had been afflicted by war and place, namely the faith, Christian life, piety and discipline, until the city of Limerick had been purified of the army of the impious Cromwell, and the Missioners were sent back, full of merit on their return to Vincent.

From the same Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, Vincent was likewise ordered in a letter dated 6 February 1647 to propose a member of the Mission to be consecrated a bishop to be sent to the kingdoms of Persia. He obeyed and proposed someone, but for some impediment that had arisen this thought remained without effect.

1647

In the same year of 1647, he had the consolation of seeing the heretical proposition condemned concerning the two heads of the church in one person, against which he was very involved.

In the same year, the servant of God gave the form and rules to some women, called “of Divine Providence,” founded, under the direction of and helped by the servant of God, by one of the [94] leading women of the Company of Charity. These women had as their charter and purpose to preserve poor girls when, either in the house of their parents or elsewhere, they were in danger of losing their virginity. Out of this pious institution they developed as a work of the disciples of Vincent another institute called “Christian Union,” to help and educate girls and women recently converted from Judaism or heresy.

1648

The untiring and ever-ready charity of the blessed priest caught his eye in 1648 concerning the remotest people of the island of Madagascar, also known as St. Lawrence. This is one of the largest islands in the world, no smaller in extent than England. Four hundred thousand people were living there, either idolaters or without any religion. The Dutch occupied it first, and then the French for the most part, but all had already shaken off the yoke. To cleanse it from lack of faith and vice, Vincent obtained the necessaries faculties [to begin the mission] from Rome and with the desire and hope of martyrdom, through spending the rest of this life there. But since he was chained to Paris for the most important affairs of the [95] church and the kingdom, he appointed in his place several of his priests. They would irrigate, some with sweat, some with blood, that uncultivated vineyard. Other were likewise destined for the glorious work, but an enormous arm of the sea caused shipwreck. Some were surprised by enemies, and they were robbed of the sacred vesture and the abundant alms destined for there. Despite of so many unfortunate events, Vincent did not remove or stop assigning new laborers. To the first works the Lord gave great blessing, which resulted in five thousand conversions. Through his direction and the zeal of his sons Vincent could quickly hope for improvement, and that numerous population [of idolaters] would be entirely reduced, whether they were not born after his death, through the hidden judgment of God, or through grave disturbances which impeded the development of this important mission. Hope still lived for other sons of Vincent, at present occupied in cultivating the neighboring islands of Bourbon and Maurice. It could be hoped that one day the door might reopen to Madagascar.

The faithful servant of God, devoted to [96] the salvation of distant people, averted neither his eye nor his hand from the miseries of his neighbors. At the end of 1648, and at the birth of the following year, the city of Paris was afflicted along with a great part of the kingdom, and the triple calamities of war, plague and starvation spared neither fatigues, nor clothing or even life itself. But we leave to another period and to another pen the separate narration of his amazing actions in the sad juncture of that civil war, and so we restrict ourselves to give only a brief account.

In the course of these obstinate civil disturbances Vincent daily fed in his house of Saint Lazare, and at his own expense, about two thousand poor, to whom, in order to give them more abundant alms, he sent the greater part of his confreres to other houses of the Congregation.

1649

The queen and the king, her son, left Paris on 6 January 1649, and the servant of God on the 13th of the same month (heedless of every danger) went to Saint Germain, to preserve it from the plan to besiege Paris, so as not to see miserably extinguished from famine a [97] large number of innocents through the blame of the few. With the dictates of a firm conscience, true prudence and Christian politics, he exhorted Cardinal Mazarin to submit somewhat considering the terrible situation of the times. But the two parties were quite exasperated, and to profit a little in the court, he [Vincent] spontaneously went in the rural area to a certain property in the diocese of Sens belonging to his house of Saint Lazare. There, for a whole month, he stayed in an exercise of penance and prayer, and exhorted the peasants of that district to repent in their heart and to offer public prayers, seeking only to placate God's anger.

Meanwhile, a group of six hundred soldiers stationed there under the private and incompetent authority of a person who opposed the court sacked the same house and the area around Saint Lazare. They violently looted furniture, animals, and the very grain set aside for the poor. But when Vincent received the bad news that came to him at daybreak, he was completely resigned, and responded with the words and the heart of holy Job: "May the name of the Lord be blessed. The Lord gives, the Lord takes away; it thus pleased the Lord, so may it be done." Therefore, he wrote to Lambert aux Cousteaux [Couteaux], the vice-superior of the house, that in such a bad situation it was necessary to rejoice in God and support the poor and he should borrow at interest twenty-thousand livres to purchase grain. Then, by divine providence, and by the decision of some persons, and not without a miraculous multiplication, this sufficed for a great emergency and so, with the roads open again, they could bring the provisions in freely.

When his little mission was finished in the place of his retreat mentioned above, but since commerce was not yet free from hostile incursions, the Blessed founder began a visit of his houses, and during this time he was twice preserved by the hand of God from an evident danger. He almost drowned while crossing a river near Dorastal [Durtal] when his horse fell. The other was nearly being killed by an office-holder of the faction opposed to the queen; he had left Rennes to strike him.

Vincent was continuing his visit and traveling at the time in Aquitaine when he received an order from the queen to return as soon as possible to the court. The peace was agreed on by the Parisians [99] at the beginning of April, and from Saint Germain it [the court] had moved to Compiègne. In obedience to the sovereign's indications, he arrived sick from his trip to Richelieu. As a result, Vincent's sickness became known in Paris, and the duchess of Aiguillon sent him a carriage which he made use of on this trip but not afterward, according to what the duchess had wished for. For this he gave very humble thanks, but begged her to accept his refusal because of the condition of his birth and of his disgraceful profession [as a peasant]. And it is quite true that some time later both the queen and the archbishop sought to preserve for the church and the nation as much as possible a man so enlightened and useful. Since even in his advanced age, and on account of his old problem with his legs, he could not travel without great problems, either on foot or on horseback, they determined for him by a precise and resolute command: he would in future have to use a coach. He therefore did so out of obedience, but in a way that embarrassed him but helped the poor. It was in any case, in bad condition, and caused children to laugh at it, but he admitted sick people in it of every [100] kind to bring them to the hospitals. He customarily called it by another name, that is, his "ignominy," through the displeasure he experienced by using this vehicle.

Around 7 June, he left Richelieu for Tours and came to Orleans for some business affairs. Then he went to Paris and at length reached Compiègne, where His Majesty the king, the queen mother, and the widowed queen of England, Henriette de Bourbon, were staying. On his return to Paris he had as his first and main business to repair the enormous sacrileges that the soldiers committed against the Most Holy Eucharist. He ordered fasts, private penances, public prayers and devout processions where they had taken place. He had the sacred vessels repaired, adorned the looted churches, restored what had fallen, and lifted up what had been destroyed. This was not only in the neighborhood of Paris in which both of the armies had stayed, but also in a great number of hamlets and villages of Champagne and Picardy destroyed by the foreign wars. About this time, during 1649 until the general peace [101] agreed on in 1660, after Vincent's life had ended, he exercised all the offices of charity with the same concern that he had previously used and still practiced to aid Lorraine. In 1650, he sent to those regions sixteen Missioners and some Sisters of Charity. The latter were to assist the sick poor, and the former came to proclaim the word of God, administer the sacraments, feed the hungry, cloth the naked and console the afflicted. They also looked for the nobles to help them in their miseries. They provided seed to farmers and materials to builders along with the tools to work to sustain their life. And because charity was in all things well organized, Vincent appointed a priest to examine here or there the afflicted provinces, watch over them, provision them, and with frequent letters refer to every detail.

At the end of this year, 1650, at the battle near Rethel there were still in the fields about two thousand abandoned corpses of enemies exposed to wild beasts. When Vincent learned of this, he quickly had them buried in a Christian fashion at his own expense. [102]

1651

The year 1651 followed with a new faculty from the Supreme Pontiff, by which Vincent appointed other priests of his congregation to convert the heretics in Scotland, in that part of the kingdom called the Highlands, and in the numerous nearby islands called the Western Hebrides and the Orkney Islands to the north, where hardly a trace of religion remains. It is convincingly told in the reports preserved from these missions how abundant the results were coming from those missions, the copious fruit gathered by the workers, until they experienced Cromwell's tyranny and the treachery of the Protestant ministers, and how some were imprisoned and others were exiled.

When the report arrived that in the city and district of Troyes in Champagne, many Irish had abandoned their homeland by reason of religion. They had already served in the royal troops, with no small losses, and huge numbers of orphans and widows were living in dire sufferings. Vincent quickly sent an Irish priest, a member of his congregation, with abundant aid, and with the order to bring the young women back to safety, and to divide the boys among various hospices, with all prepared for their Easter Communion. [103]

Queen Louise Marie Gonzague, successively wife of Ladislaus IV and Casimir V, kings of Poland, ardently desired two priests, Lambert aux Couteaux and Guillaume Desdames, and the servant of God promptly assigned them. She had often assisted at the meetings of the Ladies of Charity in Paris, and left with a broad experience of Vincent's zeal. Those two successfully laid the foundations of the Congregation in the enormous provinces of Poland and Lithuania. Today, they are widespread, and she, after lengthy weaknesses, died a holy death, full of merits.

When the minority of King Louis XIV came to an end on 7 September of this year, in the space of just a few days, both in Paris and throughout the kingdom, violent

revolutions broke out because of the union of the aristocrats under the guidance of the prince of Conde against Cardinal Mazarin. He had twice given up his ministry and left the kingdom but both times he returned after a brief absence. These grave disturbances provided a major opening to Vincent's charity, since he was always faithful to the king [104] and queen, and they allowed him, because of his rare prudence and open frankness to mediate between Their Majesties and the united princes. So great was the veneration given by all to the servant of God that he was then able to maintain or restore to royal obedience the principal senators of the parlement.

1652

The tumult of the sedition boiled over and was for a long time ignited without there being any remaining refuges. The rural people abandoned their houses and chores, and the villages were looted, and the people sought refuge in surrounding places or even in the forests. Vincent's compassion reached even there by means of his workers sent there to revive the sufferers in both body and soul.

The kingdom of France, which was quite flourishing, was stricken by these internal divisions in many places. And it certainly did not have any better help in so many calamities than the penances, prayers and alms, both from Vincent as from other devoted persons, men and women both, but principally from the Ladies of Charity. The holy [105] industry of the Blessed founder, and their own piety moved them to established on that occasion a kind of public storehouse at which every wealthy person in Paris could deposit whatever they had that was superfluous: grain, flour, clothing, linens, furnishings, and they were distributed with a good understanding of needs. Besides, Vincent had on his own a good number of people occupied in the labor of various shops where they worked quickly on shoes, jackets, stockings, shirts, bed sheets, and hats, which they were to give away to beggars for free. Only God could know, for love of whom his servant cared with such great love, how much merit these works of mercy garnered.

On the second of the following July there took place the famous battle in the Bourg Saint Antoine between the Marshal de Turenne, commander of the royal army, and the Prince de Condé, head of the rebel troops. The skirmish was fevered and obstinate beyond all belief. Nevertheless, Turenne emerged victorious, but he was restrained by battlefield fire coming from Condé's army, which had begun [106] to give up, just as the gates of Paris were opened. But Vincent could hear the warlike noise and he prostrated before the Divine Majesty, and he broke down in tears through piety on account of the bloodshed, and especially over the greater sorrow for their sins and the damnation of souls.

But the series of evils had not yet finished. On the fourth of the same month, sedition broke out again in Paris, and many of the aristocrats were killed near the city hall, and the grand chancellor, Pierre Seguier, sought so lethally by the seditionists, found no other safe haven than Vincent's house. Clothed in the habit of a Missioner, he was brought to the king, staying at that time in Compiègne. Finally, on 9 August, agreeing to the departure of Cardinal Mazarin on 21 October, he [the king] moved in triumph from Saint Germain to Paris, where the new uprisings gave new occasions for the virtue and merit of our Blessed.

The news circulated at that time that the Queen Mother had considered promoting him [Vincent] to the cardinalial purple, and many congratulated the servant of God about this. But such compliments truly confused [107] his profound and sincere humility, and he protested time and again that even if he would move a finger on his hand, that he would never want to get this profound dignity. As proof of this, he said that by granting

to a formerly poor man (whether by adulation or simplicity) the title of Eminence, Vincent knelt at the feet of a beggar and said: Forgive me, brother; I am only a nobody. Also, to a certain beggar woman who called him “Most Illustrious” and when she added that she had been a servant of Madame, his mother, he answered: You are wrong there, sister. My mother never had a servant in her house, where she was the wife of a poor peasant, whose son I am. She herself did the serving. Such examples of humility are innumerable, but only two of them, which we will add, written down in the acts of sworn witnesses [in the canonization process], should suffice for everyone.

While he was going one day through the Saint Lazare neighborhood, he was slapped by a bold man who falsely believed that he had been bumped by the servant of God in the crowd. Vincent was certainly able, as an injured man, to have a good reason [108] [to hit back] with his own hand since he was the superior of the house of Saint Lazare, and he had in his district criminal jurisdiction, from a fine to the death penalty, but he never took any revenge and followed strictly the letter of the teaching of the Gospel: He knelt down before the man who had hit him, and presented the other cheek, and used the occasion which he could have done for the insult he received to beg pardon. This heroic act of humility gained Vincent, and the delinquent received from God, an even greater wound in his heart out of sorrow for his action.

Another time, while he was returning to Paris from Saint Germain, where in the time of civil disturbances the queen had summoned him, some citizens of Paris who were among the rebels and were standing guard at the gate, called the Conference, mistreated him for being faithful to the king. They cursed him in words, struck him with their hands, and tore his clothing into pieces. This enormous insolence reached the notice of the magistrates, who esteemed the servant of God, and quickly showed that they were ready and anxious to punish the guilty party, but the humble priest, far removed from such pretension, begged the [109] judges to set their inquiry aside. He thought that with this, they had sufficiently prevented the punishment, and he acted in such a way that it never came to light the identity of the person who on that day had been guarding the gate.

The year 1652 had not yet finished when, at the request of Cardinal Durazzo, archbishop of Genoa, through the religious impulse of the republic, Vincent assigned chosen workers from the house already established in that capital to the island of Corsica, where the spiritual harvest was very fertile. Beginning in this year, the Daughters of Charity went to Poland to found their institute, where Vincent, at the queen’s request, had sent them.

But the gravity of the materials obliges us in these affairs to say what the servant of God did to petition the condemnation of the five propositions of Jansen. It was already said above concerning the year 1638 that when Jansen died, his book was published and it provoked great rumors in the church. Contrary to this book, with Vincent’s help, the bull of Urban VIII was published in Paris in 1643, and now we add also to the admission by the same Jansenists [110] that Blessed Vincent in 1650 and in the following year, had acquired with proper effect the signing of the celebrated letter which Innocent X of happy memory had written to the eighty-five bishops of France and to three others who joined them, to obtain a decisive word from the Holy See about the aforementioned five propositions. When the great letter reached the Supreme Pontiff, he established a special commission for the great examination. Likewise in Rome the supporters of Jansen had sent five theologians to support the errors. Vincent understood this and made every effort that the bishops would send three doctors of the Sorbonne, men of sound doctrine and known to him. He covered their expenses out of his own funds and warmly recommended them to his confreres in the house in Rome. When they arrived, they did nothing without

consulting Vincent, and they diligently reviewed everything, as is evident in their mutual correspondence.

Also, Vincent so persuaded the queen mother, that she besought the Supreme [111] Pontiff with letters in her own name as well as the king's, that he should grant faith to such materials, and for the peace of their subjects they wished to have the decision quickly announced about these propositions.

1653

The doctors sent by the clergy at Vincent's request presented in writing their opinions against the propositions, and they frequently sided with the congregation deputed for this, for a good ten times. Though burdened with business and years, the Supreme Pontiff intervened, and at last, after long and mature discussions pronounced on 31 May 1653 the great decrees, which then, on the ninth of June, were posted at the gates of the Vatican.

On that very same day, and on the 15th and 16th of the same month, the doctors mentioned above sent to our Blessed, with the explanation of what had happened in the matter, the apostolic constitution, so that, with the help of Monsignor Bagni, the apostolic nuncio, who was likewise involved, he [Vincent] could present it to the king, the queen, Cardinal Mazarin, the bishops, and the Grand Chancellor, and hence securely obtain its quickest possible approval. [112]

When the mail arrived in Paris at the end of June, or at the beginning of the following month, Vincent gave great thanks to God for the desired constitution and persuaded their Royal Majesties to accept it, with great results. On 4 July, the decree of promulgation was issued, and six days later, thirty bishops, those then in Paris, signed it, as they commended it to the absent bishops.

Only the supporters of Jansen brought up some difficulties, and Vincent took it on himself in every way, and made a great attempt to reduce them. In addition, he referred to the example of the very virtuous bishops who had accepted it, the reasons for it, and how the prelates valued and supported it.

1. To wait for the Holy See to remove the new errors which arose at the time, since in fact this remedy had been sent, as constant practice taught, to know and condemn the false teachings, and hence to quickly block its progress and establishment.

2. After the Council of Trent had decreed that recourse should be had to the Holy See for the definition of every controversy, that could [113] arise concerning its decrees.

3. The members should be united to the head, and inferiors should submit to the superior.

4. To wish that every issue, or when bishops disagreed, the controversy should be decided by the Supreme Pontiff as the vicar of Christ and head of the whole church and superior of the bishops.

5. To obey the pope whenever he speaks from his apostolic chair, whether to stabilize some laws, or to define some truth or condemn some error, to define the true children of the Church. They should not have a tongue to reply nor the spirit to discern against the pronouncement of the sentences pronounced by it.

From these and similar arguments, Vincent was able to demonstrate the precious duty of total submission to the bull of Pope Innocent, and to promote its acceptance and the obedience to the constitution of Alexander VII, issued on 16 October 1656. Finally a good report was made to the king so as to correct the stubborn and exclude from ecclesiastical benefices the suspects as the illness of the kingdom.

In that year of 1653, Blessed Vincent did not allow [114] any suffering, even though he was almost eighty years old and burdened with illnesses, and burdened with much business, to travel through the rural areas announcing to the people the Jubilee Indulgence granted by the Supreme Pontiff, and to exhort them to profit well from such a spiritual treasure. In the same year, a pious benefactor donated a good amount of money to him for his own purposes, but he would not benefit in any way, nor would his confreres, nor his congregation, but all would be spent on the erection of a hospital in the parish of Saint Laurent for the aid of forty poor artisans who had fallen ill. To them he gave good rules of life and assigned as directors his priests, and appointed the Daughters of Charity to serve them. From the good order observed in this establishment there grew the thought of another more famous hospice, which we will mention soon.

1654

In 1654, Vincent sent new and abundant resources to the lands ruined during the wars, and he sent another number of Missioners to Turin to go through Piedmont and the surrounding areas, to [115] report the great triumph on eradicated vice.

The conversion of the queen of Sweden made the queen of France hopeful. As a result, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, through its opinion of Vincent and his confreres, ordered them to provide subjects to be missioned. They could not receive with a greater order the commandment so greatly desired for the salvation of souls in every part of the world.

1655

When Innocent X died, 7 January 1655, Alexander VII mounted the pontifical throne on the seventh of the following April. He had the same kindness as that of his predecessors, and favored the Congregation. He confirmed the institution on 27 September with the four vows to be taken after the two-year novitiate, and only the Roman Pontiff and the superior general can dispense from them in the case of the dismissal of members. And he declared that the same congregation was of the body of the secular clergy, and he granted to the ordinaries alone the privileges dealing with the functions concerning the neighbor, but not as to its discipline and internal governance. And it is easy to understand that on the jubilee of the Blessed [116] founder one could see the stability of his congregation, with its bond of holy vows, by which, even as others said, that it was fervently renewed.

1656

It was supported at these times with abundant alms, and with the request of the royal charter for the foundation of the sacred virgins under the name of Saint Agnes in the city of Arras, but at the end of this year and in the following, 1656, the Ladies of Charity under his direction, undertook another even more glorious work, the foundation of a general hospital to receive all the poor people of Paris, who for this decade amounted to forty thousand. But a work with such importance was reserved to the Most Christian King, Louis XIV, to his generous and magnanimous piety. When the royal charter was issued in April, the houses which were destined to shelter the poor of every age, condition, both men and women, were granted to the Ladies. From this royal charter to the Priests of the Mission its spiritual and temporal direction was granted to the Daughters of Charity, but after the prudent Vincent had [117] heard the opinion of his confreres, he

refused to be dispensed from this work, as it was a pious task to which, in view of its vastness, he would not then have been able to fully satisfy it. Nonetheless, because the Daughters of Charity began the work and were continuing to form other works proper to this ministry, and for its spiritual direction, he appointed the famous Louis Abelly, who would later be the very vigilant bishop of Rodez, together with other priests of the Clergy Conference. In addition, it competed for funds for the basic provisions, and the admission of the poor would take place at the beginning of 1657, and finally he patiently supported the insults and quarrels of those troublesome beggars who preferred the fatal liberty of a lazy and nomadic life, to many comforts, instead of for the soul and body, and they were prepared for their new hospital.

1657

In this year, Vincent brought together his proposal with the holy zeal of six bishops to uproot intemperance in wine, which had grown too much in a certain province of the kingdom. He renewed and increased the penances, while public miseries were growing in France, Poland, and Italy, where [118] some of his confreres with great resignation in current service of those plague-stricken people, and thus with the holy envy of the Blessed father, they piously finished their life. He sent to Calais the Daughters of Charity to help seven hundred sick soldiers, and in Paris he waited to promote, with a pontifical commission given to him by the apostolic nuncio, the institute of the Foreign Missions [of Paris]. With the urging of the duchess of Aiguillon, that illustrious foundation that some years after the death of Vincent began with the cooperation of many bishops and priests of his conference, and of the very zealous Fathers [Alexandre] Rhodes and [Jean] Bagot of the Society of Jesus, close friends of our Blessed.

He constantly despised every worldly honor. He asked one of his own confreres, who, without saying anything had printed a book about the birth, works, and increase of the Congregation. And Vincent so disdained it that nothing would be published in praise of it.

1658

Through a new impulse of his humility he excused himself with the queen mother about undertaking a mission in city of Metz with his [119] confreres, since they were principally destined to work in the rural areas. However, to satisfy the pious wish of the queen he chose twenty priests, among abbés and professors of his confreres, to whom he added one of his own to initiate the functions, and he also assigned several coadjutor brothers of the congregation to serve the workers. Now, these preachers, during all of Lent in 1658, gave a fruitful mission in the said city, and Vincent directed abbé Louis Rochechouart de Chandénier, nephew of the sister of Cardinal Rochefoucauld, and student of the same Vincent in whose congregation he longed to enter, and was at length received before his death. This took place in Chambéry on his return to Rome in 1660.

At the end of 1658, and with great fury the Seine left its bank and flooded the neighborhoods of Paris, the island of Saint Denis, and specially the area of Genevilliers, such that the poor dwellers were confined to their houses and were on the brink of death. The charity of Vincent swiftly moved into action, and he made use of persons [120] to whom, with boats, they could provide the necessary food delivered through the windows to the poor abandoned folk. He also watched over them with similar food supplies and did so in later floods.

It was already thirty years since the birth of the congregation, and still the blessed founder had not yet distributed in writing the rules to be observed. Because of the long delay, he had nothing else to do than to consult about time and experience. Beyond this, there were not yet enough members of the Congregation, and they did not need written or printed rules, since the example of the Blessed founder was always before their eyes a living and active rule. He was the first at all exercises of piety, as much as his duties and numerous affairs allowed. He was always at mental prayer in the morning, although he had not slept at night or when suffering from fever. Three days a week he gave spiritual conferences to his community. In them, he would speak with his usual flowing spirit, [121] but because he was then approaching the time of his death, the Blessed father was thinking first about leaving his dear sons, and about giving them as a testament some rules, which for this purpose he had long considered at the feet of the Crucified, and finally he published them. However, on 17 May, the Friday of the third week after Easter, he assembled his community, and gave a fervent presentation on the purpose, the utility and the reward of the rules. He distributed a small booklet to every member of the house. They all wept for joy, and received them kneeling, and sought the blessing of their very beloved father. He, in turn, knelt before giving them to those present and for the absent. And this with a singular tenderness. He gave other rules, not printed, likewise to the Daughters of Charity, with a wise provision accommodated to individuals and to the functions of their institution. In this, the excellence of Christian piety shone forth with great edification.

1659

In 1659, he sheltered in the house of Saint Lazare four young Indians [from Madagascar], still catechumens. They were well [122] instructed there in the mysteries of the holy faith and reborn in the sacred font, and Vincent sent them back to their country on the occasion of sending out, with new faculties from the Apostolic See, other Missioners of his Congregation to the island of Saint Laurent, mentioned above. There, a few years previously, Nicholas Etienne, apostolic director of his missions, and Jean Paté [Parre], a coadjutor brother, both members of his congregation, and one of the mentioned young men were cruelly massacred in hatred of the holy faith in a district of this island.

In May of the current year, out of his concern, and with the direction and alms of the servant of God, there was erected in Burgundy in the diocese of Autun the hospital of Sainte Reine, to support the pilgrims who annually came, amounting to twenty thousand, to venerate the relics of the holy virgin and martyr, and often a large number of them fell sick,

1660

The city of Paris through the following year, 1660, was again troubled at the end of the year. It suffered from lack of food and famine, but they experienced the very liberal typical effects of Vincent's compassion. When the rigorous [123] edict came out gathering all the poor into the large hospital, it was prohibited for everyone with equal rigor to beg at the city gates, in the streets, and in the churches, but despite how general its reception was, it did not succeed when misery afflicted everyone. Therefore, the tender lover of the poor in that year continued, but it was the last year of his life. He remembered the three thousand needy to whom, after they had assisted at the Catechism lesson, he had an abundant soup distributed daily. He likewise distributed widely and privately aid to various noble families who had fallen into great poverty. He provided necessary

medicines to the numerous sick, and nurses to the children who had lost their mothers, and finally to persons, not wholly poor, but he distributed flour or *tritello* at half price, since the well-organized charity of the servant of God extended also to horses and carts, which were set aside for alms to the poor, from which they could bake bread for themselves and support life.

Neither did such attention for the poor [124] of Paris prejudice the care of those in Champagne and Picardy, since for a good ten years Vincent had sent them uninterrupted aid. His letters sent from the last years of his life to one of his confreres have been preserved. His correspondent was assigned to those areas as a treasurer of the abandoned provinces, and he sent out to him new alms nearly every week.

For the space of sixty years, since he was ordained a priest, he also maintained the pious custom of celebrating the Holy Mass daily, unless a grave illness prevented this. He did so with such devotion that it caught the attention of those attending, and it was such that his reputation for this spread about how he became taken up in it, and authoritative witnesses observed that when he was celebrating, his face grew very ruddy. A few months before his death, the wounds on his legs opened up and he thus became so weak that he could no longer walk. As a result, he was unable to celebrate Mass, but he did not give up for that reason attending every day and was fed from the Most Holy Eucharist, which from age eighteen he was accustomed to receive as if it were his viaticum, [125] so that he would not be found cut down by unprovided death. It was his habit to recite after the usual thanksgiving the prayers for the dying, and also to do everything that he should do after a sudden death.

The handicapped priest was no longer able to go out for his usual exercises of charity, but he could do them in the house for his confreres, whom he very often assembled to animate their virtues, instruct them in the functions of the institute, and exhort them at the end to maintain the primitive spirit of the congregation.

God, however, wished to try his patience before rewarding him, and to try the resignation of his servant. God called to himself first Antoine Portail, his first disciple, and then Louise de Marillac, who had worked with him in the foundation of the Daughters of Charity. Portail died on 4 February [1660], and Louise on 15 March. Vincent constantly suffered the great loss of each of them, but instead of becoming sad over them, he consoled himself with the thought of soon seeing in Paradise these dear companions of his efforts.

Because of these losses, everything fell [126] on the Blessed founder, the burden of both congregations. Nothing wounded the balance of his spirit, but the strength of his body diminished each day, Troubled, as it was said, by a period of forty years by a harsh tumor in his feet and legs, and in his knees, he still was aggravated by his troublesome constitution. With his wounds being open, a copious amount [of blood] was shed. It seemed with all this that Vincent suffered only a little and it drained him, as he wanted to suffer all the more. Consequently, the Lord, to console him, added to his other problems an unusual terrible suffering that he experienced for three hours every Friday. It so tormented him that without special help he would have been unable to survive such pain. He called this his secret favor, apparently as a reward for his great devotion to the passion of Christ, and about which people did not remember his having been heard to speak about it except with tenderness in his heart. This was not communicated to others, apart from Bishop [Nicolas] Sévin of Cahors, and the noteworthy founder of the noblewomen, called the “Christian School,” whom he recommended [127] to the perpetual direction of the priests of the Mission.

Although separated from heavenly consolation, the earthly one did not leave him, since before his death he had the happiness to hear of the establishment of peace through

the marriages of the Most Christian [King] and the solemn entry of the royal couple in Paris on 26 August. In this regard, Vincent said, during the previous night that he spent in a long vigil, he had thought of the means to be humbled before God when Their Majesties would on the same day be exalted in the presence of men.

Considering this solemn entry, he persuaded Antoine Cavalier, a student of the Sorbonne to allow the congregation to bring in sacrifice to God the innocent curiosity of this spectacle which such a multitude of foreigners had given in Paris. He obeyed Antoine, and from this act of mortification he had the reward of moving very quickly to such a perfection of life and such an abundance of merits that though prevented by an early death they would adapt for themselves these words: *consummatus in brevi explevit tempora multa*. (Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career.) Such acts of evangelical mortification were very familiar to Vincent, his great modesty of the eyes, and his great reservation in speaking of himself or his affairs. His only words were to lower himself: he never picked flowers, nor used anything perfumed, not even in hospitals or when close to the sick. He was abstinent at table and fled from any delicate food. He even sprinkled bitter powder on ordinary dishes. His hands were always exposed to the cold, and he afflicted his body, as was said, even while traveling, with fasting, a hairshirt, and the discipline resulting in bleeding. His room was poor, empty and narrow. His bed was also of straw, and when the royal physician visited him, he was amazed to see such an austere treatment in an old and sick man.

Going about always exhausted the strength of the man of God, but he often brought bishops, archbishops, senators, and princes, some for advice, some for holy remembrances, and some to receive his blessing. All shared their sorrow in his imminent loss and built on peacefulness, and contentment [129] of the Blessed sick man. Among others, bishop [Henri de Cauchon] de Maupas, bishop of Puy[-en-Velay] in whose presence our Vincent, three days before his death, defended and cleansed of certain calumnies the very worthy person of Bishop [Jean d'] Arenthon [d'Alex], soon to be bishop of Geneva, for whom he [Vincent] had predicted twenty years before his promotion to the episcopacy.

Nor was this Vincent's only prediction, proved by what happened. Other matters were referred to actions, about which it could be argued that he was endowed with prophecy and the discernment of spirits. And some had the opinion that he had also predicted the day of his death, while at the beginning of September he wrote to René Alméras, destined by Vincent in his heart to be vicar general after his death, to be brought, although then gravely ill, without delay to Paris. René obeyed and although he was in that condition, he still left in a broken-down carriage from Richelieu, and on 24 September he entered the house of Saint Lazare. Thus worn out, he had no strength to be taken to the infirmary to Vincent's room. But the very loving [130] father, who had been for several days burdened with great sleepiness, which was the prelude to his approaching death, knew of the arrival of his very dear son. He wanted in any case on 25 September, after having attended Holy Mass and received the Most Holy Body of the Lord, he was carried to where René was resting. There, after mutual embraces, they spent a long time speaking of matters affecting the good government of the congregation. Then he gave him a final farewell, and was returned to his room. He experienced such consolation in this visit that he had made to René, that he said within himself: Now, I die content since my son is living. *Nunc dimittis Domine Servum tuum in pace, quia rursus viderunt oculi mei, quem parasti ad regimen pusillae Congregationis tuae*. [Now, Lord, you dismiss your servant in peace, because my eyes have again seen the one who prepared for the government of your little congregation.] He then often repeated these words of the Apostle: *Cupio dissolvi, & esse cum Christo*; [I wish to be dissolved, and to be with Christ]. And these

others from the prophet: *Heu, mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est: quando veniam, & apparebo ante faciem Dei?* [Woe is me that my sojourn is prolonged; and, when will I come and appear before the face of God?] He said this and deserved to be heard; and soon afterward he was overcome by a new lethargy, and to the infirmarian, who was then trying to wake him, said with a smiling face: “The brother” (that is, sleep [131] is the harbinger of death) “is calling for the sister.”

On the following day, 26 September, which was the twentieth Sunday after Pentecost, he was brought as usual to the nearby infirmary chapel, attended devoutly the Holy Sacrifice, and received the Most Holy Eucharist, as he was accustomed to do in his mind as viaticum, and he recited the usual prayers for the dying. Then, he was brought back to the infirmary, courteously thanked the doctor for the care he had given him, and very soon fell in a very long and deep lethargy, from which there was no way to arouse him. And to lift him up for a moment, he seemed only to speak of God.

When the news about the extreme danger facing his dear father reached René Alméras, who, overcome with illness, could not bear to see him once more, he sent Thomas Berthe, one of the major officers of the house, so that in his name, and in the name of all the congregation he would ask Vincent’s final blessing. And Vincent, at the well-known voice of Thomas, looked at him with affection and raising his head, which he had lowered to his chest, [132] made on himself the sign of the Holy Cross, and with quite clear and distinct words, called down on all the Missioners present the future help of the Most Holy Trinity and the Incarnate Word, mysteries of his special and most tender devotion. Since he was short of breath, he could not finish, except quietly, the remaining words of this blessing.

He received with great piety the last sacrament, and about six in the evening, there came to see him and receive his blessing, Claude de Rochechouart, commendatory abbot of Saint John, brother of the abbot of Tournus, and another illustrious priest of the conference. In those days he was making a retreat in Saint Lazare, and asked the Blessed founder, for himself and for all those of the conference his last blessing. He said this accompanied by Vincent in these words: *Qui caepit opus bonum, ipse perficiet* [May he who began the good work bring it to fulfillment].

The holy old man spent peacefully the following hours of that night, and very early he was speaking to God in his agony, and remained, not in bed, but seated on a seat in the middle of the room, vested in his cassock. [133] Around him, six of his priests were reciting the rosary, and one of them suggested at the proper time some brief passage from Sacred Scripture, to which, although the dying man was in extreme lethargy, he responded. He showed special devotion to this verse suggested to him: *Deus in adiutorium meum intende* [God, come to my assistance], and he responded as best he could: *Domine ad adjuvandum me festina* [Lord make haste to help me]. Another confrere recited some of the principal acts [of faith] of the Christian religion, to which Vincent agreed after some hints, and with a fading voice died at 4:30 in the morning, peacefully giving up his spirit as the sun was rising on 27 September 1660, at that precise time when for thirty-five years he customarily invoked the help of the Holy Spirit on himself and his confreres as they began their morning meditation in common.

This was how Vincent de Paul died, full of days and merits, at age 85, the sixtieth of his priesthood, and thirty-sixth of his [134] congregation. He died not in bed but sitting in a chair and dressed in the habit of the Missioners. He died as fruit ripe for heaven, abandoned by nature but comforted by grace. He died placidly without a fever, without an agony, without convulsion, such that it could not easily be distinguished whether he was asleep or dead. There was no change in his face, which instead of growing pale grew reddish. His hands and feet remained flexible, and there was a sweet smell which spread

through his room, which have been an indication of excellent chastity, a proportionate gift for him who had so many meetings with the sacred virgins he had founded or directed.

In due time, his corpse was opened, and it was found to be in good order, complete, and his inner organs were located and buried separately. His blood was placed in glass containers, and bandages were dipped in it. One of these was presented by Father Jean Bonnet, the superior general of the Mission, to Our Lord Benedict XIII. His Holiness received it as a precious gift, and had it exposed in a beautiful reliquary. His heart was placed in another vessel, first made of wood and later of [135] silver provided by the piety of Madame, the duchess of Aiguillon. His body was not embalmed and was clothed in priestly garments. It was exposed in the main hall of the house, surrounded by lights and by priests and clerics who devoutly recited the psalms.

The sad news of the happy death of Vincent had scarcely spread through the city that all Paris heard that *The saint has died*. Orphans and widows wept, and all the poor exclaimed in tears that our father has died, our refuge, our support. Priests and prelates, knights and ladies, senators and princes together said that France had lost a tireless promotor of discipline, an ardent supporter of piety, and a zealous advocate of public peace.

But on this occasion there were no greater tears than those shed abundantly by his disciples, both men and women. Nevertheless, at the passing that their common father made, they had great faith in the joy of the Lord of having a great protector in heaven, who [136] would greatly lessen their bitter sorrow.

On 28 September, his body was brought to the church carried on the shoulders of the priests, with each one being anxious to bring him there, and it was placed in the St. Peter chapel. The church proved to be too small for the crowds who came, among whom there was no one who could look on that venerated face without sighs; his death had made it more beautiful. Some touched the sacred body with medals, rosaries and devout booklets that they kept as relics, and some even took away hairs from his head and chin.

At one hour before midday, the solemn funeral rites were celebrated, participated in by the prince de Conti, a member of the royal family, the apostolic nuncio Monsignor Piccolomini, later a cardinal; then the bishop of Puy, Coutance, Oloron, Chalons, and other dioceses; many mitred abbots, superiors of religious orders, canons, pastors, doctors of the Sorbonne, knights, officials, senators, ladies, princesses, and a great crowd of ordinary people. [137] In view of the common longing to have something belonging to the Blessed, and to avoid disorders that might arise to the departed, by having all his clothing cut up, it became necessary to move him within the choir area, surrounded by gates. Despite the fact that everything was blocked, some climbed over the gates anyway and not one part of his hair remained.

In the evening of the same day, the twenty-eighth, his sacred remains were enclosed in a lead casket place inside a wooden one. It was placed in a grave made of bricks in the center of the choir, and quite close to the cantors' stand, and this had this simple inscription: *His jacet V. Vir Vincentius à Paulo Presbyter Fundator, seu Institutor Congregationis Missionis, nec non Puellarum Charitatis. Obiit die 27. Septembris anno 1660, aetatis vero suae 85* [Here lies the venerable Vincent de Paul, priest, founder or institutor of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity. He died 27 September 1660, aged 85]. Another similar one was cast in bronze in the house, and in 1712 when, by order of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, the recognition of his body was done, it was found, to the full satisfaction of the delegated commissioners, to be totally intact. [138]

In the following days and months, other funerals were celebrated in various churches in Paris and in the kingdom, not only by the Ladies and the Daughters of Charity,

and in all the houses of the Mission, but also by many others who demonstrated on those occasions their gratitude to the departed. Another solemn funeral was that which on 23 November of that year was celebrated by many bishops and other leading priests of the clergy conference held in the Parisian church dedicated to Saint Germain, bishop of Auxerre. Innumerable persons attended, known for their virtue and nobility: Bishop Henri de Maupas, bishop at the time of Puy and later of Evreux, gave an oration widely applauded by the listeners for the eyewitness testimony about the virtues of the departed as related by the scholarly orator.

For such reasons, the reputation of holiness of our Vincent was such that bishops and princes flocked to his tomb, and they, to their great pleasure, received something from the sacred remains. The queen of Poland was delighted to have part of the rosary and the image of the Crucified [139] that the Blessed normally carried. The grand duke of Tuscany held in high esteem the walking stick, the gloves, and a letter of the servant of God.

Not only relics, but also the spirit and the virtues of the servant of God were greatly venerated, such that a considerable sum was left to the house of Saint Lazare by an illustrious person, on condition that there should be prayers to beg from God the preservation of the spirit of its founder for the congregation. And the Most Christian King, Louis XIV, approved with a document that the works of Vincent should be published in order to keep his memory alive. This happened in a brilliant way in the work of Monsignor Abelly, bishop of Rodez, who wrote his life by 1664, and then he wrote a shorter volume in 1668 for the sake of readers. Then, a shorter compendium was written by Father Acami of the Oratory, later translated into Spanish, German and Polish.

And here there should be mentioned the marvelous and prodigious events that took place on the [140] day of the solemn funerals, and in following years at the tomb of our Blessed, but to be brief, these (among many others) are abbreviated here down to only four miracles approved after the usual very exact discussion by the Holy See, with a decree found at the end of this work.

FIRST MIRACLE

Claude Joseph, son of Nicolas Compoin, a citizen of Paris, and Anne Jeunehomme, in the tenth year of his life, was attacked by a sudden and abundant hemorrhage of the eyes, which in an instant blinded him. In a few days, his eyelids closed, and they were stuck so tightly that it was impossible to open them, nor even at least to examine them to see if they were cracked as could be inferred with great foundation that the sick boy was suffering greatly. His parents believed that applying a certain lotion which was given them would do good, but it did not help at all. The boy received no relief, and he remained in the same pitiful state [141] of blindness for eighteen months. He could not walk without a guide. There was no remaining hope of healing, but at the urging of a devout widow, Julienne Henaut, who had known Blessed Vincent and experienced the effect of his charity, his good mother brought the blind boy to the tomb of Blessed Vincent with the intention of making a novena to beg his intercession with God. A truly marvelous thing! The first morning that she brought him there, while the mother was praying, and the blind boy was at the said tomb, both his eyes, stuck shut for a year and half at that time, were immediately opened, and the boy interrupted the prayer of his pious mother, and he suddenly said: Mother, I see a woman before me. The amazed mother asked him how she was dressed. The boy replied, In red, and indeed it was true, since facing him was a woman standing in prayer wearing a red dress. The mother left completely happy after a brief thanksgiving, and brought the boy back home. She no

longer [142] held him by the hand since he no longer needed a guide and enjoyed perfect sight. His father, who had seen him leaving the house blind was greatly consoled seeing him return with clear sight, with no problem in his eyes, and this Claude continued always to see as if he had never been troubled with this, and he learned the skill of an iron worker, thus earning him a good living. The mother, of course, did not leave aside coming with her boy to the novena in thanksgiving for such a great miracle. In fact, after a formal examination, by the boy whose sight had recovered, the father, the mother, and other witnesses testified to it.

SECOND MIRACLE

The second miracle approved by the Holy Apostolic See is no less marvelous than the first, Marie Anne, daughter of Mathurin Lhullier and Quintine Marie, living in the parish of Saint Laurent, a suburb of Paris, had not completed her eighth year when she could neither talk [143] nor walk. She had to be helped to her feet, but this was all useless for her as if her legs had been broken. The parents were advised to provide her with crutches, but in vain, and the girl was unable to make use of them, nor to walk upright in any other way. Her poor mother had to carry her in her arms, or to pull her on a little chair to allow her to play in the house's yard. She remained there for most of the day, exposed to the compassion of the tenants and neighbors. The mother had hoped that God would pity this poor sick child and would one day work a miracle to heal her. She had no other human remedy, and so had recourse only to the intercession of the saints. She made many vows for this and many novenas to various saints, for whom there was a more special veneration in Paris. But God had reserved this miraculous cure to increase in the faithful the veneration of his servant Vincent, and she obtained nothing from those prayers in support of the girl, and she remained as ever without speech and strength [144], totally mute and completely unable to move.

At that time, the procedures for the beatification had begun, and there spread through Paris the reputation of miracles that had taken place at his tomb in the church of Saint Lazare. Consequently, the mother of the sick girl readily accepted the advice of a friend who had urged her to bring her daughter there. She then began a novena and brought the girl with her to Vincent's tomb. The novena was hardly completed than the sick girl began to rise from her chair and to support herself, since she had already recovered strength in her legs. When the pious mother saw this miracle, she hoped likewise that she would obtain another for her speech, and for this purpose she began another novena, also at the tomb of the Blessed. She went to confession, received communion, and before she had reached the end of the novena, the girl was walking freely and speaking very distinctly, such that she had learned to pray to God without any difficulty. The entire neighborhood was astonished to see that the girl, mute and handicapped since her birth, was walking and speaking with such ease, and each [145] one kept asking the mother how such a thing had happened. She answered: There is nothing else; I made two novenas fervently at the tomb of the servant of God Vincent de Paul, and in the course of them I obtained through his intercession the health of my daughter.

THIRD MIRACLE

The third approved miracle was written up as follows in the process.

Mathurine Guerin, one of the pious disciples of Blessed Vincent, and received by him into the company of the Daughters of Charity, had for a long time exhausted herself

in the service of the sick poor, and in the government of the said congregation, whose superioress general she was for twenty years. Around 1695, she fell gravely ill in one leg, with an extraordinarily enlarged cancerous tumor. She had it opened and it formed a terrible ulcer, horrible to see. The most educated professors of Paris diagnosed it as incurable, since the sick woman was already sixty-seven years old. The round ulcer [146] moved and gnawed at her, and it was called, in the language of medicine, *phagedenic*, indicating a kind of cancer that was always spreading and consuming the flesh down to the bone. The good servant of God suffered for three years from this bitter wound, and she was always obliged to lie down, either in bed or in a chair, without being able to walk or hold herself upright, either with crutches or in some other way. She needed to be carried to the chapel to attend Mass and receive the holy sacraments. For some time already the famous Doctor Vernage, dean of the faculty of medicine in Paris and the physician of the Daughters of Charity, determined, as others did, that the wound could not be healed, and that it could not be helped by simple topical remedies. The only possibility was to reduce her pain and slow its progress. But Sister Mathurine grew tired of seeing that even other remedies were in fact useless, and resolved not to use them any longer and to have recourse only to God and the intercession of his servant Vincent de Paul. She had admired his holiness during his life and experienced his charity. She therefore began [147] a novena together with some fellow sisters who would go every day to the tomb of the blessed Father, and her hope in her illness was not disappointed, since at the time when the novena had moved along, the ulcer began to dry up. Consequently, at its end, Mathurine was found to be perfectly healed, and she walked freely without a cane, as if she had never been ill. Five months later, Doctor Vernage, who was no longer visiting Sister Mathurine, since he believed it unnecessary, went to the house of the Daughters of Charity to see other sick persons. At that time, Sister Mathurine had him see her leg which had been healed. The doctor was amazed to see such a perfect cure, and he asked what she had done. She answered that she had stopped a long time before then to apply any remedy, and that she had recourse to God. The professor then diagnosed it and found it very true that such a cure could not have been done through medical remedies, and thus it must have been miraculous. This was also believed by all those who before and after the novena had seen Sister Mathurine's leg, [148] which caused her no problem then or for the rest of her life. She died 18 December 1704, that is, about six years after her miraculous cure, and she had been persuaded that she had obtained it through the merits of Blessed Vincent. She induced another sister with a hydrops [a large swelling] which doctors judged incurable. Thus in imminent danger of death, she had recourse to his [Vincent's] intercession. What she had done suddenly brought about the desired health, as is reported in the List of Miracles, number 1.

FOURTH MIRACLE

The fourth equally approved miracle happened in the following manner, as the witness testified and agreed on the substance.

There is a hospital in Paris called Infant Jesus. There, thanks to Vincent's charity there poor abandoned infants were received, as mentioned elsewhere. They were brought there, it is not known by whom, but about the year 1692, a little baby recently born, and in his Holy Baptism, he received the name Alexandre [149] Philippe le Grand. The Daughters of Charity who were in charge of this pious institution, gave him as usual to be suckled by a nurse in the country, but when three years later she brought him to the hospital, he was identified as a paralytic, on the one hand, and the experts judged that the beginning of this paralysis was in his side and in the kidneys, from where it extended over

the thigh and the leg. This problem increased and spread in accord with his age such that the boy remained so handicapped and lame that he could not stand on his legs, as if he were a six-week-old child. Neither could he use his hands to bring food to his mouth. The Daughters of Charity, in addition to their accustomed zeal toward all poor children, whose mothers they replaced, had a special affection for Alexandre Philippe, in whom they perceived a sweet character and good hope. For this reason, they did not use a special remedy, and according to the advice of several experts, who had examined the boy, they used and repeated many times for four years their own remedies, from which, however, [150] no improvement resulted. Then, both the sisters and the professors thought that they should use for an entire year every kind of medicine until they became tired of seeing any change, and they lost hope. Even Franchet, the most expert surgeon wrote out this declaration: It was a lost cause: since Alexandre Philippe le Grand would never be healed without a miracle; and he would have to be sent to the general infirmary of the incurables of the General Hospital. When Sister Elizabeth Bourdois heard this declaration—she was then the superior of the hospital of the Infant Jesus—she said to her companion that in this extremity, one should have recourse to the servant of God Vincent de Paul, who had built the hospital for poor children, and she believed that he had great credit with God to obtain the paralytic's freedom. They resolved to make a novena at the tomb of the Blessed in the church of Saint Lazare, and since it was quite distant from the said Foundling hospital, they had Alexandre Philippe brought in the arms of an old man to the house of [151] the gardener of the main house of the Daughters of Charity, which is close to Saint Lazare. Some of the Sisters began a novena in June 1699, and the boy was carried daily to the said tomb where they recited nine Our Fathers and nine Hail Marys, and called on the assistance of the Blessed with these precise words: Monsieur Vincent, my good father, obtain healing for me. The fervent prayer of this innocent child was answered, since from the third or fourth day the paralysis in his legs and hands, formerly looking so difficult, diminished and he could set foot on the street supported by a cane, even if he were still a little weak, and also since never had the ability to walk. Then on the ninth day he was found so perfectly healed that he returned home, the Foundling hospital, on foot without a cane, although it was half a league away. It was well reported by the healed boy, the chaplain of the said hospital, four Sisters of Charity, and eyewitnesses. But the good sisters of the said hospital, to totally certify the perfect recovery of [152] boy, had him remain for some time at the house of the said gardener, where he continued to walk better in the garden, and to use his hands without needing any aid. This caused the great amazement of everyone, especially the hospital's surgeon, whom the superioress had look at him in the presence of the administrators, and saying to them: Gentlemen, here is this boy whom you said could not be healed without a miracle. The expert answered: I do not easily believe in miracles, but as to the cure of this boy, this is a genuine miracle; and the administrators added: We have no doubt that Monsieur Vincent does miracles, since his life was a constant miracle.

CONCLUSION

Everyone can easily argue from the reported virtuous works of Blessed Vincent, proven by reports and other noteworthy miracles, no matter how extraordinary his vocation was and completely in agreement to those of the [153] apostles, whose virtues he imitated. It is something worthy of special admiration that the son of a simple peasant, born in the obscurity of a very humble station, brought up simply in country ways while guarding the herds, later reduced to an unfortunate slavery in the hands of the barbarians, and in the course of his years worked always to hide his virtues under the appearance of

a common life without any singularity but which made him shine. Because of this, he was finally compared to the most luminous lights in the Church militant, who had illumined with the light of evangelical teaching a huge number of souls sunk in the darkness of a profound ignorance of God and of the matters of salvation; and he had access with the fire of divine love for so many persons of every status, some of whom, by imitating him, were consecrated to the conversion of sinners, while others sacrificed their goods, their efforts, and their very own life to the service of the poor and the most abandoned sick, and all were moved to an efficacious desire for perfection and the greater glory of God. [154]

It was truly a great thing that a simple priest, without the aid of ecclesiastical dignity, had been able remedy various disorders found among the clergy. With his example and knowledge he had formed many zealous pastors and faithful dispensers of the Most Holy Mysteries; and through his work Divine Worship, which had declined in many places, was restored to its ancient splendor, and the divine praises were chanted with that holy attention that the Lord deserves to whom they were directed. Likewise, the Sacred Ceremonies were carried out with gravity, devotion, and exactness; and the Holy Sacraments were administered with every sort of care and reverence.

In addition, a person such as Vincent was, so poor in the goods of fortune, had discovered a way to help the extreme needs of the poor, not only of one city but of various provinces, of promoting so many hospitals and so many houses of piety that still exist; of rebuilding a great number of churches ruined by heretics and soldiers, and of providing them with the necessary furnishings. Just one man, who did not consider himself without horror, who spoke of himself [155] only with contempt, and who mentioned everywhere his modest birth and his earliest duties, and spoke of himself as an ignoramus, and who placed himself under the feet of everyone, acquired such reputation and esteem in France that everyone honored and revered him. He was summoned to the offices and royal councils to be consulted about issues dealing with the service of God and the holy Church. He was universally recognized as a man sent by the Lord to renew the ecclesiastical spirit of the clergy, to draw the people to penance, and to perform all the duties of a truly apostolic man.

Finally, who will reflect on what was properly the character of the servant of God, and not be lifted up by him by the special vocation of the Lord for so many works of piety that he sponsored. He never opened his mouth or followed a path to enrich his relatives or to procure for his congregation foundations, subjects or goods when he had so much opportunity to succeed in this. All told, his glorious undertakings were only for the glory of God and the salvation of the neighbor. [156] In so many works of the Church, the kingdom, his congregations and other communities, even though he was obliged to write so many letters, and deal with so many people amid the difficulties of lengthy illness, he always preserved the equality of his simple, humble, meek, mortified and zealous spirit.

Without a doubt, all things considered, one would be forced to admit that the hand of the Lord was with his faithful servant, and that God denies his favor to the proud. And that it is not intended for the humble, how matter how great the things were that were not done for persons excelling in holiness and merit, but it would likewise be necessary to say that the Majesty of God had wished to raise up the humility of his servant through extraordinary things, and these will serve as testimony for the future that Vincent de Paul was a man of grace, full of God's spirit, and thus worthy of eternal veneration for the heroic virtues of his life and for the notable miracles done after his death.

The materials narrated above provided a solid foundation and stimulus to the reiterated wishes [157] made by the glorious Most Christian King, Louis XIV, by the reigning Louis XV, and his wife, Marie, most Christian queen of France, and many other

kings, princes, and republics; by all the French clergy in three different assemblies, and by a large number of the Lord Cardinals and Bishops of various nations, of many abbots, chapters, and superiors general of the Congregation of the Mission and the Company of the Ladies [of Charity], and the Daughters of Charity.

In view of such requests, Clement XI, of happy memory, granted that the process done with the ordinary authority of the diocese of Paris and in many other dioceses of France in 1705, would be opened in 1708; and in 1709 the cause was introduced in the Sacred Congregation of Rites under the leadership of the Lord Cardinal de Tremoille, of happy memory, who established in Paris commissioners deputed for the general and special processes by apostolic authority. These were translated and approved, and then the Position and the Summary of heroic virtues, concerning which, on 22 January 1715, the antipreparatory meeting [158] was held, and on 18 December 1717, the preparatory meeting. Since the above-mentioned cardinal Tremoille had died, his leadership role was taken by the Lord Cardinal Paulucci, of happy memory, and by the Most Eminent Lord Cardinal de Polignac. Thanks to their pious care on 16 September the affirmative decree was obtained in a general meeting in the presence of Our Lord Benedict XIII, and he pronounced this decree: It is proven that the virtues of the venerable servant of God, Vincent de Paul, both the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, and the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance and those virtues were linked to them to a heroic degree.

Finally on 1 February 1729, the anti-preparatory congregation on the miracles was held: on 5 April, the preparatory; and the general in the presence of the Supreme Pontiff on 12 July, and His Holiness pronounced on the fourteenth of the same month the following decree. [(159)]

DECREE

On 12 of the current month of July, 1729, in the presence of our Most Holy Lord, BENEDICT XIII, a general meeting of the Sacred Congregation of Rites was held, in which, through the Most Reverend Lord Cardinal de Polignac, the leader or reporter, the cause in Paris of the Beatification and Canonization of the Venerable Servant of God, Vincent de Paul, the founder of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity concerning the issues: Whether and by which miracles it is proven in the matter, and its effect, etc. His Holiness, after hearing the votes of the Consultors, the Most Reverend Lord Cardinals, that nothing contrary had then been found, but he wished to defer, as before, and implore, as customary, the Divine Word. When he did this, the below-mentioned on the day of Saint Bonaventure, doctor of the Church, after the Mass celebrated in the chapel of Saint Pius V, the following response was composed, namely: “It is proven concerning miracles, first, the sudden healing of Claude Joseph Compoin from blindness; second, the instantaneous recovery of speech and strength of Marie Anne Lhuillier, an eight-year old girl, mute from birth, and the movement of her lower limbs; fifth, the instantaneous healing of Sister Mathurine Guerin, from an inveterate and cancerous ulcer of the tibia; and eighth, the sudden healing of Alexandre Philippe Le Grand, from inveterate and [(160)] stubborn paralysis, as miracles of the third class.” He ordered that the present decree of the Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God VINCENT DE PAUL, by Apostolic letters, in the form of a brief, with the usual indults be issued and published. 14 July 1729.

N. Cardinal Coscia

[Place + of the seal]

N[icola] M[aria] Tedeschi, archbishop of Apamea
Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

[(161), from second edition]

BENEDICT XIII

For the eternal memory of the event

The just and merciful Lord has, since the beginning of the world, established some of his special servants and chosen ones as predestined by the abundant grace of his charisms. Meanwhile, he established their holiness on earth by signs and wonders, so that for those whom he grants a crown of eternal glory in heaven, also supplies for the faithful an honor of due veneration. Among these [(162)] is the widely known servant of God Vincent de Paul, a French priest, and founder of the Congregation of the secular priests of the Mission and the society of the Daughters of Charity. Aflame with a marvelous love for God and neighbor (his heart being expanded by the Holy Spirit), he was always intent on works of true piety and especially for the advantage of souls. He was pained that the poor country folk lay miserably in the darkness of ignorance, and he obliged by vows himself and the priests of his Congregation to teach the mysteries of the Catholic faith and the precepts leading to the way of salvation. He also devoted himself especially to the proper instruction of the clergy. Endowed with the strength of all the other virtues and strengthened from on high, he showed himself as a faithful minister of their pilgrimage and way of life, and was a hard-working and tireless cultivator of the Lord's vineyard and workshop. He not only filled the entire Church with the sweetest of spiritual aromas, but he also enriched it with the fertility of abundant fruits. Full of days and merits, beloved of God and men, he finished the course [(162)] of his mortal life. Reason demanded that we should no longer allow such a splendid light to remain any longer under the bushel basket, but should be placed on the lampstand by our ministry of apostolic work, which the Most High has wished us to perform, so that it might shine on all those in the house, for the glory of Almighty God, the beauty of the Catholic Church, and the consolation and spiritual edification of the Christian people. Thus, after mature and diligent discussions and reflections through the meeting of our venerable brethren, the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church responsible for sacred rites, and after the procedures carried out by the permission of the apostolic see concerning the holiness of life and heroic virtues by which the servant of God VINCENT DE PAUL shed such great light, and by the miracles which were performed at his intercession, and to manifest to men that a person's holiness was accomplished by God, they have asserted: that this meeting of cardinals held in our presence, and after hearing the votes of the consultors, thought with one spirit and one voice that, whenever it seemed good to us, the aforementioned servant of God could be proclaimed Blessed, with the usual indulgences. For this purpose, [(163)] pious and repeated requests came humbly and beseechingly to us and to the Holy See on this matter from our dearest son in

Christ, Louis, most Christian king of France, and our dearest daughter in Christ, Marie, the most Christian queen of France, his wife, and many other exalted Catholic princes, and our venerable brethren, the archbishops and bishops, and our beloved sons, the clergy of the kingdom of France and of the entire aforementioned Congregation of the secular priests of the Mission. Based on the advice and consent of the cardinals, by apostolic authority, by means of the present document, we have decided that the same servant of God, Vincent de Paul, should in the future be called Blessed. His body and relics should be exposed to the veneration of the faithful (but not brought around in processions); his images also can be adorned with rays and ornaments, and yearly, on the anniversary of his happy death, the office can be recited and the Mass of a confessor, not a bishop, be celebrated according to the rubrics of the Roman breviary and missal. However, we grant that the recitation of the office and the celebration [(164)] of the Mass of this Blessed be said only in the following places, namely: in the town of Pouy, diocese of Dax, in the province of Auch, where the servant of God was born; in the town of Clichy, near Paris, and in the town of Châtillon, in the principality of the Dombes of the diocese of Lyons, where he ministered in the care of souls; and in the city of Paris, from where he went to heaven, and where his venerable body remains. This may be done by the men and women faithful, both seculars and regulars, who are obliged to the canonical hours, and by the entire aforementioned Congregation of the Mission, by both the clerics and priests of the same congregation, along with the residents and students who live in their houses. Finally, this may be done in each of the churches or chapels, or oratories, of the aforementioned Society which the servant of God named the Daughters of Charity by the priests assigned to the service of the churches, chapels, or oratories. [(165)] As to the Masses, they may be celebrated also by all the priests who come to the churches in which the feast is celebrated.

Besides, one year after the date of this document, and in the Indies from the day when the same document reaches there, they may with our permission also, in the churches in the hamlets, villages, towns, and cities of the Congregation and the Society with the office and Mass, celebrate the solemn office and Mass of the servant of God, as a double major, on the day agreed to by the respective ordinaries, after the same solemnities are celebrated in the basilica of the prince of the apostles in the City (which we assign to 21 August of this month). This is notwithstanding apostolic constitutions and ordinances, and decrees of *non-cultu*, and any contrary edicts of any sort. We however wish that copies of the present document, or printed versions, signed by the hand of the secretary of the abovementioned congregation of cardinals, and authenticated by the seal of the prefect or pro-prefect of the same congregation, should have the same authority for all and everywhere, both in a legal judgment and apart from one, as given to the present document, if it is exhibited or shown.

Dated Rome, at St. Peter's, under the ring [(166)] of the Fisherman, 13 August 1729. The sixth year of our pontificate.

F. card. Oliverius. [Fabio Cardinal
Olivieri]
[(167)]

COLLECT
approved by His Holiness, Our Lord,
BENEDICT XIII,
in honor of
BLESSED VINCENT DE PAUL
To be recited in the Office, and Mass.

O GOD, who to evangelize the poor and those abandoned and the sick who suffer from miseries, and to promote the beauty of the Ecclesiastical Order, have raised up the spirit of Your Son in the apostolic charity and humility of Blessed Vincent de Paul: grant us by his intercession, that raised from the miseries of sins, we may always please you with charity and humility. Through the same, etc.; in the unity of the same, etc.

(III)

[1]

**COMPENDIUM OF THE LIFE, VIRTUES, MIRACLES,
AND DECISIONS FOR
the Canonization of Blessed Vincent de Paul,**

*Founder of the Congregation of the Mission, and
the Company of the Daughters of Charity, and
the first superior general of both communities.*

Secretariate of the Congregation of Sacred Rites

ROME, MDCCXXXVII.
Printed by the Reverend Apostolic Chamber

[2, blank; 3] The noble French people have always shone through their works, weapons, elegant ways and merits, their piety and teaching, as especially the lights of the Church, Saints Thomas, Bonaventure, Andrea Cortini, and numberless others, in addition to those to whom it has given birth and who can be added. All those of any condition have undergone persecution for the sake of Christ and justice, and for his charity, and they have certainly experienced all this. Nonetheless, this noteworthy race has experienced other sad problems: provinces devastated by war, people reduced to poverty, a scattered clergy, the discipline of the Church trampled, morals depraved by heresies, but He, from whom all good things come, raised up Charles [Borromeo] in Italy, Francis [de Sales] in Savoy, and Vincent in France. We can still look on them kindly, and Vincent is like a second Elijah who was seen to have been raised up; he restored everything. In Italy, [4] Borromeo was hastening to the palm of martyrdom; and de Sales struggled bitterly for the faith in Savoy. In France, Vincent was born on 24 April, in the year of the Incarnation 1576, in a humble village, called Ranguines [Ranquines] in the parish of Pouy, of the diocese of Dax, province of Aquitaine. His parents were Guillaume de Paul, and Bertrande de Moras. They were indeed poor, but were a pious Catholic couple.

After being washed in the sacred basin of regeneration, and then in due time confirmed by the Sacred Chrism, in his tender years he learned the fear of God and the Roman faith, carefully taught by his upright parents, and he strove according to his age to be a pious and devoted servant of the Most High.

Trained in his childhood by his father in caring in a small garden, for their little flock, the total substance of the family, and all its paternal wealth, he learned proper care for the poor, as the most beloved flock of Christ. In a most human way he distributed bread as food for them, even garnering the merit of fasting while providing food for the hungry.

The poor boy also showed great compassion for the needy poor, such that he could give away the half-ecu that he gradually acquired from alms, and little by little from his work and industry. [5] He once encountered a poor man and promptly gave away liberally his boyhood treasure. In this his heart moved him in this small way to gather heavenly treasures by the hand of a poor person.

Guillaume, his father, noticed in his son Vincent the character both of piety and intelligence. He was the third child among the boys whom his father received from his marriage and the care of his flock, and he chose him to receive an education.

As a result, he sent him in 1586 to the town of Dax, where, in a hostel run by the religious of Saint Francis, he learned admirably along with youngsters of his own age not only his letters but also piety and divine worship. This he practiced strongly with his classmates and the Franciscans. For this reason, an important attorney in the same town called Vincent to his home to teach his children.

When he finished his humanities, he went to Toulouse for his theology, and then to Zaragoza where he completed them with high praise. When he completed those studies, *magna cum laude*, he was found worthy of a doctoral degree to publicly interpret the Master of the Sentences at the faculty of theology. When he had completed his path of studies, he turned to the most important point, that is, the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom, which he always kept before his eyes. He placed the law of God so firmly in his heart that [6] he joined himself to the Lord. Once initiated into minor orders, he ascended the sacred steps of subdiaconate and diaconate, and from there, in 1600, he rose to the priesthood.

Soon after his priestly anointing, he was the good aroma of Christ everywhere, even unconsciously and, without choosing it, he received a rich benefice in a district of the town of Dax. However, he lost its free possession to a competitor after a legal judgment, and then he willingly and freely gave it up, rather than go to court against a priest, as he used to say, preferring to flee from what he could not obtain.

Lest he burden his poor mother, who in the interim had been widowed, and so that he could earn an honest living in a small town in the diocese of Toulouse called Buset [Buzet], he taught primary school, and soon afterwards he taught sacred theology in the famous academy itself. And because he constantly planned to care for youth while teaching, he imbued them with Christian virtues. This included noblemen, who taught their own sons under the correct discipline of a pious teacher, and whose virtues they rapidly adopted.

Meanwhile, while seeking a legacy left in the will of a friend, he went to Marseilles, and he sought it out by taking a ship to Narbonne thanks to favorable winds. However, he fell [7] into the hands of the Turks, whose captain brought to North Africa this pious priest Vincent, wounded by an arrow, along with several others. His clothes were stripped off and he was placed in chains as a captive. There, just like an animal he was first sold to a fisherman and then to a certain physician expert in crafting medicines,

and finally to a man from Nice in Savoy, who had criminally abandoned the Catholic religion by apostasy.

He underwent these and many more things for the name of Jesus, and he came to understand the anger of the Turks against Christian slaves; also he clearly understood the cause of the sickness in his legs which troubled him severely until his death. From this, there arose the common opinion that he had suffered from plagues, wounds, and mistreatment in captivity, or because his feet had been bound by chains. This was clear, since once, when he saw a person tightly bound, he was so moved by charity that he wanted in his compassion to bear the weight of the chains by which his fellow captive was burdened.

With a brave spirit, he tolerated these and other hardships in his captivity and placed all his confidence in the Lord, his God, who did not leave him in chains, and who protected him from his seducers. His second owner, the physician, did not [8] overlook his constancy in any way, even with promises of riches, freedom, and the lucrative medical art of the many hidden crafts in which he greatly excelled, as the physician often swore solemnly against the Catholic faith, but the faithful captive preferred to remain the humble servant of God, for whom to serve is to rule, and the poverty of Christ to the riches of all treasure, against promised rewards, every art, every industry, and all blandishments of the cunning seducer.

As the property of his final owner, the apostate, he was freed from the three who had entreated him, and passed his time in the tiresome work of agriculture. But one woman among them, Muslim by birth, knew that the farm needed slaves and because of her management of the fields, she saw how Vincent chanted the praises of his God. When the occasion arose, he sang the psalm *Super flumina Babilonis illic sedimus, & flevimus, cum recordaremur Sion* [On the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept as we remembered Zion] and he added the antiphon *Salve Regina*. Moved by this, the woman scolded her husband for having deserted such a great religion. The merciful Lord, whose pity knows no bounds, thought about the salvation of the lost man, who was attracted no less by the piety and devotion of his upright captive than even by his vivid warnings. God strengthened his voice and even touched his heart to repentance, and he was inwardly moved, and admitted his guilt and wept bitterly. When the opportunity arose, [9] he took flight with Vincent from the Barbary coast, boarded a poor skiff, and with the aid of the most blessed Virgin, from whom he had fled and now fervently besought, Vincent brought him to Avignon, and presented this apostate to the papal pro-legate. Following the accustomed holy rites, he was reconciled to the Church.

In fact, before Vincent moved elsewhere in France, he came to Rome with the above-mentioned pro-legate, who had appreciated the blessed man's virtues, and chose him as his traveling companion, lodging him regularly in his home. In this priestly city, every care was taken for this blessed guest to develop his own piety. Instead of being a mere spectator of Roman magnificence, he often came to the holy places enriched by the precious relics of martyrs, and regularly spent time in fervent prayer. And if he could not separate from them, he grew accustomed to remaining.

On his return to France he received orders from the royal ambassador, the duke of Nevers, that is, the marquis de Breves, that he would carefully and prudently deal with the court. By marvelously accomplishing this, and not very readily moved by honors or works, but by his own abjection, he was received into a private home, where he had the opportunity to exercise a wondrous occasion for both charity and patience. [10] One day, it happened that his host left early in the morning, and the delivery servant from the pharmacy came to give the sick Vincent a potion. He found the host's safe open, and he fraudulently ran off with the money placed there. When his host returned, he looked to

Vincent for his funds and accused him of theft, defaming him publicly. Vincent, however, kept silent about his reputation and committed his care to God. In the meantime, Father Berulle, known for his great piety (he was the first to introduce the Congregation of the Oratory of Jesus into France) and later admitted into the sacred college of cardinals, became Vincent's spiritual director. Vincent agreed to take on the administration of the parishes of Clichy, a district of Paris, and then of Chatillon-les-Dombes, of the diocese of Lyons.

He became a model for the flock because of his spirit; he rebuilt tumble-down churches; he broke the bread of the Gospel to the youth; he received younger clerics into his home and instructed some who had been wandering off and brought them back to the ways of the Lord. He directed them by labor and work of the Most Holy Shepherd and reformed the parishes from what they had become to then give outstanding and notable examples of piety to others.

Next, he became the spiritual tutor to the Most Excellent [Philip] Emmanuel de Gondi, admiral of the galleys of France, and he added to his endeavors the instruction of his three sons in good morals and teaching them. [11] One of them was raised to the government of the church of Paris. It happened also that one of the village folk of the same Emmanuel fell sick, a person who was, in the common opinion, a man of great uprightness with an able conscience. Vincent was called to hear his confession. When he saw the sick man, and not without a special inspiration of God, he recognized his poor state. Zealously, he urged him to provide a general account of his previous life. He agreed, and with Vincent's charitable help, the sick man later admitted that without that general cleansing of his conscience, he would have certainly lost his own future existence because of the grave sins which he had imprudently held back in previous confessions. At that time when the most excellent and pious wife of the said Emmanuel was visiting her estates, hamlets, villages and farms of the Gondi family with the help of gospel ministers, she would go frequently and bring great rewards for souls. When Louis XIII, Most Christian King received the news of the good works of that zealous and blessed man, who had begun to minister to those condemned to the galleys, he appointed him [Vincent], by royal decree, to be the principal chaplain of the galleys of France. In this ministry, he worked for the salvation of the commanders and the rowers, sparing no work, difficulty, effort, or hardship for them. [12]

Vincent's holiness was not hidden from Saint Francis de Sales either, or the results of the good works which, with God's blessing, he was doing. For this reason, he [de Sales] appointed him as the superior of the nuns of the Visitation newly arrived in Paris; he [de Sales] was already their superior and founder. For a long period of forty years, Vincent governed them with such great prudence and zeal for regular discipline and moved them with such great progress in holiness, that the judgment of the most holy bishop showed openly that, as he said, he never met a priest more worthy than Vincent.

While evangelizing the poor, especially the country people in France, those who were living in the shadow of death, a light arose by the attending the missions. Vincent carefully devoted himself to this, and since the harvest was great, he gathered to himself other upright priests to partake in the work, and he instituted in 1625 a congregation, called the Secular Priests of the Mission. Their members took a perpetual vow, confirmed successively by the Holy See, to continually give Missions, principally in rural places, hamlets, and limiting themselves especially to less noble sites.

How great and abundant was the fertility of good works coming from the same congregation in the church of God, especially in reference to the charity of Blessed Vincent, their founder. [13] By his tireless example he led his disciples, knowing that his son is a father's glory. This is evident from a papal decree publishing the apostolic

approval of the same congregation in the following brilliant text: *for, because of it, the use of sacramental confession—even general confessions—and of the Most Holy Eucharist, previously rare, has by the grace of God become frequent in a relatively short time. Confraternities of Charity have been established in many places for the relief of the sick. It is well known that clandestine marriages have been convalidated, public sins have been corrected, and stolen goods have been restored. Places of worship are noticeably kept much more beautiful. Church ceremonies are performed more carefully. It is clear that the Divine Office is performed and attended with a greater sense of devotion, and many other spiritual blessings have been realized.*

Because of this, the reputation of this devout Institute throughout France has led many Bishops of various jurisdictions and provinces to call to their dioceses some priests and members of the Congregation of the Mission, whose services they have used with great effectiveness to animate their subjects to the practice of virtue and devotion.

Because of these things to which Vincent was greatly devoted, he performed good works among the people of France, thanks in large measure to Louis XIII, who made him his private Almoner, and took his particular advice concerning those matters that could deal with the status of the churches and the splendor of the clergy [14] which he [Louis] was supporting liberally. In addition, he nominated no one to episcopal sees unless Vincent approved them. When Louis XIII was dying, he wanted Vincent to be with him as his support, and after his death, Queen Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV, then age five, held firmly to herself the virtues and holiness of the blessed man. Although he was reluctant and unwilling, she took him on as the director of her conscience, and she was not shortchanged in this, her heart's desire. For Vincent had nothing more solemn in his responsibility than only the most worthy persons should be appointed to parishes, dignities and clerical benefices since they are the patrimony of the poor. And when he recommended candidates for appointments, he urged and used all means most efficiently that they not be appointed out of the habit of human respect, promises or favors, or even the hatred of the nobles who were wanting to promote their sons, relatives or friends.

He perceived, with the greatest pain in his heart, the dishonest errors of Jansen, which had just arisen in France, and he abhorred them. He openly opposed them and worked tirelessly with great constancy to see them rooted out. At Vincent's exhortation, persuasion and pressure through humble and urgent letters, eighty-five bishops of France, plus others added later, [15] besought and proposed to the late Innocent X that as quickly as possible an apostolic condemnation should be made of the impious teachings of this heretic. With Vincent's cooperation three of the Doctors of the Sorbonne, well-known both for their knowledge as their great piety, were sent to Rome as ablegates so that the negotiation at the Holy See of such importance might be concluded more quickly and expeditiously. With Vincent's usual watchfulness lest the good not be corrupted by this pestilential rot, all those of less than sound doctrine were restrained, and he himself declared

war on them, not allowing them to be anywhere whether in the congregation that he had founded, or in the monasteries of the Visitation, whose care he exercised, or in individual groups of priests, over which he watched as a good shepherd.

Then, when the Apostolic Constitution dealing with the condemnation of the evil teachings was published, Vincent not only rejoiced in the Lord, whose right hand is powerful and strikes the evil one, he worked diligently with all his strength to secure everyone's obedience to the papal decisions. But, having strapped his sword most powerfully on his thigh, that is, with the apostolic liberty that befits a holy man, he seriously warned the king, queen, and other ministers, that the obstinate should be inflicted with due punishment, so that they [16] should accept the judgments of the Holy

See. Also, he worked that those who persisted gloomily in their errors, should be, as a deadly plague, quickly removed from the whole kingdom of France. This zeal for religion spread widely among his successor generals, such as Jean Bonnet, the fifth superior general after our Blessed. He perceived that some in his congregation had, over the years, wavered, and he spared nothing until those who troubled it were expelled. For this reason, the general assembly of 1724 approved as a most holy decision that everyone should subscribe in this matter to the apostolic constitutions in word, speech, writing, and work, and that those who did not should be expelled. When this was fortunately accomplished, he affirmed that he most certainly believed that there was no one in his congregation to be found suspected of disobedience, and that even others had returned to the fold of the supreme Shepherd.

On the contrary, even the blessed founder, dead to the world, saw that some living fanatics could be condemned for being fascinated by a kind of enchantment and visions under the species of devotion in Paris. However, a huge number of genuine miracles, in the style of the Apostolic See, both legally and carefully examined, took place, thanks to his intercession, at the chapel of Saint Lazare, where his body rests.

These and many other things besides which Vincent, in whose heart the charity of God had spread, speak for themselves. For, when the evil of the times and the tumult of civil wars [17] greatly deformed the Church in France, he worked to restore and increase clerical discipline. He erected seminaries to promote the discipline of clerics for Holy Orders, and he restored the brilliance and observance of sacred rites and ceremonies. He assembled a group of priests for conferences to be held regularly concerning divine matters on stated days, and he was the very author of retreats in the houses of his congregation to prepare for holy ordinations. He even wanted them to be open for pious retreats of laypersons. He was the strong supporter of the reformation of the religious orders of the Premonstratensians and Grandmont, and he acted as their efficacious partner.

In individual parishes, not only in cities but also in towns and hamlets he founded confraternities of women, to work diligently to care for the suffering, for those in bad health, and provide remedies both corporal and spiritual. He went to visit them and strove to console them. He erected the pious congregation of the Daughters of Charity, which later spread widely throughout the world to care for the elderly, the children, the needy, working both day and night to cure the sick of all sorts. He founded a hospice, built from the ground up, for abandoned children, where the said Daughters would nourish and form them. He had hospices for [18] those with emotional problems, and he built a reform school for youth. There was a very large hospital that took care of helping and nourishing both the elderly who had been reduced to begging, as well as laborers who had become unable to provide food by the work of their hands, and he had them prepared for some industry. At Vincent's urging, hospitals were built and endowed by royal generosity for sick galley prisoners, who previously had been treated like animals in Paris and Marseilles. They were transferred there and restored with spiritual and corporal help. The Communities of the Daughters of the Cross, of Providence and of Saint Genevieve, no less pious as the weaker sex, labored to provide a free education as well as in honest women's work. He promoted and increased these institutions, and so all these and other large monuments which are still standing testify to the late Vincent's great charity.

Finally, he raised so many alms for the poor of all sorts that he was commonly called the Father of the Poor. This was especially evident in that very time in which the city of Paris was terribly troubled by a huge dearth of grain, when he himself regularly provided food at his house for two thousand poor persons. What else? He ardently desired for himself and his confreres that they would sacrifice their lives. [19] Once, a certain

renowned theologian, tempted against the faith, came close to desperation. God permitted him [Vincent] to take on the temptation in himself, and he became a shield against the furious swords of poor soldiers [i.e., priests] already wounded.

Vincent's extraordinary charity was not limited only to Paris, but shone forth far and wide. To increase faith and piety, this evangelical man sent workers from among his disciples to Italy, Poland, Scotland, Ireland, and even the Barbary Coast and the Indies [Madagascar]. There could not be enough days or months to carefully enumerate his actions in Lorraine, Champagne, Picardy and other areas which he helped to rebuild after plague, famine and war thanks to the huge amount of money which the Daughters of Charity distributed, like the Deaconesses.

Amid so many outstanding works of piety in which Vincent was involved, he found great favor both in the royal court as well as among all the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church living in France, and among the nobles and all those of every kind, state, and condition. Yet he debased himself in deep humility, saying he was nothing, that he knew nothing, either in work or in speech. [20]

Hence, he constantly rejected ecclesiastical dignities being offered him, and he always hated honors, riches and delights, and he was heard to say that nothing pleased him except in Christ Jesus. He never favored his family members through works or social position. He always described himself as a nobody, the son of a peasant, a person who once shepherded his flock. In the presence of a general assembly, he turned down the perpetual governance of his congregation. On his knees, he asserted his stupidity and ignorance and said that someone worthier should be elected and installed. He did not agree to the strong requests of the same assembly or that he would still exercise the said office. Like a burning and shining light he did this, often while kneeling and weeping, and, still the superior general, he begged pardon from his confreres for the bad examples that he said he had given them. At table, he washed the dishes and was involved in the lowest of various ministries, and he took delight in these habits.

It was marvelous that Vincent, involved constantly in so many issues at court dealing with his congregation, and other pious places that he had founded, worked so strenuously and tirelessly for the glory of God alone. He was mild and meek, and a person of great mercy to all the needy [21], like everyone's parent. He cared for everyone, protecting them under the shadow of his wings. He did not consider age, condition, or persons. He was generous to everyone, sheltering with his mantle of piety all who asked him in any need. He discounted his own needs but was patient in them and compassionate to others. He did not deny support to anyone who came to him, nor did he consider the person of men except with kind paternal love. He had ready ears for the requests of his confreres, even anticipating their wishes. He then answered them softly and did not reject the thinking of anyone. He never promoted envy, but he consulted everyone about their health. He went on regular missions since God had called him especially to this vocation. Everywhere he spread his wings in charity, especially for those who were country dwellers, who, living in the fields had no one to break the bread of the Gospel for them, and he tirelessly continued to work until weakened by his advanced age. He could move about in the middle of crowds without problems and had free time for the needs of his followers, the missions, the poor, the court, and the clergy. He never put off his holy meditations, his time for prayer, or contemplation in leisure itself, all of which he exercised in justification of the Lord.

In addition to other offices of piety, [22] each day he spent time in vocal and mental prayer. And his face, which flushed in this, seemed bright more than once. This was an indication of the fervor with which he poured forth his soul in the sight of the

Lord, such that nothing was needed for his supreme diligence concerning the salvation of others, and it appeared that nothing could be added to his extraordinary piety toward God.

He never abstained from the unbloody sacrifice of the altar unless prevented by grave illness. This is why for some months before his death, while gravely attacked by an abscess in his leg, he was unable to stand but was devoutly present daily with devotion at the holy sacrifice of the Mass and nourished by the bread of angels. After a humble and fervent act of thanksgiving, he recited with deep feeling of his heart the prayers indicated by the Church for the dying, as if he would soon leave the mortal prison for his heavenly homeland. Besides afflictions of the flesh and voluntary penances, he was accustomed to use the hairshirt and to fast, especially severely during the general calamities facing both the kingdom and the church,

Burdened with years, Vincent reached his eighty-fifth year, not lacking his faculties, but afflicted in his body and by his works, from which he never abstained while being afflicted for the salvation of the neighbor. Thus, in his [23] weakness, it became evident that the hour was approaching in which he would leave for his heavenly homeland. Armed for death by the holy sacraments of the Church, and filled with God's spirit, rejecting worldly things and most desirous of heavenly ones, he responded to the priest who was offering him the last rites of piety with these familiar words, *Deus in adiutorium meum intende* [God, come to my assistance], saying: *Domine ad adjuvandum me festina* [Lord, make haste to help me]. He died most peacefully in the Lord in Paris, in the house of Saint Lazare, headquarters of the Congregation of the Mission, on 27 September 1660.

Since the fame of the holiness of blessed Vincent had spread far and wide, accompanied by frequent signs from God and miracles, two customary procedures were begun in Paris by authority of the Ordinary. One, as mentioned, was informative, dealing with his reputation for holiness, with virtues and miracles, while another dealt with the lack of evidence of veneration. Clement XI, of happy memory, on 14 July 1708 opened the procedures. On 13 July 1709, their validity was examined, and a commission on the introduction of the cause was established. By 4 October of the said year, everything had been prepared which the Holy See required, and so on 22 January 1715 the ante-preparatory meeting was held concerning this doubt: Whether there were [24] theological and cardinal virtues at a heroic level. Then on 18 December 1717, the preparatory meeting was held, and finally, on 16 September 1727, the general meeting. Following this, Benedict XIII, on the 21st of the same month and year, ordered the publication of the decree that the theological and cardinal virtues of this blessed man existed at a heroic level. Following the publication of the said decree, the procedure moved to the examination of the miracles, in the ante-preparatory meeting of 7 February 1729, and the preparatory on 4 April [1729], and the general meeting on 12 July of the same year. About these, the decision was passed approving four [miracles]. *The first* was the sudden healing from blindness of Claude Joseph Compoin. *The second* was the instantaneous ability to speak and the restoration of movement of Marie Anne Lhullier, an eight-year-old girl, mute from birth and unable to move her lower limbs. *The fifth* was the instantaneous healing of Sister Mathurine Guerin from an inveterate and malignant ulcer of her leg; and *the eighth*, the sudden healing of Alexandre Philippe Le Grand from an inveterate and persistent paralysis. The aforementioned Benedict XIII issued the brief of beatification on 13 August 1729, and then granted other extensive indulgences concerning worship, the proper readings of the second nocturne [of matins] and the oration to be recited in the office, and for that same day [25] the inclusion of the name of the Blessed in the Roman Martyrology.

Then, so that the case might progress from beatification to canonization, Our Most Holy Lord Clement XII, happily reigning, signed in February 1731 the document permitting the resumption of the commission. The usual remissorial letters were then sent to the city of Paris to establish the customary process, by apostolic authority, concerning the new miracles which took place after the indult of veneration granted to the same Blessed. This was brought to the city [Rome] and after the approval of its validity, 27 June 1734, the examination of the same miracles began, followed by the usual meetings, called Ante-preparatory, on 23 August, and 20 October 1731 [1735] and the same examined miracles were sent to Our Most Holy Lord in a general meeting held in his presence on 30 January 1736. There, they took the customary vote after prayers to seek the will of God, and finally on 24 June of the same year, Our Most Holy Lord graciously approved, out of the seven miracles performed by God at the intercession of Blessed Vincent after his beatification, two out of three. They were: *the Second [First]*, the instantaneous cure of Sister Marie Therese of Saint Basil from malignant and [26] persistent ulcers, with a lengthy and stubborn retention of urine, and an enormous edema; and *the Third*, the instantaneous healing of François Richer from a complete, inveterate, and desperate hernia.

When a general meeting held in the presence of the Supreme Pontiff on 31 July of the same year approved these two miracles, the last and final proposition was the doubt: Whether in view of the approval of the two miracles, the procedure might safely continue to the solemn canonization of Blessed Vincent de Paul. This received the unanimous vote of those present, and His Holiness, on 10 August, pronounced that the decree of canonization should be drawn up, and where, for its execution after the requests humbly and meekly made to the Holy See by the Most Serene Louis, Most Christian King of the French, and the Most Serene Queen Marie, his wife, and of several other supreme Catholic princes, as well as the Most Reverend Archbishops, Bishops, and the entire clergy of France, the universities and other authentic persons, as well as by the requests submitted by the congregations of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity erected and founded by Blessed Vincent, to the great benefit of the Church.

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