

Vincentian Chair of Social Justice

was established in 1994 in response to the recommendation Pope John Paul II made to the delegates of the Congregation of the Mission's 37th General Assembly in Rome (1986): "to search out more than ever with boldness, humility and skill the causes of poverty and encourage short and long term solutions." University scholars and research fellows collaborate with the Vincentians in their charism "to evangelize the poor" and encourage efforts to build a society based on Gospel values and the Vincentian tradition.

A Catholic university ... is called to become an evermore effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society. Included among its research activities, therefore, will be a study of serious contemporary problems in areas such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world's resources and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community at a national and international level.

*Pope John Paul II,
Ex Corde Ecclesiae (32)*

"The Human Dignity of Women in Contemporary Society"

United Nations Forum, 2007



About St. Vincent de Paul

St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) founded the Congregation of the Mission which established St. John's University in New York in 1870. He serves as a patron for those who yearn and work for solidarity within the human family and for that day when structures and systems will assure justice for the poor and will release all members of society from the dehumanizing effects of poverty and injustice. Because of Vincent's total commitment to the Church and his extraordinary educational, formational and management abilities, his life also serves as a textbook for institutional ministry and community-building. His founding of the Daughters of Charity with St. Louise de Marillac serves as a model of effective, productive Church collaboration and solidarity with the poor.

Despite limited means of communication and highly stratified society, Vincent successfully brought together all levels of society and animated very successful models of collaboration across classes and interests to advance the holistic development of people. The blending of his analytical mind and compassionate spirit with his fertile imagination and creative visioning achieved astonishing results. Through a leadership style marked by investment in the capacities of others, Vincent effectively changed the face of 17th-century France and the Church in ways that perdure. His example continues to challenge his progeny at St. John's to access and relate the vast resources within the University community and beyond to advance both charity and justice.

For further information please contact:

Margaret John Kelly, D.C., Executive Director
Vincentian Center for Church and Society
Vincentian Chair of Social Justice
St. John's University
8000 Utopia Parkway
Queens, NY 11439
Tel (718) 990-1612
Fax (718) 990-1901
vccs@stjohns.edu
<http://vincenter.org>

M1-2532-RM



Charity embraces justice.
– St. Vincent de Paul

Vincentian Center for Church and Society

was created at St. John's University in 1994 to serve as a resource to identify and respond to the needs of the local Church. The Center's core purpose, relating the University to the Church, is uniquely addressed through its Vincentian sponsorship, metropolitan location and diversified personnel resources. By utilizing these resources, the Center provides services in collaboration with and in service to the Church, thereby connecting the University to the Church community in fulfilling its mission.

Catholic universities ... will be particularly attentive to the poorest and to those who suffer economic, social, cultural or religious injustice. This responsibility begins within the academic community but it also finds application beyond it.

*Pope John Paul II,
Ex Corde Ecclesiae (40)*

Annual Acculturation Seminar for International Priests



Vincentian
Center for Church
and Society

Vincentian Chair
of Social Justice

Activities of Vincentian Center:

- **Acculturation of Clergy.** Annual sponsorship of a week-long residential program, "Acculturation Seminar for International Priests," and related events to assist priests in their U.S. ministry.
- **Church Management.** Development of educational materials, in-service sessions and consultation services for church/parish/diocesan managers and other leaders.
- **Convenings.** Think-tanks, roundtables, colloquia and seminars with Church and University personnel on a broad spectrum of ministry issues and Catholic Social Thought as a formative influence within Church organizations.
- **Collaborative Planning.** Sessions with Church leaders and University personnel to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue and intra-Church collaboration.
- **Faculty Experts at United Nations.** Development of a cadre of St. John's faculty to serve as advisors to the Permanent Observer at The Holy See Mission at the United Nations as expert participants in meetings and as program developers.
- **Membership/Participation.** Active participation in local, national and international organizations bridging the University and the greater Church society and securing mutual benefit.

A Catholic university must become more attentive to the cultures of the world of today and to the various cultural traditions existing within the Church in a way that will promote a continuous and profitable dialogue between the Gospel and modern society.
Ex Corde Ecclesiae (45)

Goals of Vincentian Center:

Solidarity is learned through 'contact' rather than through 'concepts.'
John Paul II

The Vincentian Center for Church and Society pursues the following goals:

1. **Mission.** Create opportunities for Church personnel and University personnel to discuss their mutual interests, identify needs, align interests and develop collaborative projects.
2. **Capacity Development for Church Personnel.** Develop capacity for and promote research, academic programming and publications which strengthen Church personnel and Church organizations.
3. **Communication Structures.** Sustain communication with Church leaders as well as with the worldwide Vincentian family to inform planning and enrich activities.
4. **Resource Inventories.** Maintain inventories of University resources to respond to requests and inquiries of Church leaders and community based organizations.
5. **Networking.** Maintain and facilitate relations with local, national and international Church organizations to assure relevance of Center's programming in service to and with the Church.



Vincentian Chair of Social Justice Lecturers (L to R) Evelyne Franc, D.C., Robert P. Maloney, C.M., Dolores Leckey, David Hollenbach, S.J., Rev. Bryan Hehir, H.E. Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Mary Ann Glendon, Rev. Bryan Massingale, Peter Steinfels

Goals of Vincentian Chair:

...The cause of the human person will only be served if knowledge is joined to conscience.
Ex Corde Ecclesiae (18)

The Vincentian Chair of Social Justice pursues the following goals:

1. **Social Justice and Poverty.** Focus attention on social injustice and poverty as affronts to the dignity of the human person and the common good.
2. **Catholic Social Thought.** Serve as a catalyst and convenor for reflection on and formation in Catholic Social Thought.
3. **Vincentian Research Fellows Program.** Create within the University through the Fellows Program an active, interdisciplinary community of research and practice where faculty bring their academic expertise to bear on issues of poverty and justice.
4. **Collaboration for the Common Good.** Structure specific convenings and programs on justice for academics, religious leaders, community representatives and service providers.
5. **Vincentian Identity.** Encourage the University community to communicate "Vincentian" in various modalities, including visual arts, curricula and research.

Activities of Vincentian Chair:

- **Vincentian Fellows Program.** Coordination of the Vincentian Research Fellows Program and support of research, including the research of engagement, directed to the eradication of poverty, the advancement of justice and the integral development of structures and peoples.
- **Programming in Catholic Social Thought.** Development of lectures, roundtables, colloquia, think-tanks, conversations and courses on Catholic Social Thought (CST).
- **Annual Public Lecture.** Sponsorship of the Annual Vincentian Chair of Social Justice Lecture during Founder's Week to highlight the institutional commitment to Social Justice.
- **Poverty Conference.** Sponsorship of the Biennial Poverty Conference which brings together academics, civic leaders, religious leaders, service providers and students to address contemporary issues of poverty and development.
- **Faculty-Students Programming.** Sponsorship and co-sponsorship of interdisciplinary faculty panels on current social justice issues for groups of professors and their classes.
- **Religion and Science.** Study and programming on the nexus of Religion and Science through the prism of Social Justice.

The Christian spirit of service to others for the promotion of social justice is of particular importance for each Catholic university to be shared by its teachers and developed in its students.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae (34)