



International Association of Charities - Vincentian Family

ACTING TOGETHER – AGAINST ALL FORMS OF POVERTY

AIC UK is part of the 150,000 strong International group of, primarily, women whose spirituality is rooted in Vincentian tradition. Begun in 1617 by St Vincent De Paul, the Confraternities of lay volunteers help the disadvantaged in society. Groups became the Ladies of Charity – a name that many countries still use today under the AIC umbrella.

Groups in ABBEY WOOD, BEXLEY, DARLINGTON, GLASGOW, MILL HILL & PECKHAM. **Contact AIC UK: info@aic-uk.org.uk NEW CONTACT EMAIL**

[This email address is linked to our website; aic-uk.org.uk](http://aic-uk.org.uk)

AIC UK NEWS – CHATILLON – 400 Years THEN & NOW!

[CHATILLON – on the same day and date – 400 years later!](#)



*Happy Feast of St
Vincent de Paul!*

27TH September

*The day of his
death in 1617.*

*Every blessing for
your continued
work in his spirit*



In 1617 Chatillon was called Chatillon les Dombes. Now this picture perfect town near Lyon in East France, near the Swiss border, is called Chatillon sur Chalaronne. The Chalaronne river flows through and around the town, fed by the over 1,000 ponds in this fish-farming and frog-farming area. It is also renowned for its Beaujolais wine and wonderful variety of cheeses.

Video Clip about the AIC Charter – the Motivations behind our Actions

I urge you individually and in your groups to look and listen to the 2 links below. The first is about our Charter and explains the motivations behind our actions as AIC Volunteers. The second is a synopsis of AIC world-wide today.

<http://famvin.org/en/2017/04/02/reflections-aic-charter-motivates-actions/>

[The Charter explained.](#)

<https://famvin.org/en/2017/02/13/aic-400-years-video-presentation/>

[The Video of 400th Anniversary of AIC.](#)



The legendary Sr Therese Vlaminc DC together with AIC Chatillon and the Parish Priest Dominique Blot and townspeople of Chatillon, welcomed us with open arms to their town and its proud heritage. Here she spoke passionately outside the house where St Vincent stayed during those months in 1617. To her left is Archbishop Gineau of Montauban and right Fr Blot and Fr Koch CM the renowned Vincentian author who spoke at the conference

400th Anniversary Celebrations. 20-23rd August 2017

It was quite overwhelming to stand beside St Vincent's first charter to the Confraternities in Chatillon. On the very same days and dates, four hundred years later, members of AIC gathered for four days with the townspeople, the local and visiting clergy and the legendary Sr Therese Vlaminc DC who led the organisation of the events.



Vincent's highly recognizable signature ends the faded document held in the glass case at the end of the Chapel in the Daughters of Charity's house. The Chapel itself is about four times the footprint of St Vincent's bedroom which is open and included in the Chapel - behind the present altar. Laurence de la Brosse, past President, Tayde de Callatay present Director and Lalo Galisteo represented AIC Int. Executive at the four day gathering which included presentations of AIC work, a book launch and conference.

Standing there, we could imagine him sitting in his small bedroom penning the provisional Rule (cf. CCD.XIIIb:3-5) that he had written on the evening of Sunday 20th August, and in which he defined their objective in the following manner: to assist the sick poor corporally and spiritually. Vincent then highlighted the reason for this: charity toward the neighbour is an infallible sign of the true children of God (CCD:XIIIb:8).

Three days later, on Wednesday, August 23rd, he organized the first group of pious women who were touched by the spirit of compassion. He encouraged them to create an association that would care for the infirm in their homes. Among these were women were:

Mlle. De la Chassigne, Mlle. De Brie, Mme. Philiberte and Mme Denise Beynier (CCD:XIIIb:3-4).

The women committed themselves to begin this work the following day and to do so in accord with the manner in which their names were listed.

NB. The Hotel Dieu, from the very beginning, engaged night care workers from able women of the parish who found the paid employment helped their families. The ladies and their friends were volunteer workers during the day.

When Vincent distributed the official Rule (longer than the provisional Rule) to the members of the Confraternity in Chatillon, the Archbishop of Lyon officially recognized the Confraternity (November 24th 1617 and decreed such on December 8, 1617).

The fact that this occurred during the celebration of the Eucharist reveals the fact that the Eucharist is the source of charity, and we can affirm the fact that the International Association of Charities (AIC) was born during the celebration of the Eucharist...it was the Eucharist that made it possible to organize the charity that in turn enabled countless – perhaps 2 million – men and women to serve the poor.



Cardinal Gineau of Montauban celebrated the 10.30am Mass in the church of St Andre, Chatillon Sunday 20th August.

The Cure, Parish Priest Dominique Blot acted the part of St Vincent, and six Ladies of Charity, in period costume, entered the church to re-enact the key scene of their first encounter with St Vincent telling him of the poor local family in need.





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The townspeople, including Guy & Beatrice Richard made us SO welcome. We had lunch in a local café each day, and in the evening, we had outdoor picnics with food brought by them. It was wonderful – including home grown enormous vegetables and Beatrice ice-cream cake! They were so happy to see us all gathering from far and wide to celebrate our 400th anniversary in Chatillon.

During these packed four days, we had book lectures and presentations from Vincentian authors such as Fr Bernard Foch CM, an evening of music from Fr Yves Buchet CM and presentations from AIC members from France, Spain and UK (Dee Mansi). France presented on their work with the elderly lonely, Spain spoke about their elderly project and UK presented our work with prisoners. We took part in a global presentation too.



The townspeople took us to their hearts, and we were showered with local produce during our evening “picnics” in the grounds adjoining the Sisters’ house across the bridge spanning the Chalaronne river. So picturesque!

We went on a pilgrimage out to Buenans to the site of the main chapel 400 years ago. Chatillon, the formerly smaller church, has survived and been built on because of its strategic importance both as a place of worship and market serving the needs of this rural town.

Each Eucharist was particularly poignant as we recalled each day’s occurrences 400 years ago, with a particularly moving moment on Wednesday 23rd August at 10am when we gathered to give witness by reciting our prayer of commitment. There was such an upswelling as we knew we were joined at the same time by our members world wide.

Chatillon for myself and my husband Gino was an amalgam of 400 years of re-claimed memory of the Vincentian charism beginning and present day Vincentian work and enjoyment in the company of AIC members and French folk who were so proud and keen to commemorate “their” Saint. We were happy to join them and claim him as “our” Saint, pastor and inspiration too!

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT FOR THE JUBILEE YEAR; With all our hearts, we give thanks to you, Lord, Father of mercy. You have chosen us to be members of the AIC and to continue the mission of the Confraternities of Charity that were established by Vincent de Paul some four hundred years ago. Grant us the grace to continue this marvellous collaborative work. Inspire us to join hands with those countless men and women who live in the midst of poverty so that together we might build a more just and equitable world. Give us strength to communicate your love to our brothers and sisters so that they, in turn, might become active in their own development.

*Teach us to be docile to your will. Strengthen us to be authentic ministers and transformational agents of change in the midst of society. May our numbers increase and may all the volunteers be convinced of Jesus’ words: **whatever you do for one of these least brothers or sisters of mine, you do for me (Matthew 25:40)**. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*
Dee Mansi. AIC UK President.