



COMMISSIONING CEREMONY
Installation of a District Council President

Opening Song: (Begin with an appropriate song)

Spiritual Advisor: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Spiritual Advisor: Let us pray together the Mission Statement of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul:

(Alternate sides)

- **Inspired by Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization, leads women and men to join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul.**
- **As a reflection of the whole family of God, Members, who are known as Vincentians, are drawn from every ethnic and cultural background, age group and economic level. Vincentians are united in an international society of charity by their spirit of poverty, humility and sharing, which is nourished by prayer and reflection, mutually supportive gatherings and adherence to a basic Rule.**

(Together)

- **Organized locally Vincentians witness God's love by embracing all works of charity and justice. The Society collaborates with other people of good will in relieving need and addressing its causes, making no distinction in those served because, in them,
VINCENTIANS SEE THE FACE OF CHRIST.**

Spiritual Advisor:

The Rule teaches us that: “The Councils of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul exist to serve all the Conferences they coordinate. They are called to help the Conferences develop their spiritual life, to intensify their service and to diversify their activities so that they may always be responsive to the needs of those who suffer.

Councils are particularly called to: create new Conferences, to help existing Conferences to expand, to promote Special Works, to prepare training courses and encourage Vincentians to attend them, to foster interest in cooperation with the Vincentian Family, to promote cooperation with other organizations and Institutions, to develop friendship between members in the same area, to provide communication to and from Conferences and higher Councils. In summary, to promote the sense of belonging to a Society which encircles the world.” (Rule 3.6)

In the spirit of Jesus, the Servant leader, the office of President is a responsibility, not an honor. It is one of service and the President is the first among equals. The Rule calls the President to “provide an encouraging atmosphere in which the talents, capacities and spiritual charism of the members are identified, developed and put to the service of the poor and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The President of the District Council will have special responsibility for promoting Vincentian spirituality.” (Rule 3.11)

And so we gather together to pray for and to commission (Name) , the new President for the District Council of (Name) .

Reading: Gospel according to John (13:12-17) read by the Retiring President:

“After he had washed their feet, Jesus put his cloak back on and reclined at table once more. He said to them: “Do you understand what I just did for you? You address me as ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and fittingly enough, for that is what I am. But if I washed your feet—I who am Teacher and Lord—then you must wash each other’s feet. What I just did was to give you an example: as I have done, so you must do. I solemnly assure you, no slave is greater than his master; no messenger outranks the one who sent him. Once you know all these things, blest will you be if you put them into practice.”

Spiritual Advisor: First, let us thank our outgoing President (Name) , for his generosity in fulfilling his duties and his faithful years of service as President of (Name) District Council.

Now, my dear brothers and sisters, let us ask God our Father to look lovingly upon (Name) , who has been called to serve as our new District Council President.

(The outgoing President then hands the Manual and Rule of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to the new President)

Outgoing President:

Receive this Manual and Rule of the Society as the sign of your leadership and responsibility. May the Holy Spirit grant you a receptive mind and heart to come to know the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and Bl. Frederic Ozanam, and may you hand this Manual and Rule to your successor after a fruitful and successful Presidency.

Spiritual Advisor: May the Manual and Rule of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, continue to guard and guide your steps as you lead the Society. And so I now ask you:

Do you (Name) , promise to carry out your duties with diligence and creativity, serving the District Council and those in need for the greater glory of God?

New President: I do, and I pray for the strength and wisdom to faithfully serve the members and those they visit.

Spiritual Advisor: Do you promise to seek consensus and not to insist on your own opinion, to see every member as a friend, to recognize their talents, to encourage each one and to develop harmony and respect between members and to always “deepen the Vincentian spirit of friendship”?

New President: I do, and I pray that we will be of one mind and one heart, so that all of our Conferences may be a sign of the presence and love of Christ in our community.

Spiritual Advisor: Do you promise to help all members “seek and to find the forgotten, the suffering or the deprived so that they may bring them the love of Jesus?”

New President: I do, and I pray that we will be filled with the grace to serve those who are suffering in “charity and justice.”

Spiritual Advisor: Do you promise to adhere loyally to the spirit of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, as reflected in the Rule and to promote a deeper Vincentian spirituality amongst all the members?

New President: I do, and I pray that I will be generous with my time, my possessions and myself in this mission of charity.

Leader: (Name) , you have accepted a serious responsibility as the District Council President. I ask all of us here present to share in that responsibility by our prayers and support. For this let us seek the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patroness of our Society, as we say together:

All: Hail Mary...

Spiritual Advisor: Prayer of Blessing and Commissioning

Let us now raise our hands in blessing as we pray together:

All: May God's grace and blessing be with you (Name) as we commission you as the President of the (Name) District Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Let the wisdom of St. Vincent and Blessed Frederic, guard and guide you as you undertake your office.

Allow yourself to be led by the Lord. He will direct all things through you. Trust him and following his example, always act humbly, gently and in good faith, and you will see everything go well. Your responsibilities, which are many, will continue to grow but believe and trust that he will not leave a heavy burden on your back without sustaining you. He will be your strength as well as your reward for the extraordinary services you render to the Society and to the poor.

We promise our prayers and our support. Amen

Closing Song: (End with an appropriate song)