

SAINTE  
VINCENT DE PAUL

Part I – DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO SAINT VINCENT  
Part II – DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THE CONGREGATION  
OF THE MISSION

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**VOLUME XIIIa**

**SAINT  
VINCENT DE PAUL**

**CORRESPONDENCE  
CONFERENCES, DOCUMENTS**

**III**

**DOCUMENTS**

**VOLUME XIIIa**

**NEWLY TRANSLATED, EDITED, AND ANNOTATED**

**FROM THE 1924 EDITION**

**OF**

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*January 7, 2003*

To  
**BERNARD KOCH, C.M.**

whose scholarship  
and  
passion for accuracy  
in the study  
of these documents  
have enriched our appreciation  
of the sanctity and genius  
of  
Saint Vincent de Paul

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## INTRODUCTION

Vatican Council II encouraged religious Congregations to a rebirth of the primitive spirit by a “return to the sources” of their foundations. With the publication of Vol. 13 *Documents* of the series *Vincent de Paul, Correspondence, Conférences, Documents*, a large number of the priceless texts relating to Saint Vincent and his works are now available in English.

In his 1924 introduction to the French edition of *Documents*, Pierre Coste, C.M., wrote the following:

*Saint Vincent has left other writings besides his letters and other talks, and his Conferences to the Missionaries and the Daughters of Charity. These writings and talks, well worth being conserved, are found in this third part of the series. It seemed helpful to add to them the documents that recall the facts of his life, the titles, benefices, or honors he received, and the creation, organization, and early development of his works. This collection will allow future biographers of Saint Vincent to readily avoid errors in dates or in other matters into which their predecessors have too often fallen.*

*The documents are classified under five principal headings, according to whether they concern Saint Vincent himself the Congregation of the Mission, the Confraternities of Charity, the Daughters of Charity, or the Ladies of Charity.*

With the completion of the first eight volumes of the series (*Correspondence*), the reader may have noted that Vol. 13 is being printed out of sequence. Although the second section, consisting of Vols. 9-10 (*Conferences to the Daughters of Charity*) and Vols. 11-12 (*Conferences to the Congregation of the Mission*), has not yet appeared, the editors have seen fit to advance the publication of

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**Introduction.** *Note:* For those biographical entries that have already appeared in volumes 1-8, only the *reference is* given to the volume, page, and note in which the full entry appears. The volume is indicated by a Roman numeral in bold type, the page by an italicized Arabic number, and the note is preceded by the abbreviation “n.”

Vol. 13 in order to provide access to texts that have never appeared in English, whereas several versions of the Conferences are already available in that language. The updated Vols. 9-12 will be published in subsequent years.

Because of the large number of new documents discovered since Coste's publication, the size of the volume has almost doubled; the editors, therefore, have found it necessary to print Vol. 13 in two parts: Vol. 13a includes documents relating to Saint Vincent and to the Congregation of the Mission; Vol. 13b contains those pertinent to the Confraternities of Charity, the Daughters of Charity, and the Ladies of Charity. The index for both volumes will be found at the end of Vol. 13b.

Copies of the texts used in the French edition have not always been accurate; today, however, the electronic revolution makes possible the location of more correct versions. Researchers have unearthed some documents with which Coste was unfamiliar, and the contents of the English edition have been enriched by these heretofore undiscovered treasures, garnered from publications such as *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission, Mission et Charité (XV)*, *San Vicente de Paul Obras Completas, Vol. X, Documentos*, as well as from collections in the Vatican Archives and various other archives and private collections. It should be noted that space does not allow the inclusion of *all* the documents relating to Saint Vincent, e.g., some of the foundation contracts of establishments of the Congregation of the Mission; however, reference to these contracts has been made in the footnotes.

Work on this volume presented a real challenge, especially the translation of numerous Latin, Italian, and French legal documents, which must be drawn up with legal precision and involve frequent use of expressions such as “the aforementioned,” “the said,” etc. Furthermore, these seventeenth-century texts have very little punctuation and are composed of extremely long sentences. Coste edited the originals by modernizing the spelling, breaking the long sentences into shorter ones, and introducing punctuation. In this English edition, the editors have also tried, while preserving the necessary formality of legal language, to make the documents

reader-friendly. Where feasible, they have omitted many of “the aforesaid,” etc. In the presentation of the minutes of Council meetings of the Daughters of Charity, the editors have opted for a spoken style, i.e., they have provided a reader's version of the documents, rather than a student's or scholar's version. Serious researchers may continue to consult the originals.

The documents furnish historical proofs of Vincent's activities from pre-ordination days to his death and provide his location on many given dates. Deeds, land titles, records, accounts, council deliberations, contracts, reports, outlines, sermons, Repetitions of Prayer, Rules, foundations, and approbations [diocesan, civil, papal] give testimony to his organizational genius in many arenas, most of which are related in some way to his charity. At the same time they offer a panorama of the religious, spiritual, political, and social situation of seventeenth-century France and the Catholic Church.'

Coste did not opt to include in his series the Common Rules that guided the Congregation of the Mission for over three centuries. In recent years, the discovery of one of the primitive manuscripts of the Rules, now referred to as the “Codex Sarzana,” has provided a look at the development of the Saint's thinking. Vincent's desire for a more precise formulation of the Rules is evident in the fact that he put off publishing the Rules until 1658.

Several versions of the Common Rules of the Daughters of Charity, in which Saint Louise de Marillac undoubtedly had a hand, are also printed in this volume, along with the Particular Rules of their various ministries, some of which have never been published in English, e.g., Rules for the Sisters Working with the Galley Convicts. The “official” Rules of the Daughters of Charity did not appear in print until 1672. Although they have come to be known as “Almérás' Rules,” they truly embody the spirit and charism of Saint Vincent.

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For an excellent overview of the contents of Coste's Vol. 13, *Documents*, and a listing of pertinent bibliographical references, see the comprehensive presentation of John Rybolt, C.M., “Documentary Evidence for the Life and Works of Saint Vincent de Paul,” *Vincentiana*, 4-5-6 (1987), pp. 392-437.

Similarities in the Rules for both Communities reflect the authentic thinking of Saint Vincent and the fruit of his wisdom and long experience. For the Founder, “Christ is the Rule,” and this he has tried to convey to his sons and daughters in their lives of service to Christ in those who are poor.

The publication of Vol. 13 represents a collaborative effort that spans the globe: Daughters of Charity and Priests of the Congregation of the Mission in Australia, England, France, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Taiwan, and the United States have contributed in diverse ways to its realization. The editors are grateful for the interest and scholarship of these members of the Vincentian family, which assure a more accurate and informed presentation of the documents. Special thanks are given to Thomas Davitt, C.M., Ignatius M. Melito, C.M., and John E. Rybolt, C.M., for their dedication in reading the manuscript. Their expertise in history, theology, Sacred Scripture, and the English language, and their knowledge of Vincentian history and spirituality have allowed the editors to correct errors, clarify texts, and make stylistic changes which render the documents more readable. By the invaluable contribution each has made, they have merited the gratitude, not only of the editorial staff, but of all who will be enriched by reading this volume.