

### **Why I Became a Vincentian**

It was late 1985 and Holy Spirit had just finished a Renew session. The leader of my group asked us what we were going to follow up with, now that we were spiritually energized. He asked me to try St. Vincent de Paul. I agreed to give it a try. We went to the home of a woman who had called for help with her utility bill. As we arrived, I noticed a nice home with a luxury car in the driveway. Inside, as my leader interviewed the woman as to her need, I observed expensive furniture, a large TV and other decorative items.

As we departed, I said to my partner that there was no need for help there, he was being taken for a ride, and that SVdP was not for me. He suggested that I give it one more try before writing the Society off. I agreed reluctantly.

The next week we went on a case to a different end of town to help a widow who needed food. As we approached the modest home, I noticed no car in the carport and that the yard was overgrown. We took the food inside, where I observed very humble furnishings. I offered to put the food away in the kitchen while my partner interviewed her. As I placed the canned goods in the only cabinet, I noticed it was essentially empty. I opened the refrigerator to put away the perishable items. There was a box of Argo laundry starch, but no food.

I asked the woman why the starch. She replied that she ate it when she got hungry. And why was the starch kept in the refrigerator? She replied: "So the roaches won't get it." I went outside to compose myself. As we drove away, I told my partner: "I'm convinced. I want to become a Vincentian."

By the way, I later learned that the first woman we visited had tragically lost her husband, she had cancer and an autistic child. As a Vincentian, I quickly learned not to be judgmental.

Could this rewarding ministry be for you?