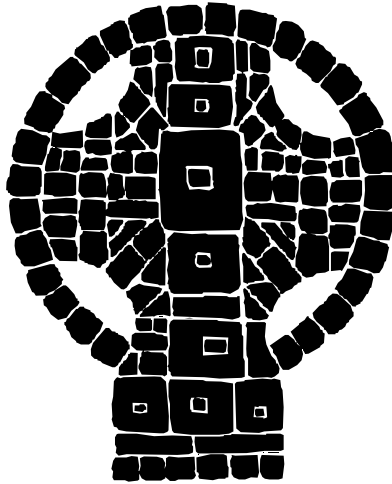


PRAYER IDEAS FOR ANY CHURCH GATHERING

Based on VINCENTIAN REFLECTIONS



*Seek refuge in the
name of the Lord.*

Zep 3:12

Liturgical Year : Cycle A - 2020



INTRODUCTION:

Leader describes to the group the process which is going to take place:

- Provide a copy for each member of your Conference for their personal reflection
- Stress that sharing is not compulsory and mention the need for confidentiality
- Ask, or assign, different members to read the different sections:
 - Gospel reading
 - Reflection
 - Words of Founders

OPENING PRAYER/QUIETENING DOWN PERIOD

Leader invites group to:

- Become relaxed and aware of God's presence with us
- "Let Go" of distractions and quietly pray to the Holy Spirit

READING OF THE VINCENTIAN WEEKLY REFLECTION

- Each section is read aloud, slowly and prayerfully, by the different members
- Hearing different voices will allow different emphasis on words/phrases

QUIET PERIOD

Leader invites everyone:

- To quietly reflect on the readings and notice if anything strikes them
- Introduces the Discussion Question suggested in the Reflection
- Allows 2-3 minutes of quiet

SHARING

Leader invites members who wish to share on the Discussion Question, or on how the one of the readings struck them. Possibly not everyone will share, but time should be allowed for each person who wishes to share his/her thoughts.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader closes the Prayer Reflection by beginning the Closing Prayer, and all answer the response (in bold).

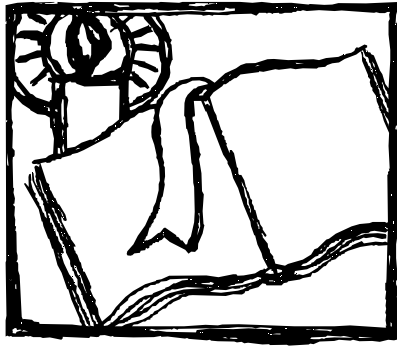
INTRODUCTION:



St. Vincent de Paul never wrote a book about his spiritual teachings. But we find the living voice of the saint in his letters and conferences in which he trained his followers for the mission of service to the poor.

The two fundamental sources of his teaching are the GOSPEL and LIFE. He wanted his followers to put the whole of the Gospel into the whole of their lives, and he never wearied of deepening both with all the faith that God had put into his heart. That is why all that Vincent says to us has the simplicity of our everyday life and the penetrating strength of the Word of God.

The Vincentian Weekly Reflections are therefore offered to all who strive to serve the poor in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul. The prayer and reflections are based on the Sunday Gospel of the Liturgical Calendar, together with the feast days of some of the saints of our Vincentian Family. Each reflection offers a time for prayer, silence and discussion so that our everyday life, like Vincent, can become penetrated with the strength of the Word of God.



LITURGICAL YEAR-Cycle A
1st Quarter-2020
(January-February-March)

January

January	1	Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God
January	5	Epiphany of the Lord
January	12	Baptism of the Lord
January	19	Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
January	26	Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

February

February	2	Presentation of the Lord
		Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (celebrated in some dioceses)
February	9	Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time
February	16	Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time
February	23	Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time
<i>February</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>

March

March	1	First Sunday of Lent
March	8	Second Sunday of Lent
March	15	Third Sunday of Lent
March	22	Fourth Sunday of Lent
March	29	Fifth Sunday of Lent

SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD
January 1, 2020

Gospel: (Luke 2:16-21)

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them. When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Reflection:

Like the shepherds, we wish to remember the incarnation event “glorifying and praising God” and with Mary we “keep these things, reflecting on them in our hearts.” Like Mary, we must assume a contemplative stance toward God’s marvelous deeds of salvation. God revealed the divine will and plan to Mary for her part in the plan of salvation; she responded with a yes that she contemplated throughout her life. Christmas reveals God’s will for our salvation and asks of us our contemplative yes. When we wish each other “Happy New Year” as Christians, we are really wishing each other a grace-filled year of responding to God’s revelation and a year of contemplating what we have seen and heard so that we can come to understand life with more depth and insight. May our “Happy New Year” be a pledge to, like the shepherds and Mary, embrace in joy and peace God’s presence to us and in us. (Living Liturgy, p.32)

Vincentian Meditation:

“Give me a man of prayer and he will be capable of anything. He may say with the apostle, ‘I can do all things in him who strengthens me.’ –St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 110)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

How have you discovered that as Vincentians we are called to be “contemplatives in action”?

Closing Prayer:

Mary, you who are the Mother of God, we now pray:
 -teach us how to be contemplatives in action.
Mary, wellspring of peace,
 -be our fountain of grace.
Mary, model of risk,
 -help us overcome our fears.
Mary, mother of the poor,
 -give us compassion in our service Amen



THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

January 5, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 2:1-12)

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ...Herod sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child...” After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Reflection:

The magi followed the light and found the Savior of the world. The magi searched, encountered, worshiped him and offered gifts. The magi demonstrated how Christianity must always show “faith in action.” Believing always plays itself out in living. The pattern of our lives is that of the magi: seek, encounter, homage, self-giving. An important lesson here for living is that authentic homage (worship) naturally leads to living in the Light. Worship, then, is more than what happens in church on Sunday. It is the light of our own selves that shines throughout our weekdays, witnessing to our own encounters with the Light. Our very lives must proclaim our faith. (Living Liturgy, p.36)

Vincentian Meditation:

“This is my prayer to you, O Lord! Give to me your special favor. Pour out your truth and mercy on me in an abundance that will enable me to put your love into practice, filling me with true affection for you, for my neighbor, and also for myself.” -St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.113)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

How does the “light of our own selves” shine throughout our weekdays?

Closing Prayer:

O God, as you guided the Magi by the light of a star,
-may **Jesus be our light.**
O God, you have created a marvelous variety of peoples,
-may **we be open to all cultures, races, and nations.**
O God, your love surrounds us,
-may **we faithfully offer Christ the gold of living faith,
the incense of our worship,
and the myrrh of compassion.** Amen



THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

January 12, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 3:13-17)

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "*Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*" Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.**"

Reflection:

At his baptism the heavens were opened and the Spirit descended upon Jesus, anointing him as Messiah. Thus anointed, he was enabled to "fulfill all righteousness", to bring forth justice to the nations: he makes the blind see, gives prisoners freedom, brings light to those dwelling in darkness, went about doing good and healing all those oppressed. The voice from heaven revealed to Jesus his identity and a mission that called forth a response-his life of preaching, teaching, healing, forgiving, etc. This same identity and mission is revealed to us, and calls forth from us the same faithful response. This is our Christian and our Vincentian life. (Living Liturgy, p.40)

Vincentian Meditation:

"Blessed are those persons who, under the guidance of Divine Providence, are called upon to continue the ordinary practices of the life of the Son of God through the exercise of charity." –St. Louise de Marillac- (Gibson and Kneaves, Praying with Louise, p. 36)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

How has Divine Providence called us to carry on the mission of Jesus?

Closing Prayer:

The heavens are opened and the Spirit of God comes to rest upon Jesus,
-Spirit of God, rest upon us
Christ, the Chosen, you trusted in the loving plan of God,
-deepen our faith in the Providence of God
Christ, the Anointed, you began your public ministry after your baptism,
**-may we serve all we meet today with compassion,
cordiality and respect.**
Christ, the Beloved, you emptied yourself in love for the human family,
-open our hearts to the poorest and most abandoned
Amen



SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
January 19, 2020

Gospel: (John 1:29-34)

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. He is the one of whom I said, ‘A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.’ I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel.” John testified further, saying, “I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God.”

Reflection:

Our baptismal task is continually to deepen our own understanding of who Jesus is and to make him known. We don’t come to a one-time understanding of Christ. Our whole lives are spent beholding the Lamb of God. Like John, we go from not knowing to seeing to testifying. More than likely, we aren’t called to testify to the Son of God by going and baptizing or doing great things. We testify to Jesus’ identity by being faithful to the ordinary things in life, by doing God’s will. The revelation of Jesus’ identity—how he is made known in the world—is mediated by the way we live our lives everyday.

Vincentian Meditation:

The fields of battle for Frederic Ozanam were not only the arenas of the poor, but also the milieus of the young whom he served at the university. One day he heard that the public were clamoring for him at the Sorbonne, accusing him of self-indulgence and neglect of duty in being so long absent from his course, when he was paid by the State for giving it. The news stung him to the quick. “I will show them it is not true. I will do honor to my profession!” —Bl. Frederic Ozanam- (Ramson, *Praying with Frederic*, p. 102)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

In what ways have you testified to Jesus’ identity by being faithful to the ordinary things in life, like Frederic?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, in the waters of the Jordan, you were consecrated as God’s Beloved, and now we pray,

-Spirit of God, fill us with zeal.

You call us to be people of courage,

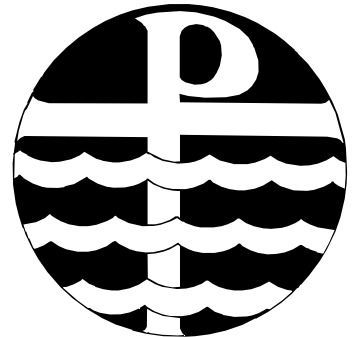
-Jesus, send forth your spirit of freedom.

You call us to consecrate ourselves to the poor,

-Jesus, send forth your spirit of love.

You call us to bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted,

-Jesus, send forth your spirit of healing. Amen



THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
January 26, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 4:12-23)

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ...From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*” As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, “*Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.*” At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father mending nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him. He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.

Reflection:

Every encounter with Jesus provokes a response; this gospel shows a response of discipleship that is quick and decisive. Our own call to discipleship comes at our baptism, but unlike the disciples in the gospel our response isn’t usually so quick and decisive. We spend our whole life trying to see the great Light that is the Savior of the world. But we practice the following of Jesus in the simple, everyday things that come our way: the friend who needs a listening ear, the elderly parent who needs a comforting phone call, the sick child who interrupts our sleep. In all of these instances do we hear Jesus’ refrain: repent? Turn from ourselves toward those in need. Turn from darkness to light. (Living Liturgy, p.50)

Vincentian Meditation:

“Lord Jesus, teach me by your example. Make me, through the vigor of my efforts, set the world on fire. I want to give myself to you, body and soul, heart and mind and spirit so that I may always do what gladdens you. In your mercy, grant me the grace to have you continue in me and through me your saving work.” -St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.67)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

In what simple, every day things have you heard Jesus’ refrain: repent- turn from yourself and toward those in need?

Closing Prayer:

For the grace to “repent,” turning from ourselves toward those in need,

-Merciful God, hear us!

For the grace to respond to the call of discipleship, quickly and decisively,

-Merciful God, hear us!

For the grace of healing to all who are ill and alone,

-Merciful God, hear us! Amen



PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

February 2, 2020

Gospel: (Luke 2, 22-32)

When the day came to purify them according to the law of Moses, the couple brought Jesus up to Jerusalem so that he could be presented to the Lord... There lived in Jerusalem a certain man named Simeon. He was just and pious, and awaited the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him... The child's father and mother were marveling at what was being said about him. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: "This child is destined to be the down fall and the rise of many in Israel, a sign that will be opposed—and your own soul shall be pierced with a sword—so that the thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare."

Reflection:

The Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple is a sort of christening celebration. It was primarily a joyful occasion and then the old man Simeon comes along and spoils everything. He foretells the suffering of Our Lord, and turning to his Mother he says: "And your own soul a sword shall pierce." There is an Irish poet who wrote: "Lord, Thou art hard on mothers; they suffer in our coming and our going." The Lord was certainly hard on his own Mother. She suffered in His coming. To listen to that sad forecast about her Son forty days after His birth was hard. She suffered in His going: "There stood by the cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother." (Jn 19:25) (McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.988)

Vincentian Meditation:

Simeon spoke of a sword that would pierce Mary's heart.. In reality we can count at least seven occasions when sorrow entered Our Lady's soul. But there was a possible eighth sorrow, and that was living with the fear of what was to come. That can be a heavy cross. Our Lady eighth sorrow was living with Simeon's sword hanging over her. She lived with fear, but was able with the strength of God to prevent it from immobilizing her. May Mary obtain for each of us the grace of surmounting those fears which occupy a place in the hearts of every one of us and sometimes paralyze us in showing love to God and to our neighbor." "(McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.988)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

With God's grace, what fears have you been able to surmount?

Closing Prayer:

Mary, you who are the Mother of God, we now pray:

-help us to see and hear what God is revealing in our lives.

Mary, wellspring of grace and peace,

-help us to take time to ponder and reflect.

Mary, you who carried fear in your heart ,

-help us to trust that God will give strength and hope. Amen



FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME *(Celebrated in some dioceses)*
February 2, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 5:1-12)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Reflection:

One way to approach the Beatitudes is in terms of their being descriptions of identity rather than moral demands. The Beatitudes embody a radically alternative vision of our Society. This is how the kingdom of heaven is at hand: that we appreciate that we are in ourselves are blessed. Blessed is who we are in Christ. God indeed calls us to blessedness. (Living Liturgy, p.54)

Vincentian Meditation:

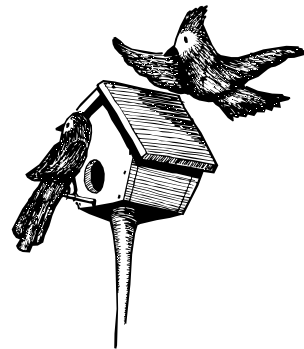
“The gospels and epistles frequently remind Christians to be gentle. They should seek to resolve conflicts peacefully, act with kindness, speak courteously—in short, love their neighbors as they love themselves. Such gentleness comes when Christians realize that despite all their sins, God loves them. The balance of gentleness and strength is learned in the schools of prayer and experience. Gentleness is not passivity or spinelessness. Strength is not uncontrolled rage or stoic coldness. Determining when to be gentle and when to be forceful should be the subject of our prayerful discernment. We are called to be gently strong, and strongly gentle. (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.97-98)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)*

How have you been “gently strong and strongly gentle”?

Closing Prayer:

For the grace to be poor in spirit,
 -Merciful God, hear us!
For the grace to mourn ,
 -Merciful God, hear us!
For the grace to be meek,
 -Merciful God, hear us!
For the grace to hunger and thirst for justice,
 -Merciful God, hear us!
For the grace to be merciful,
 -Merciful God, hear us! Amen



FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 9, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 5: 13-16)

Jesus said to his disciples: *"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly father."*

Reflection:

The lights in a city create a glow in the sky that can be seen from miles away. However, a light can be hidden—put under a bushel; the light still shines, but its light is blanketed, covered over, kept from doing what it is meant to do. When Jesus says, "You are the light of the world," he is saying that we can choose to cover over the grace that is given us. We can choose to ignore who we are called to be—beloved adopted sons and daughters—and act of "out of character." Then our actions do not square up with who we are. By such choices we compromise both identity and mission. We must live who we are. Identity and mission cannot be separated. (Living Liturgy, p.58)

Vincentian Meditation:

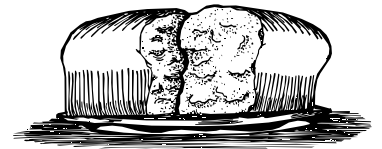
Vincent prayed that over time his designs and actions would be more and more in harmony with God's desires. He knew that this was the way to a full life. One afternoon in the very last months of his life, Vincent sat with some of his close friends. In the way that people sometimes do when they sense that their time is coming to an end, Vincent began to speak about what mattered to him most. He did not tell of any particularly successful project, or of people whom he had loved and who had loved him, nor even of his precious poor ones. Rather, he talked to his friends about the loving hand of God that had led him, of the interior star that had steered him through all the hectic years. Bent and elderly as he was, he declared, "We should give ourselves to God and wear ourselves out for God." (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.35)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

In what ways is our Conference a "light that shines before others?"

Closing Prayer:

For the grace to be the salt of the earth,
 -Loving God, hear us!
For the grace to be a light of the world,
 -Loving God, hear us!
For the grace to "give ourselves to God,"
 -Loving God, hear us!
For the grace to "wear ourselves out for God,"
 -Loving God, hear us! Amen



Give glory to your
Father in heaven.

Mt 5:16

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 16, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 5: 17-37)

Jesus said to his disciples: *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. I have come, not to abolish them, but to fulfill them. Of this much I assure you: until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter of the law, not the smallest part of a letter, shall be done away with until it all comes true. ...Whoever fulfills and teaches these commands shall be great in the kingdom of God. I tell you, unless your holiness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter the kingdom of God.”*

Reflection:

Holiness demands that we live who we are...our identity and mission cannot be separated. “Doing” who we are—choosing to let our identity express itself in mission—is lived out in feeding the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and clothing the naked. The Bible in all its parts calls us relentlessly for action on behalf of others. This is a staggering demand, bigger than any individual, and so it is truly a corporate mission undertaken by the community of disciples working together. (Living Liturgy, p.5p)

Vincentian Meditation:

Every Christian at every moment is called to holiness. Make no mistake about it. You are proclaiming a message at every moment of the day, even when you are not speaking. Your message must be authentic. It will be so, if you are authentic. Your authenticity as a Christian comes from your personal relationship with Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man. Often ask your self: “Could Jesus Christ share what I am going to say or what I am going to do?” If you can reply yes, then you are authentic. Holiness can be summed up in the words of Micah (Mi6:8): “God has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.”(McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.555)

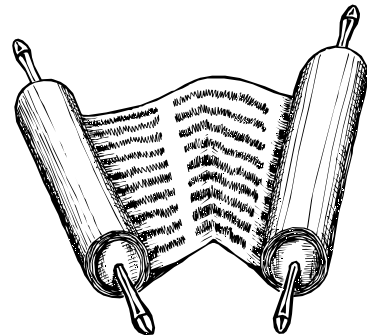
Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

In our Conference how are we “doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with our God?”

Closing Prayer:

For the grace to do justice,
 -Loving God, help us to grow in holiness!
For the grace to love kindness,
 -Loving God, help us to grow in holiness!
For the grace to walk humbly with our God,
 -Loving God, help us to grow in holiness!

Amen



SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 23, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 5: 38-48)

Jesus said to his disciples: *"You have heard the commandment, 'You shall love your country man but hate your enemy.' My command to you is: love your enemies, pray for your persecutors. This will prove that you are sons and daughters of your heavenly Father, for his sun rises on the bad and the good, he rains on the just and the unjust. If you love those who love you, what merit is there in that? Do not tax collectors do as much? And if you greet your brothers only, what is so praiseworthy about that? Do not pagans do as much? In a word, you must be perfected, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

Reflection:

Bishop Untener requested that every meeting in his diocese should begin with the question, "How shall what we are doing here affect or involve the poor?" He also said: "This must be addressed to the *poor* poor. They are the ones who get left out because they're not part of what we did yesterday or today. The other kinds of poor people are part of our lives, and we need to be concerned about them. But I want us to connect with the *poor* poor. If we deal with them, all the rest will follow. The *poor* poor are the ones who rarely if ever are first on an agenda. So let's talk about them. Always start with the *poor* poor." (McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.737)

Vincentian Meditation:

I think the Bishop's observations could give us all much to reflect upon. In his question, "How shall what we are doing here affect or involve the poor?" I like the two verbs, *affect* and *involve*. Both are important. We can spend much time discussing problems about the poor without ever—or at least only after much time—*affecting* the lives of the poor. To *involve* the poor: that is an ideal which we must try to realize in the programs we elaborate to relieve need and redress injustice. We must try to *involve* the poor in the projects which we organize. We must try to help the poor in such a way that they will be able to help themselves and thus rise out of their poverty in such a way that is in harmony with their human dignity. The work we do for the poor is a work of faith. Activated by the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and inspired by the example of St. Vincent, we try to bring the healing hand of Christ to those in need and the courageous voice of the prophet to those in power. This is the challenge that faces the Vincentian Family today. (McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.738)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

In what ways do we "*affect and involve*" the poor?

Closing Prayer:

For the grace to *affect* the *poor* who are living in poverty,

-Merciful God, hear us!

For the grace to *involve* the *poor* who are living in poverty,

-Loving God, hear us! Amen



I will not forget you.

ASH WEDNESDAY
February 26, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18)

Jesus said to his disciples: *“Be on guard against performing religious acts for people to see. When you give alms, for example, do not blow a horn before you in synagogues and streets like hypocrites looking for applause...Keep your deeds of mercy secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. When you are praying, do not behave like the hypocrites...Whenever you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees what no man sees, will repay you. When you fast, you are not to look glum as the hypocrites do...When you fast, see to it that you groom your hair and wash your face. In that way no one can see you are fasting but your Father who is hidden; and your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”*

Reflection:

In the gospel we hear Jesus direct his disciples to surrender their money in alms, their bodies in fasting, and their spirits in prayers. May Jesus gift us with his presence this Lent, so that we can be a gift to others in carrying out our service as we:

Fast from judging others; to feast on the Christ indwelling in them.

Fast from unrelenting pressures; to feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from self-concern; to feast on compassion for others.

Vincentian Meditation:

“I should not judge the poor peasants, men or women, by their exterior nor by their apparent mental capacities. All the more is this so since very frequently they scarcely seem to have the appearance or intelligence of reasonable beings...But turn the medal, and you will see by the light of faith that the Son of God, whose will it was to be poor, is represented to us by these people.” –St. Vincent de Paul-
(McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 59)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

Recall your last encounter with a homeless or poor person. Was it an occasion during which you saw below the surface-you turned the medal- and caught a glimpse of God’s presence?

Closing Prayer:

Lent is the acceptable time for renewing our desire to serve as Jesus served, so we pray:

When we walk with those caught in the cycle of poverty-

Help us to see your face, O God!

When we look into the wondering eyes of a child-

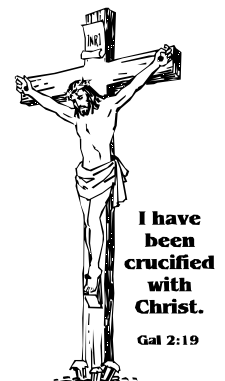
Help us to see your face, O God!

When we reach out to the homeless-

Help us to see your face, O God!

When we listen to the fading voice of the aged-

Help us to see your face, O God! AMEN



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT March 1, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 4:1-11)

At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "*It is written: One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.*" The devil took him to the city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. . . . Jesus answered him, "*Again it is written, You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.*" Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, "All these I shall give you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." At this Jesus said to him, "*Get away, Satan! It is written: The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.*"

Reflection:

We are never immune to temptation; it is real. But temptation always brings choice, decision, and greater self-knowledge. In the case of the Son of God, his choice was also between God and Satan, his decision was to be faithful to God's Law and revelation, and his greater self-knowledge led him out of the desert to begin his public ministry. In our daily living we must place our temptations and the choices within the context of the commandment to love God and neighbor. This is Lent's challenge and invitation. (Living Liturgy, p. 64).

Vincentian Meditation:

Frederic Ozanam suffered temptations against his faith, and he was literally brought to his knees. Thanks to a friend, we know that: "In the darkest hour of trial, which had become for him actual pain, the young student appealed to the mercy of God for light and peace. He threw himself on his knees before the Most Blessed Sacrament, and there in tears and in all humility, he promised Our Lord that, if He would deign to make the lamp of truth shine in his sight, he would consecrate his life to it's defense." —Bl. Frederic Ozanam (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p.50)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

**What phrases in Frederic's words are most significant to you?
Share these insights with each other.**

Closing Prayer:

Lord, during this Lent, give us the grace to:
Fast from apparent darkness; **to feast on the reality of light.**
Fast from personal anxiety; **to feast on eternal truth.**
Fast from discouragement; **to feast on hope.**
Fast from temptations; **to feast on prayer and silence. Amen**



SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

March 8, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 17:1-9)

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; LISTEN TO HIM.*" When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "*Rise, and do not be afraid.*" And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw one else but **Jesus alone.**"

Reflection:

Christian living is about being "touched" by Jesus so that the fleeting moments of glory are made permanent in bettering the lives of others. We don't "build tents"; we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, touch the downhearted, visit the lonely, encourage the discouraged...bringing the tenderness of Christ to all persons who are destitute and forgotten. In this way Christ touches others through us. (Living Liturgy, p. 68)

Vincentian Meditation:

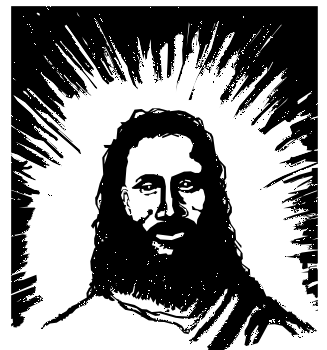
"So very often, many outpourings of affection for God, of resting in his presence, of good feelings toward everyone and sentiments and prayers like these, although very good and very desirable, are nonetheless suspect if they do not express themselves in practical love which has real effects...Let us love God, my brothers, let us love God. But let it be with the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brow."-St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.64)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

**Vincent, the realist, questioned any love that did not translate into deeds.
To what extent does my desire to love and serve stay only in the realm of intention?**

Closing Prayer:

Lord, may this season of Lent
- **be a time for conversion and action.**
Draw our hearts away from selfishness
- **turn our lives to loving sacrifice.**
Move our minds away from greed
- **turn our thoughts to generosity.**
Give us the grace to be true Vincentians who
- **love God with the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brows. Amen**



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

March 15, 2020

Gospel: (John 4:5-42)

Jesus came to a town of Samaria ...Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, *"Give me a drink."* ...The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" Jesus answered and said to her, *"If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."* The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? ...Jesus answered and said to her, *"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* ...Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, *"I have food to eat of which you do not know."* ...*"My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work."*

Reflection:

Thirst is a metaphor for conversion. It captures the dynamic of encountering Christ, hearing his voice, seeing our lives for what they are, and then turning to Christ who is the source of our thirst. Christ is the "gift of God" who gives us the "living water" of his own preaching, dying, and rising. All we need do is drink deeply and we, too, will never thirst again. It is then that we will be able to say with Jesus, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work." (Living Liturgy, p.72)

Vincentian Meditation:

"A sure way for a Christian to grow rapidly in holiness is a conscientious effort to carry out God's will in all circumstances....Each one should show a great eagerness in that sort of openness to God's will which Christ and the saints developed so carefully."
-St. Vincent de Paul-

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

Vincent always discerned every action carefully to be sure that it was rooted in God's will. He studied the Gospels, asked for advice and prayed for God's light and strength. Think back to an occasion when the sense of doing God's will was especially strong for you, and share this experience.

Closing Prayer:

The Church constantly calls us to spiritual renewal, and so we pray:
As we abandon ourselves to God's will-**renew in us your Spirit, O God.**
As we allow prayer to change our lives-**be present to us, O God.**
As we seek to know Christ ever more fully-**transform us, O God.**
As we serve Christ faithfully in the person of the poor
-**strengthen us, O God. Amen.**



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

March 22, 2020

Gospel: (John 9:1-41)

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “*Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made a clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, “*Go wash in the Pool of Siloam*”—which means Sent—. So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

Reflection:

It is the man born blind—but who can now see—that is “sent” to bear the good news. As beggar and sinner the man is not worth of the miracle. But Jesus came precisely to save sinners! In our baptism and confirmation we are anointed. Like the man born blind in the gospel, we are transformed from not seeing(sinner) to seeing; from darkness to children of light. We are light. And also like the man born blind, we are sent to help others see and come to believe. (Living Liturgy, p.76)

Vincentian Meditation:

Before a Vincentian can be a sign of God’s love, a sign of God’s generosity, a sign of God’s service, he or she must have personal experience of God’s love, God’s generosity, God’s service. The most unfortunate people in society are those who have not had the experience of being loved. Before loving other, we must come to the realization that we are at every moment of our lives being loved by God. If we do not reflect often in prayer on the fact that the love of God is flowing down upon us at each moment of the day, it will be difficult for us to show love to others, to show love to the poor. May you have a love for the poor and be generous to the poor and be of service to the poor but, more importantly, may you have each day a fresh experience of God’s love, of God’s generosity and of God’s service. (McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.670)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

How have you experienced God’s love, God’s generosity and God’s service?

Closing Prayer:

O God, you are the healer of souls and so we pray:

When we are blind,
-may we find your light.
When we come to you in prayer,
-may we experience your love.
When we serve the poor,
- may we know your generosity. Amen



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
March 29, 2020

Gospel: (John 11:1-45)

So Jesus came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, *"Take away the stone."* Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, *"Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?"* So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, *"Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me."* And when he has said this, he cried out in a loud voice, *"Lazarus, come out!"* The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, *"Untie him and let him go."* Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him.

Reflection:

Jesus promises Martha (and us) that whoever "lives and believes in me will never die." The amazing fact of our living the dying and rising of the paschal mystery is that we already share in this eternal life. We readily see the dying in our everyday lives—the pain, suffering, death, sinfulness, self-emptying, discipline, giving up our wills. This gospel challenges us to see and believe equally signs of the grace of new life—glory, joy, peace, forgiveness, mercy, trust, kindness. Living the paschal mystery draws us to see these dyings and risings as two aspects of the same mystery. The *already* of eternal life is God's grace *already* working in our lives. (Living Liturgy, p. 80)

Vincentian Meditation:

"Five years ago Thou didst bring me back almost from death, and was not this delay granted me to do penance and become better? Ah! The prayers that were sent up to Thee then were heard. Why should those that are being offered now, and in so far greater number, on my behalf, be lost? Perhaps Thou wilt answer them, Lord, in another way. Thou wilt give me courage, resignation, peace of soul, and those ineffable consolations that accompany Thy real presence."—Bl. Frederic Ozanam— (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, pp. 108-109)

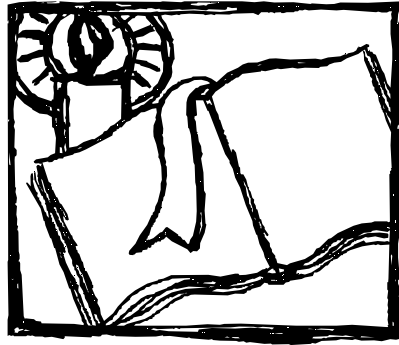
Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

How has God answered your prayers?

Closing Prayer:

O God, you are the healer of souls and so we pray:
When we are lonely
 -may we feel your presence.
When we are burdened by worries
 -may we be at peace in your love.
When we have sinned
 -may we know your forgiveness. Amen





LITURGICAL YEAR-Cycle A
2nd Quarter 2020
(April-May-June)

April

April 5	Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion
April 12	Easter Sunday
April 19	Second Sunday of Easter-Divine Mercy
April 26	Third Sunday of Easter

May

May 3	Fourth Sunday of Easter
May 10	Fifth Sunday of Easter
May 17	Sixth Sunday of Easter
May 24	Ascension
May 31	Pentecost

June

June 7	Most Holy Trinity
June 14	The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
June 19	<i>Feast of the Sacred Heart</i>
June 21	Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time
June 28	Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION
April 5, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 21: 1-11 and 26: 14-27)

When Jesus and the disciples drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “*Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tethered, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them here to me. And if anyone should say anything to you, reply, ‘The Master has need of them.’*” ...The crowds preceding him kept crying out and saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.” After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots. The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said, “Truly, this was the Son of God!”

Reflection:

From the high hosanna acclamation to the low of betrayal, denial, and abandonment the gospel take us up and down to the brink of life itself. Like the disciples, we also know who Jesus is. Every Sunday we make our profession of faith: “We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God...” This Palm Sunday we are invited to reflect on our own knowledge of who Jesus is and how well we confess him in our daily living. It is a daily choice to live the gospel’s requirement that we die to ourselves for the sake of others. This is how we confess Jesus as the Son of God. This is how, rather than denial and abandonment, we come to stand at the cross with Jesus. (Living Liturgy, p 88)

Vincentian Meditation:

“The world has grown cold, it is for us Catholics to rekindle the vital fire which had been extinguished. It is for us to inaugurate the era of the martyrs, for it is a martyrdom possible to every Christian. To give one’s life for God and for one’s brothers (and sisters), to give one’s life in sacrifice, is to be a martyr. It is indifferent whether the sacrifice be consummated at one moment, or whether slowly consuming, it fills the altar night and day with sweet perfume. To be martyr is to give back to heaven all that one has received, wealth, life, our whole soul.” –Bl. Frederic Ozanam- (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p.103)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

Indeed, the “Master has need of us” to rekindle the vital fire which has been extinguished in our world. What form has martyrdom taken for you or for those who are dear to you?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, give us the generosity of martyrs, so that we can give:
to an enemy, **forgiveness**
to an opponent, **tolerance**
to our family, **love and respect**
to all men and women, **charity. Amen**



EASTER SUNDAY

April 12, 2020

Gospel: (John 20:1-9)

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there...and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

Reflection:

Even on this most glorious of days, the gospel incorporates contradictions: Mary of Magdala arrives at an empty tomb, and sees that Jesus is gone and "we don't know where they have put him" while the disciple whom Jesus loved enters the tomb and "saw and believed"; they "did not yet understand the Scripture." Our own Alleluias and Easter joy are perhaps filled with some of the same contradictions. It seems as though we, too, peer into the empty tombs of the ups and downs of our everyday lives and are challenged to see and believe. But we are the disciples whom Jesus loves; and we surrender ourselves to the Easter mystery when we return love. All we need to do is hand ourselves over into God's hands. Filled with God's love, we are then able to love in return. Alleluia! The tomb is empty; by our love we see and believe, and we are filled with new life. Alleluia! (Living Liturgy, p.112)

Vincentian Meditation:

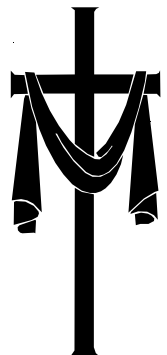
"We must develop the practice of making frequent acts of the desire to know God and ourselves. This will lead us to make the repeated acts of love which we owe Him and to avoid anything that is displeasing to Him. We must often abandon ourselves to Him, show Him our hearts filled with trust and gratitude; and try from time to time to whisper prayers to Him."-St. Louise de Marillac- (Gibson and Kneaves, Praying with Louise, p.95)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

Is our prayer life filled with repeated acts of love and abandonment to God?
How do we "see and believe" as we live our life today?

Closing Prayer:

Risen Lord, through your triumph of the cross,
May our sufferings lead us to deeper union with you.
Risen Lord, you brought faith and hope to your disciples,
May we abandon ourselves to you, in trust and gratitude.
Risen Lord, your resurrection formed a community of believers,
Give us true love for one another.
Risen Lord, you give God's love poured out in our hearts,
Make us beloved disciples who "see and believe." Amen



SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 19, 2020

Gospel: (John 20:19-31)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, *"Peace be with you."* When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, *"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."* And when he said this, he breathed on them and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit."* A week later...Jesus said to Thomas, *"Put your finger here and see my hands and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe."* Thomas answered and said to him, *"My Lord and my God!"* Jesus said to him, *"Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."*

Reflection:

The disciples were gathered behind locked doors because of fear, then the Risen Jesus stands in their midst and they are then filled with joy as Jesus speaks words of peace and forgiveness. Peace and forgiveness open up the spaciousness of salvation, shattering the confines of locked doors and doubt. But Thomas does not believe the witness of the other disciples; he wants tangible evidence. When Jesus offers his hands and side, Thomas rather than touching only utters a profound profession of faith. (Living Liturgy, p.118)

Vincentian Mediation:

"... the poor we see with the eyes of flesh; they are there and we can put finger and hand in their wounds and the scars of the crown of thorns are visible on their foreheads; and at this point incredulity no longer has place and we should fall at their feet and say with the Apostle, *Tu est Dominus et Deus meus (You are my Lord and my God!)*. You are our masters, and we will be your servants. You are for us the sacred images of that God whom we do not see, and not knowing how to love Him otherwise shall we not love Him in your person? (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p.98)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How do we have the eyes of faith, like Frederic, to see the Risen Jesus whose scars and nailprints the poor and suffering bear on their bodies?

Closing Prayer:

O Lord, give us the grace to live the **Corporal works of Mercy**:
To feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those in prison, shelter the homeless, visit the sick and bury the dead.

And may our lives reflect the **Spiritual works of Mercy**:
To admonish the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive all injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead. Amen



THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 26, 2020

Gospel: (Luke 24:13-35)

That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had happened. And while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them. ...and then Jesus said to them, "*Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?*" Then beginning with the Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures. ...They urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." ...While he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened Scriptures to us?"

Reflection:

The disciples had given up hope, they were confused and downcast. But they still had a spark within them and their hearts burned as they once again heard the Scriptures. But they could not see, could not understand. It was only their hospitality, "Stay with us", in the spaciousness of their reaching out to the Stranger and offering what they could give that their eyes were opened. Our daily reaching out to our neighbor is our daily walk with the risen Christ; we recognize him in others. (Living Liturgy, p.126)

Vincentian Meditation:

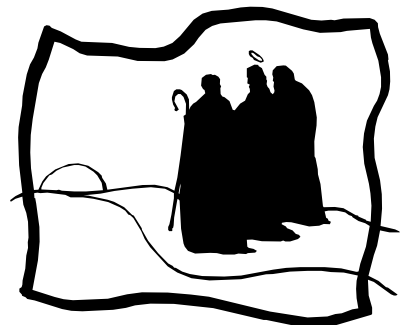
"Help honors when to the bread that nourishes it adds the visit that consoles, the advice that enlightens, the friendly shake of the hand that lifts up the sinking courage; when it treats the poor man with respect, not only as an equal but as a superior, since he is suffering what perhaps we are incapable of suffering; since he is the messenger of God to us, sent to prove our justice and our charity, and to save us by our works."-Frederic Ozanam- (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p. 93)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

When have you found "your hearts burning within you" as you served the poor with the hospitality and "honor" in the spirit of Frederic?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, through your resurrection hope was given to the world,
-**strengthen us to be hope for others.**
For those who live in fear and loneliness,
-**enable us to be peace for others.**
For the sick and the dying,
-**ignite our hearts to be love for others. Amen**



FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 3, 2020

Gospel: (John 10: 1-10)

Jesus said: *“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice.”...“Amen, amen I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep... whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come and go out and find pasture. I came so that they may have life and have it more abundantly.”*

Reflection:

Jesus is the gate, the only entrance to the fold. The image of the gate directs our attention to Jesus the Risen One who always recognizes us and cares for us, to Jesus our Shepherd. This is where resurrection faith leads us so “that we might have life and have it more abundantly.” Christ is truly here for us, calls us by name and leads us to life. (Living Liturgy, p.130)

Vincentian Meditation:

“Surely, the great secret of the spiritual life is to abandon all we love to him by abandoning ourselves to all God wishes in perfect confidence that all will be for the best...He will take the place of father and mother for you. He will be your consolation, your virtue, and in the end the recompense of your love.”-St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 30)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

**When have we “abandoned ourselves to God in perfect confidence”,
and found that Jesus is truly our Shepherd?**

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, you laid down your life so that we might live:

-give us the grace to know that you call us by name.

Jesus, you search out those who are lost,

-give us the grace to know that you bind our wounds.

Jesus, you carry those who cannot walk alone,

-give us the grace to know that you are always with us.

Jesus, you lead those in your flock who hear your voice,

-give us the grace to abandon ourselves to you. Amen



FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 10, 2020

Gospel: (John 14:1-12)

Jesus said to his disciples: *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way...I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him...Whoever has seen me has seen the Father...Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? ...Amen, amen I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.”*

Reflection:

Jesus is the Way-the Truth-and the Life, because of his relationship with the Father. The good news is that when we relate to Jesus, we are relating to God. And when we encounter the risen Christ we encounter God. We encounter the risen Christ by doing the works of Christ and by recognizing Christ in the other. Thus the challenge here is that our baptism plunges us not only into a relationship with the Triune God but also with each other. Therefore, our belief in the resurrection and the good news of salvation isn't something that stays in our heads but is played out concretely in the way we treat others in justice, mercy, forgiveness, and love. That is the good news! (Living Liturgy,p.134)

Vincentian Meditation:

Vincent said: “To make God known to the poor, to tell them that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand and that it is for the poor. O how great that is, so sublime is it to preach the gospel to the poor that is, above all, the office of the Son of God. (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 41)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)

In what ways has our service in justice, mercy, forgiveness and love spread the “good news,” and made “God known to the poor?”

Closing Prayer:

Risen Lord, your resurrection brought joy to all believers,
-give joy to those who live in sadness.
Risen Lord, your resurrection brought hope to all believers,
-give hope to those who live in despair.
Risen Lord, your resurrection formed a community of believers,
-give us true love for one another.
Risen Lord, you are one with your Church on earth,
-hear our prayers for all those in need.

Amen.



I am the way, and the truth,
and the life.

Jn 14:6

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 17, 2020

Gospel: (John 14:15-21)

Jesus said to his disciples: *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows him. But you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and reveal myself to him."*

Reflection:

Jesus tells us that we keep God's commandments because our love for God has established a deep and intimate relationship between us and God that spills out in acts we know will be pleasing to the Beloved. Rather than burdensome laws, then, commandments are concrete expressions of our love for God and each other. On our own it is impossible either to know God or love God, and that is why Jesus promises us the Spirit will come. If we wish to grow into our love for God we must become attentive to the Spirit who dwells within us. We get to know the Spirit within us by being faithful to prayer, finding the presence of God within, realizing his goodness and cultivating grateful hearts. (Living Liturgy, P.138)

Vincentian Meditation:

"Upon awakening, may my first thoughts be of God. May I make acts of adoration, thanksgiving and abandonment of my will to His most holy will. Reflecting on my lowliness and powerlessness, I shall invoke the grace of the Holy Spirit in which I shall have great confidence for the accomplishment of His will in me, which shall be the sole desire of my heart. (Gibson and Kneaves, Praying with Louise, pp. 50-51)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

In what ways have we seen the Holy Spirit leading, guiding and protecting us?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, make us attentive to your Spirit dwelling within us, as we seek to do your will:

When we are weighed down by burdens,
Send us your Spirit!
When we have difficult choices to make,
Send us your Spirit!
When we need hope and peace,
Send us your Spirit!
When we forget your presence among us,
Send us your Spirit! Amen.



THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

May 24, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 28:16-20)

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. Then they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, *"All power in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of time."*

Reflection:

Jesus knew that his mission was not to be continued by mere humans; on our own authority and power we could not give true witness and our doubts and misunderstandings could never be overcome. Jesus knew that his mission could be entrusted to his disciples because they "will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon" them. It is the Spirit who resolves doubt, clears up misunderstanding about the mission, gives wisdom, revelation, and knowledge. Thus, being disciples of Jesus is not something we are alone. We are disciples by letting the Spirit work through us as we live our everyday life. (Living Liturgy, p.142)

Vincentian Meditation:

Vincent said to his priests: "...that we should be called to associate with, and to share in, the works of the Son of God surpasses our understanding. What! To render ourselves -I do not dare say it-so great, so sublime, it is to preach the gospel to the poor, for it is above all else the office of the Son of God, and we are applied to it as instruments by which the Son of God continues to do from heaven what he once did on earth. Great reason have we...to praise God and to thank him unceasingly for this grace!" (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 53)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Recall a time when you felt the presence of the Spirit in your life making you an instrument of God.

Closing Prayer:

We see the poor all around us and we long to respond to their needs,
and so we pray:

-Spirit of God, fill us with your power.

The hungry search for sustenance of body and spirit,

-may we empty ourselves to reach out to them.

Many children are abused or live in poverty and fear,

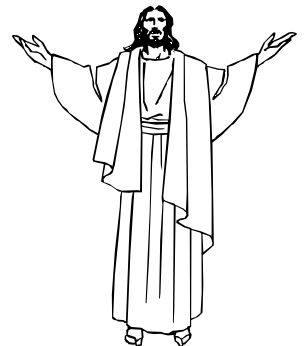
-may we be advocates for all those who feel unprotected.

Victims of violence cry out for justice,

-may we hear their cries and work for change.

For the grace of being called to serve the poor,

-we give you thanks and praise! Amen



PENTECOST SUNDAY
May 31, 2020

Gospel: (John 20: 19-23)

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “*Peace be with you.*” When he had said this to them, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “*Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.*” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “*Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.*”

Reflection:

Pentecost brings Jesus’ ministry to a focus: **we** are sent to continue Jesus’ ministry, armed with the Holy Spirit and specific instructions as to what we are to do: forgive. By his ascending into heaven and sending the Holy Spirit Christ makes his mission **our** mission. It is a great miracle that God chooses to make **us** real participants in God’s plan of salvation and sharers in God’s divine life. To forgive doesn’t mean to forget; it means to restore love. This is the ministry for which the Spirit empowers us, and this is how we can live in peace. (Living Liturgy, p.150)

Vincentian Meditation:

In his last days, Frederic... “would lie silent for hours with the Bible open by his side. One evening he lay thus, watching the sun sinking into the blue Mediterranean; his wife had drawn her chair a little behind him,...something in the extreme serenity of his countenance prompted her to ask which of all the gifts of God he considered the greatest. He replied without hesitating,... ‘**Peace of heart**’; without this we may possess everything and yet not be happy; with it we can bear the hardest trials and the approach of death.’” (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p.113)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

When have we come to know the “Peace of heart” that comes from forgiving and being forgiven?

Closing Prayer:

We are temples of the Holy Spirit, carrying within us the power of God, so we pray:

-Spirit of God, show us the way.

When we find it hard to forgive others,

-Spirit of God, show us the way.

When we search for peace of heart,

-Spirit of God, show us the way.

When we meet the broken-hearted,

-Spirit of God, show us the way. Amen



THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

June 7, 2020

Gospel: (John 3: 16-18)

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Reflection:

Of all the festivals on the liturgical calendar, this is the one that speaks most to us of pure, unfathomable mystery. We can only know something of God through what God has done for us and how God relates to us-these are the concrete traces of God among us. This solemnity reminds us that God does not exist in isolation but as a community of Persons in relationship to each other. The Trinity is a relational God who gives and loves. Do we choose to live an independent existence or a Trinitarian, communitarian, and self-giving way of living? The only way to living the kind of community the Trinity models for us is through love, the self-giving love that creates and sustains life. (Living Liturgy, p. 156)

Vincentian Meditation:

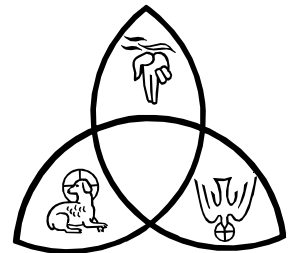
St. Vincent prayed: "O my God, may it please you to be the bond which ties the hearts of evangelizers together in a common attitude of humility, of unity, and of respect for one another...Let the good effects of their mutual affection, which you allow to develop among them, steadily grow and flourish, and make the fruits of their labors for the salvation of souls constantly increase. Strengthen them in their efforts, and be yourself their ultimate reward." (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 107)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Within our conference, does the bond which ties our hearts together produce a common attitude of humility, of unity and of respect for one another?

Closing Prayer:

O Holy Trinity, three Persons in one, we pray,
-**keep us in the circle of your love.**
For all peoples of the earth, created in God's image,
-**may we work toward reconciliation and peace.**
For married couples, parents, and children,
-**may their mutual love be a reflection of your love.**
For all of us gathered together,
-**may our love and service bear witness to God's care.**
For all who share in the faith of the Catholic Church,
-**may we grow in unity, peace and truth. Amen**



THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

June 14, 2020

Gospel: (John 6: 51-58)

Jesus said to them, “Amen, Amen I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven.

Reflection:

In the mystery of the Eucharist self-giving and community are inseparable. Life is the most precious possession any one of us has. To share one’s life, then, is to share with another our deepest being. Community is the commingling of life through mutual self-giving. Jesus’ gift of life to us through our participation in his Body and Blood is not simply for our own sakes, but for the sake of others. To receive this gift of life is to be compelled to give this gift to others. Eucharist nourishes us and gives us the strength to choose self-giving as a way of living and this is the only way to achieve eternal life. No wonder we call ourselves a Eucharistic people! (Living Liturgy, p.160)

Vincentian Meditation:

St. Louise prayed: “Give Yourself entirely to me, my God. May Your precious body, Your holy soul, and Your glorious divinity, which I adore in this Holy sacrament, take complete possession of me. Sweet Jesus! Gentle Jesus! My God and my All! Have mercy on all souls redeemed by Your precious blood. Inflame them with the arrow of Your love in order to make them grateful for the love that urged You to give Yourself to us in the Blessed Sacrament.” (*Gibson and Kneaves, Praying with Louise, p. 59*)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.*)

In what ways can we become “Eucharistic people?”

Closing Prayer:

Christ Jesus, we give thanks with broken bread and cup of blessing,
-may your food strengthen us for our journey.
Christ Jesus, your Eucharist is a sign of love,
-may the poor and outcasts find a place at your table.
Christ Jesus, your Eucharist is a sign of unity,
-may we embrace diversity with reverence and open hearts.
Christ Jesus, you are the bread that fills the longing of our hearts,
-may this bread deepen our longing for justice,
Christ Jesus, you are the wine that satisfies our thirst for holiness,
-may this wine deepen our desire for You. Amen



THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS
June 19, 2020

Gospel: (1John 4:7-16)

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us.

Reflection:

The human heart is a symbol for the life, love and well-being of an individual. The heart therefore as a symbol tries to capture God's tremendous love for us, God's constant care, and the security we find in resting against God's heart in prayer. The Sacred Heart tells us "not that we love God, but that he loves us."

Vincentian Reflection:

Frederic wrote: "Love possesses something of the divine nature, which gives itself without diminishing, which shares itself without division, which multiplies itself, which is present in many places at once, and whose intensity is increased in the measure that it gains in extension. In your wife you will first love God... You will draw comfort from her tenderness on bad days, you will find courage in her example in perilous times, you will be her guardian angel, she will be yours." (Ramson, *Praying with Frederic*, p.63)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.*)

Frederic found his vocation, his primary commitment in life, in marriage where he found the love of God. How have you found the love of God reflected to you?

Closing Prayer: (Together)

Lord Jesus, " we dedicate and consecrate to Your divine Person and to Your Sacred Heart this our Conference (Council) and all the members who compose it, the poor whom we visit in Your name, the youth and children to whom we respond...and all the works we have undertaken in various places for Your Glory... inflame us with that fire which from the depths of Your Heart Thou desire to see burning more and more each day, in order that, filled with the tenderness of Your Heart...we may love and help our neighbor. Give us the grace to live our vocation, loving our spouse, family and others in the example of Frederic and Amelie.
Amen



TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
June 15, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 10:26-33)

Jesus said to the Twelve: *“Fear no one...And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.”*

Reflection:

The gospel speaks of the fear that the disciples would have in facing opposition. When we are compassionate—sent out to serve the poor—we also will face opposition and persecution. This doesn’t mean censorship or physical hardship only. It does mean that our lives must embody the care and compassion of God. The mission of discipleship ought not be undertaken lightly, because there will also be persecution. Neither, however, ought the mission be undertaken with trepidation because God does not abandon us. (Living Liturgy, p.176)

Vincentian Meditation:

Vincent often cautioned against “undisciplined enthusiasm,” a false zeal that springs from desire for praise or from anger. Unlike true zeal, compulsions take on a hard edge of self-righteousness or paralyzing preoccupation with self: what *I* do, rather than what *God* wants done. True zeal sets a person on fire with love of God, with the realization that all gifts and all power come from God. Thus, true zeal is humble but courageous in the face of scorn and persecution. True zeal acts with charity, not out of a desire to manipulate, or out of trendy do-goodism. Christian zeal models itself on Jesus’ zeal to proclaim the Good News of God’s love and to heal the wounds of suffering people. (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.92)

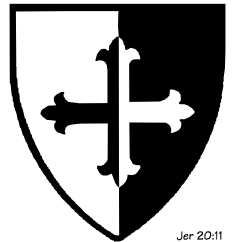
Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.*)

When have we seen “true zeal” in our Conference?

Closing Prayer:

O God, you inspire Vincentians to have zeal in their service,
 -help us to serve always with respect and gentleness.
O God, you send us to serve the poor and the suffering,
 -help us to face opposition and persecution.
O God, you told us that you will acknowledge us before your heavenly Father,
 -help us to acknowledge you before others.
O God, you told us to not be afraid,
 -help us to know that you are always with us. Amen

The LORD is with me.



Jer 20:11

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

June 28, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 10:37-42)

Jesus said to his apostles: *“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent meAnd whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because the little one is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.”*

Reflection:

The heart of the paschal mystery is dying and rising. Our own daily living can sometimes seem to have much more dying than rising. Even setting aside the issue of consciously choosing self-sacrifice, just the simple demands of our lives pull it out of us: feeding the infant in the middle of the night, ferrying the kids to soccer, helping with the homework when we are dog tired, cleaning the house and preparing meals, taking time to share some good thing with a spouse, calling and visiting an aging parent, helping the suffering and the poor. One of the great encouragements of this Sunday’s gospel is that all this behavior—like giving “a cup of cold water”—may seem small to us, but to God they are actions that correspond to those of Christ. The message is that our generosity is far surpassed by God’s generosity. (Living Liturgy, p.188)

Vincentian Meditation:

To Vincent, a life of virtue was no accident. God gives the grace, but human effort is required to cultivate the virtue. Habits of charity, hopefulness, and justice are *built*, not just wished into being. Vincent knew that good intentions were insufficient responses to God’s grace. Virtue—a good habit, an inner readiness to accomplish moral good—had to become part of the fabric of life. For instance, by acting patiently over and over in trying situations, a person may learn patience. Virtues such as patience are important in the full living of the Christian life. Vincent constantly made concrete suggestions about how to develop virtue. From hard experience, he knew that definite dispositions had to be cultivated into the heart of the servant if the Gospels were to come alive through his or her hands. (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.70)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.*)

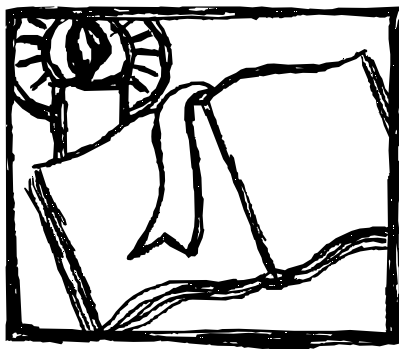
What Vincentian virtues have you seen lived out in your Conference?

Closing Prayer:

O God, you inspire the followers of Vincent to be virtuous,
-help us to serve always with respect and gentleness.
O God, you inspire the followers of Vincent to be servants of the poor,
-send us out in humility, simplicity and charity. Amen



**Carry the cross
and follow me.**



LITURGICAL YEAR-Cycle A
3rd Quarter-2020
(July-August-September)

July

July 5	Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
July 12	Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
July 19	Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
July 26	Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

August

August 2	Eighteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
August 6	Feast of the Transfiguration
August 9	Nineteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
August 15	<i>Feast of the Assumption of Mary</i>
August 16	Twentieth Sunday of Ordinary Time
August 23	Twenty-first Sunday of Ordinary Time
August 30	Twenty-second Sunday of Ordinary Time

September

September 6	Twenty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time
<i>September 9</i>	<i>Feast of Blessed Frederic Ozanam</i>
September 13	Twenty-fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time
September 20	Twenty-fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time
<i>September 27</i>	<i>Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul</i>
September 27	Twenty-sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
July 5, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 11:25-30)

Jesus exclaimed: "I give you praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him. "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

Reflection:

The love Jesus speaks of is a self-sacrificing love that knows no bounds when the good of the other is at stake. No bound, not even ones' life. Jesus' command of love requires of us no less than dying to ourselves. We must let go of all our own pretensions, become meek and humble like Jesus and serve others. In everyday terms this means that we always seek God's will in our lives. This isn't always easy, because our natural human tendency is to seek our own good. Just as Jesus came to do God's will and brought salvation and peace, so when we do God's will we extend salvation and know peace. This is knowing God! (Living Liturgy, p.192)

Vincentian Meditation:

Not only will we find rest and refreshment in Christ as we move along the road of life, but He would have us learn from Him meekness and humility of heart. Gentleness and humility of heart contribute much to our peace and rest on our journey to heaven. St. Vincent would wish us to be sacraments of the gentleness of Christ. Not only must we bring strength and help to the poor, but we must put them in contact with the meekness of Jesus. That is why it is important that we should not be angry people. If there is anger in our hearts, it will be difficult for us to help the poor effectively because we will not bring to them the gentleness of Jesus. (9McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.573)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.)

Who are the Vincentians that have shown you how to be "sacraments of the gentleness of Christ" ?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, make us gentle servants,
 -with eyes to see the poor.
Lord, make us humble servants,
 -with ears to hear the cries of the poor.
Lord, we come to you with our labors and burdens,
 -may we know your rest. Amen



**Come
to me
and I
will
give
you
rest.**

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
July 12, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 13: 1-23)

Jesus said: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came up and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

Reflection:

If we see ourselves as the sower, the parable takes us in the direction of learning to know God and having union with God. We ourselves are the ones who spread the word of good news. If we see ourselves as the seed, it reminds us that we sow God's word wherever we are, by word and example. If we see ourselves as the soil, we are directed to examine the cares and distractions of our lives to see if they stand in the way of open eyes, open ears and open hearts. This is our call to discipleship! God is extravagant with the seed, and he is doing everything to prepare the soil so that the word can take root. All we need to do is "see with our eyes, hear with our ears and understand with our hearts(Living Liturgy, p.196)

Vincentian Meditation:

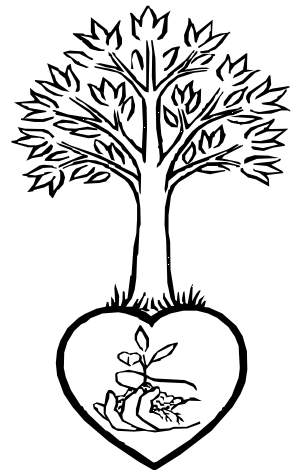
A fellow student challenged Frederic by saying: "Today Christianity is dead. Indeed, you people who boast about being Catholics, what are you doing? Where are the works which demonstrate your Faith...?" The Holy Spirit inspired Frederic with these words that touched the heart and mind of each person in the room: "We must do what is most agreeable to God. Therefore, we must do what our Lord Jesus Christ did when preaching the Gospel. **Let us go to the poor.**" (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p.86)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.)

As disciples who are "Sower, Seed and Soil", how do we have hearts that love, eyes that see and ears that hear the cries of the poor?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, make us sowers, who spread the good news,
 -with eyes to see the poor.
Lord, make us your seed in our words and example,
 -with ears to hear the cries of the poor.
Lord, make us your rich soil ,
 -with hearts filled with love and mercy.
Amen



SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
July 19, 2010

Gospel: (Matthew 13: 24-30)

Jesus proposed another parable: *“The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well.”* ...His disciples said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field. He replied, *“He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil....at the end of the age the Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace ...Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear.”*

Reflection:

To be sure, in our daily living there will be times when we fall short of the gospel and we feel that we are only weeds that should be burned. But the paschal mystery reminds us that dying always leads to rising, and invites us to look beyond the immediate moment, see the possibilities for repentance in our lives, trust in God’s mercy, and be open to God’s loving kindness. The weeds will grow. But God is patient, knowing our love and good deeds, He will mercifully gather us into his kingdom. (Living Liturgy, p.200)

Vincentian Meditation:

“We ought to have confidence in God that he will look after us since we know for certain that as long as we are grounded in that sort of love and trust we will be always under the protection of God in heaven, we will remain unaffected by evil and never lack what we need even when everything we possess seems headed for disaster.”-St.Vincent de Paul-(McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.47)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.)

Who are some members of your Conference that have lived with such confidence in God, and were grounded in such love and trust, that you know they are among the “righteous who shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father.”

Closing Prayer:

We thank you, Lord, for loving life into us, and now we pray,
 -we turn to you, O Lord.
That we may seek forgiveness for our sins and failings,
 -we turn to you, O Lord.
Hope of sinners, give us hearts that are humble and contrite,
 -we turn to you, O Lord.
That our lives be grounded in love and trust,
 -we place our confidence in your protection, O Lord. Amen



The righteous will shine
like the sun.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
July 26, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 13: 44-52)

Jesus said to his disciples: *“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all he has and buys it...”*

Reflection:

The demand of daily Christian living is to spend our life primarily searching for the kingdom of God. In the Gospel, first the person who finds the buried treasure in a field comes upon it by happenstance; the find just happens without effort; it is pure gift. The role of discipleship is to become aware of the treasure when it is found. Second, the merchant knows his or her business and recognizes the prized pearl when it is found. The role of discipleship here is to be diligent in the search, not become discouraged and give up, seek until the “pearl of great price” is found. (Living Liturgy, p. 204)

Vincentian Meditation:

“To be servants of the poor...O Mon Dieu! What a lovely title and what a beautiful description! **Servants of the poor**, that is just the same as to say **Servants of Jesus Christ**, for He regards as done to Himself what is done to them, and they are His members. And what did He do whilst on earth, but serve the poor?”—St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.42)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.*)

To hear the call to serve the poor is like finding the “treasure in the field” or “the pearl of great price”. How did you join the Society-by searching or did someone invite you?

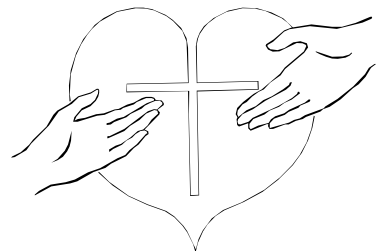
Closing Prayer:

Loving God, thank you for grace of finding the “pearl of great price, in the poor,
-may we serve you in the most destitute.

In every age you call new disciples to follow Christ,
-lead men and women to serve the poor within the

Society.

Give us strength to stand in solidarity with those who suffer,
-may our hearts be filled with compassion and love.
Give us the grace to be true “Servants of the Poor”,
-Servants of Jesus Christ. Amen



*All things work together
for good.*

Rom 8:28

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
August 2, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 14: 13-21)

When Jesus saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them... When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said: "*There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.* But they said, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." Then he said, "*Bring them here to me,*" ... Taking the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied... when they picked up the fragments left over they had twelve baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand...

Reflection:

This gospel helps us move all the talk about God's kingdom out of the scripture and into our daily lives. We can't make the kingdom present by ourselves. At first, Jesus tells the disciples to "give them some food yourselves." They can't; human resources are not sufficient to make present what God's kingdom promises. Jesus then takes the meager human resources- "five loaves and two fish"- and **blesses** them and gives them to disciples to distribute to the crowds. What the disciples cannot do alone they can do with Jesus' blessing. (Living Liturgy, p.208)

Vincentian Meditation:

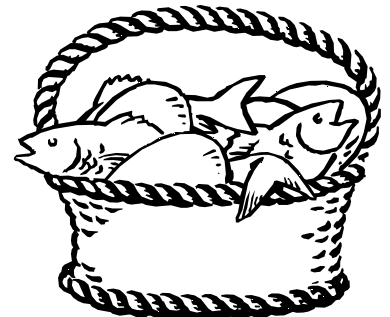
"We must pass, ...from affective love to effective love. And that is a love which takes flesh in works of charity, service of the poor which is undertaken with joy, constancy and tender love."-St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 64)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How have you witnessed in your service to the poor that your "loaves and fishes" were multiplied by the blessing of Jesus?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you bless those who seek to serve the poor,
 -move our hearts from affective to effective love.
Open our eyes,
 -that we may see your presence in our midst.
Open our ears,
 -that we may hear the cries of the poor.
Open our hearts,
 -that we may serve with joy, constancy and tender love.
Open our hands,
 -that our "loaves and fishes" may receive your blessing.
Amen.



FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

August 6

Gospel: (Matthew 17: 1-9)

Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother, John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

Reflection:

In the Gospel we read: "This is my beloved Son...Listen to him." "Prayer is one of the privileged ways of listening. But it must always be validated by life. One who listens to 'what God is telling me' in prayer, but pays little heed to what others are saying in daily life is surely suspect. Prayer must be in continual contact with people and events, since God speaks not only in the silence of our hearts, but also (and often first of all) in the people around us. It is only when what is heard is pondered, that its full meaning is revealed. Listening includes seeing, hearing, sensing, feeling, and perceiving. Indeed, attentiveness is one of the most important signs of respect for others. It is indispensable foundation of Vincentian spirituality." (Maloney, *He Hears the Cry of the Poor*, p.24, 26)

Vincentian Meditation:

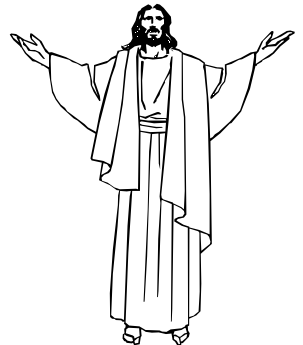
Conference meetings can be a time of grace or a time when sin threatens grace. "Meetings are a time of grace only through a communal quest to listen to God and communal attentiveness to the words of others. When there is listening there is a climate of freedom for discussion and discernment. When there is no listening, meetings create strife and division. They disrupt rather than unify. When listening wanes, meetings degenerate rapidly. Among the signs that sin is at work in meetings is fighting, strife, bad feelings, disillusionment and bitterness. (Maloney, *He Hears the Cry of the Poor*, p.28)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

Are our Conference Meetings a time of grace or a time of division?

Closing Prayer:

O God, give us the grace to listen to you in prayer,
-and to each other in our Conference meetings.
Amen.



NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 9, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 14:22-33)

When Jesus fed the people, he made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and the cried out in fear. At once Jesus spoke to them, "*Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.*" Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "*Come.*" Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Reflection:

This gospel does show Jesus as having authority over the waters: he walks on the sea and at his will the wind dies down. Nevertheless, this gospel is less about Jesus manifesting power in great events that it is an invitation to respond to Jesus, to come to him. We follow Jesus not because he is a great miracle worker but because he is the "Son of God." It is far easier to come to Jesus in the obvious things; for example, faithful attendance at Mass. It is far more difficult to see God in the little things; for example, being pleasant when the poor are demanding, or giving back to a cashier too much change, or giving extra time to be present to children or spouse. (Living Liturgy, p.212)

Vincentian Meditation:

When the disciples were terrified, Jesus immediately responded to them: "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Jesus is interested always in trying to lighten our fears. When he comes to us in Holy Communion, he assures us that he is giving us everlasting life. That is a great assurance because the greatest natural fear which we have is the fear of death. Jesus can take care of that greatest natural fear, namely death, and he will also take care of those many other smaller fears which are hidden in our hearts. Some of these fears are known to us, others are not. To us, however, as to the frightened disciples, Jesus keeps saying: "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid. (McCullen, Deep Down Things, p. 735)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

When have you heard Jesus say to you: "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, in our fears and anxieties, may we always hear you say,

"Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Amen.



FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
August 15

Gospel: (Luke 1: 39-56)

Then Mary said: “My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit finds joy in God my savior, for he has looked upon his servant in her lowliness; all ages to come shall call me blessed. God who is mighty has done great things for me, holy is his name...He has deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places. The hungry he has given every good thing, while the rich he has sent empty away...

Reflection:

Blessed Ceferino Gimenez Malla was born in Spain in 1861. Ceferino Malla was beatified in 1997, and is a wonderful example for all Vincentians... He exemplifies charity to the poor and devotion to the Blessed Mother. Ceferino had a deep conversion experience. He became an active member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, where he was ever ready to give generously to the poor. Though illiterate, the poor, uneducated and politically powerful came to him for advice and counsel. He was revered as a pious Catholic, a daily communicant. He took part in “Eucharistic Thursdays,” and night adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In July 1936, during the Spanish Civil War, he was imprisoned for protesting the arrest of a priest. While in prison, Ceferino recited the rosary; and this angered his guards. He was offered his freedom if he would give up his rosary; he refused. He considered devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary a matter of great honor; he would not-could not-deny the Mother of God. He was killed by a firing squad on August 2, 1936, clutching his rosary...it was three weeks before his seventy-fifth birthday. (Manual of the Society of SVDP, p.96)

Vincentian Meditation:

On the feast of the Assumption, Frederic, three weeks away from death’s door, insisted on walking to church. There he attended Mass and received Holy Communion. “It may be my last walk in this world, and I desire that it shall be to pay a visit to my God and His Blessed Mother.”-Bl.Frederic Ozanam- (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p. 70)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Devotion to Mary is a fundamental root of our Vincentian vocation. What place does devotion to Our Lady hold in your life?

Closing Prayer:

O God, you chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus,
- **may she always be our hope in time of need.**
Mary lived the mystery of Jesus and followed him to Calvary,
-**give us the faith to follow her example.**
Mary responded with joyful faith and radical witness to your call,
-**open our hearts to your will. Amen**



TWENTIETH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
August 16, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 15: 21-28)

A Canaanite woman called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon."...Jesus said, "*I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" But the woman came and did Jesus homage, saying, "Lord, help me." He said, "*It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.*" She said, "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters." Then Jesus said to her in reply, "*O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.*" And the woman's daughter was healed from that hour.

Reflection:

What is the deeper significance of these apparently harsh words of Jesus? The answer lies in Jesus' clear understanding of his mission, to the house of Israel. This woman was not a Jew, and she is thus challenging Jesus to extend his mission beyond Israel to include all people. This foreign woman gives us a model response to Jesus in her confident prayer and great faith. Thus the Gospel announces that the kingdom and salvation are for all people. It is our persistent calling out to Jesus and our faith that count for Jesus always responds. (Living Liturgy, p. 220)

Vincentian Meditation:

Vincent reminded the women in one of his charitable organizations, that it is Divine Providence that calls Christians to be creative in forming communities of service. He told them, "It has been 800 years now since women have had any public role in the Church. In early times there were deaconesses...but this custom stopped and your sex was deprived of providing all these kinds of services. In our day, however, this same Providence prompted you to take up the crucial work of caring for the poor...God has given you as mothers to the abandon children...and call upon you to dispense many alms. By the grace of God, these good women have responded to these needs with great warmth and steadiness." (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 103-4)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How have women been a grace to the Society? What gifts and services have they brought to your Conference?

Closing Prayer:

O God, as you call us to serve the poor may we
 -also be evangelized by those we serve.
Grant us the grace to be open to the gifts of women in the Church,
 -may our words and actions bear witness to Jesus.
Give us the faith and courage of the Canaanite woman,
 -so that we may be true servants of the gospel.
Amen.



TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
August 23, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 16: 13-20)

Jesus asked his disciples, *“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”* They replied, *“Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”* He said to them, *“But who do you say that I am?”* Simon Peter said, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* Jesus said to him, *“Bless are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church... I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

Reflection:

Jesus revealed himself to Peter through his experience where, in spite of his doubt, fear, and sinking, he was saved from the raging seas. Peter had a gripping and personal experience of the saving power of Jesus, and so answers from a faith stance that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God. Peter had paid attention to his experience, and so the “heavenly Father” could reveal to him the knowledge that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. When we open our eyes to see and ears to hear and our hearts to experience Jesus’ presence and power in our daily lives, God’s revelation comes to us. We only need to have faith. (Living Liturgy, p.224)

Vincentian Meditation:

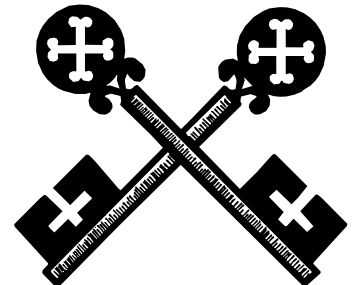
A friend wrote about Frederic: “He has the sacred fire. There is such an air of interior conviction in this man, that without the appearance of doing so, he convinces and moves you.” Frederic’s sacred fire was faith. Faith for Frederic Ozanam was indeed a living reality that permeated his entire being; it was his “second sight.” Yet it was a hard-won gift. Frederic attributes the foundation of his faith to his parents. “In the midst of an age of skepticism, God gave me the grace to be born in the true faith. As a child I listened at the feet of a Christian father and a saintly mother.” (Ramson, Praying for Frederic, p.49)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

How or to whom do you attribute your faith?

Closing Prayer:

O Father, you reveal to us that Jesus is you Son,
 -deepen our faith to see you in the events of our lives.
We pray for all parents,
 -may they guide their children in the ways of faith.
Give us the sacred fire of Frederic,
 -that our faith will have his interior conviction.
When Jesus asks us, “Who do you say that I am?”
 -may we answer with Peter, “You are indeed the Christ.”
Amen



TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
August 30, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 16:21-27)

Jesus said to his disciples: “*Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct.*”

Reflection:

Lose life and find life. Cross and glory. This is the paschal mystery in a nutshell. Sometimes our response to living the paschal mystery is enthusiastic because things are going well and we don’t realize the demands. Then, when the going gets rough, we bog down. The challenge is to let go so *God* can lead us. We need to surrender ourselves. The paschal mystery isn’t just a concept; it is a turning of the heart toward God’s love working in us, but not without its demands. Even sharing in Jesus’ divine glory means that we must share in his sufferings and death. (Living Liturgy, p. 228)

Vincentian Meditation:

“Service to God’s people demands a price. Christians must put aside their own prejudices, comfortable circumstances, and favorite ideas in order to do the will of God. This sort of discipline calls Christians to die to themselves in order to follow Christ. St. Vincent called this discipline *mortification*. Mortification, or dying to self, has sometimes become confused with self-hate, repression...or co-dependency. However, dying to self is a core value in the Christian Testament. St. Vincent believed that mortification had to be a conscious choice. With the grace of God, people could be willing to make the hard sacrifices that love demands. With God’s help, they could detach themselves from—or die—to all that was not Christ so that they could put on Jesus Christ. (McKenna, *Praying with Vincent*, p.83, 85)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

In what ways have you been called to *mortification*—“to deny yourself, and take up your cross”?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, give us the grace to deny ourselves,
-so that we can lose our life in order to find it.
Lord Jesus, give us the grace to carry our cross,
-so that we can learn *mortification* in the spirit
of St. Vincent.

Amen



TWENTY-THIRD WEEK OF ORDINARY TIME
September 6, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 18:15-20)

Jesus said to his disciples: *“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector....Amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*

Reflection:

Giving and receiving corrections is one of the hardest things we can do. Some strong motivation usually has to be present in order for corrections to be given or received and true reconciliation take place. There may be many motivations: to save face personally, to please another, to get another to change behavior that simply annoys us, etc. The last line of the gospel gives us a clue as to what underlying motivation is really the strongest: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.” Our strongest motivation urging us to charitable correction is the fact that we share a common identity of being the body of Christ. We ourselves aren’t the reconcilers; it is the power of Christ action through his body. (Living Liturgy, p. 232)

Vincentian Meditation:

People had often reproved Vincent for his harsh, almost driven streak, and commented about his steep mood swings. Defensive, Vincent would argue that he was the way he was and could not change. But during one intense period of prayer, Vincent threw himself on God’s mercy, recognizing at last that only God’s power could calm his harshness and ease his sharp mood swings. Many years later, Vincent recounted this crucial moment: “I turned to God and earnestly begged him to convert this irritable and forbidding trait of mine. I also asked for a kind and amiable spirit. And with the grace of Our Lord, by giving a little attention to checking the hot-blooded impulses of my personality, I have been at least partly cured of my gloomy disposition.” (McKenna, *Praying with Vincent*, p.68-69.)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

Do we need to confront some unchristian behaviors in our Conference?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, where two or three are gathered in your name, be in our midst,

- and give us the grace to give and receive corrections.

Lord, give us the grace to pray for our own conversion,

- so that we will have the kind and amiable spirit of Vincent. Amen



FEAST OF THE BIRTH OF MARY
September 8

Gospel: (Matthew 1: 18-32)

Suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream and said : “Joseph, son of David, have no fear about taking Mary as your wife. It is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son and you are to name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.” All this happened to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin shall be with child and give birth to a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel.”

Reflection:

Frederic Ozanam died on the feast of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, September 8, 1853. It seems fitting for this man to die on the feast of a woman to whom he had been greatly devoted all his life. Devotion to Mary, the mother of God, was part of Frederic Ozanam’s life from childhood to death. He sought her intercession often. Kneeling at her altar, he prayed, “I place my intentions under the auspices of our Divine Mother...” Frederic believed in the power of Mary, the Mother of God. He often prayed to her for himself and for others. He believed in the power of Mary’s intercession with her divine offspring. Devotion to her was woven into the various stages of Frederic’s life and especially prominent in the poetic devotion of youth, the moral challenges of young adulthood, the transformation of becoming a parent, and the acceptance of suffering and death. Frederic invites us to consider our own devotion to Mary and our trust in her intercession. (Ramson, *Praying with Frederic*, p.68;71)

Vincentian Meditation:

“I am entirely yours, most Holy Virgin, that I may more perfectly belong to God. Teach me, therefore, to imitate your holy life by fulfilling the designs of God in my life. I very humbly beg you to assist me.”-St. Louise de Marillac-
(Gibson and Kneaves, *Praying with Louise*, p. 91)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Have you ever felt the power of Mary, the mother of God, in your life? Do you need to ask her intercession for a significant situation now?

Closing Prayer:

O God, as we celebrate the birth of Mary,
 -we ask for the grace to trust in her intercession.
Through Mary, source of our joy,
 -we ask for the grace of healing the brokenhearted.
Through Mary, seat of wisdom,
 -we ask for the grace of guidance in our lives.
Through Mary, mother of God,
 -we ask for the grace to recognize Jesus in the poor. Amen



FEAST OF BLESSED FREDERIC OZANAM
September 9

Gospel: (Luke 10: 25-37)

“And who is my neighbor? Jesus replied: “There was a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who fell in with robbers. They stripped him, beat him, and then went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road; he saw him but continued on. Likewise there was a Levite who came the same way; he saw him and went on. But a Samaritan who was journeying along came on him and was moved to pity at the sight. He approached him and dressed his wounds, pouring in oil and wine as a means to heal. He then hoisted him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, where he cared for him. The next day he took out two silver pieces and gave them to the innkeeper with the request: “Look after him, and if there is any further expense I will repay you on my way back.” Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the man who fell in with the robbers?” The answer came, “The one who treated him with compassion.” Jesus said to him, “Then go and do the same.”

Reflection:

“The humanity of our days seems comparable to the traveler of whom the Gospel speaks...in our turn, weak Samaritans, worldly and people of little faith that we are, let us dare nonetheless to approach this great sick one. Perhaps it will not be frightened of us. Let us try to probe its wounds and pour in oil, soothing its ear with words of consolation and peace; then, when its eyes are opened, we will place it in the hands of those whom God has constituted as the guardians and doctors of souls, who are also, in a way, our innkeepers in our pilgrimage here below, so as to give our errant and famished spirits the holy word for nourishment and the hope of a better world for a shield.” –Bl.Frederic Ozanam- (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p. 82)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Frederic does not call Christians “good Samaritans,” as one would expect, but “weak Samaritans.” How are you in your Conference, indeed weak human beings who attend to other weak human beings by acts of compassion?

Closing Prayer: A Litany in Honor of Blessed Frederic Ozanam

Frederic Ozanam, defender of faith, **pray for us.**
Frederic Ozanam, promoter of hope, **pray for us.**
Frederic Ozanam, apostle of charity, **pray for us.**
Frederic Ozanam, exemplary husband and father, **pray for us.**
Frederic Ozanam, lover of poverty and the poor, **pray for us.**
Frederic Ozanam, advocate of the dignity of the human person, **pray for us.**
Frederic Ozanam, servant of the truth, **pray for us.**
Frederic Ozanam, model for Catholic teachers and professors, **pray for us.**
Frederic Ozanam, disciple of St. Vincent De Paul, **pray for us.**
Frederic Ozanam, faithful son of the Church, **pray for us.**
Frederic Ozanam, our intercessor at the throne of God, **pray for us. Amen**



TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
September 13, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 18:21-35)

Peter approached Jesus and asked him, “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus answered, *“I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants....a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount...Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan. When the servant left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount...he had the fellow servant put in prison until he paid back the debt. His master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you? Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers...So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother or sister from your heart.*

Reflection:

Forgiving another-not focusing on our hurt or the other’s transgression but on the loveliness of the other-is so difficult! The challenge of this gospel is to forget how others have behaved toward us and look to God’s way of loving and forgiving us. Our focus must be on God. Without God’s example we probably couldn’t forgive very well. The challenge is to forget about ourselves so we can reach out to the other. (Living Liturgy, p. 236)

Vincentian Meditation:

“Because Jesus took our misery upon Himself, it is only reasonable that we should follow and imitate His holy, human life....Filled with consolation and happiness at the thought of being accepted by Him to live my entire life as His follower, I resolved that in everything, particularly in uncertain or questionable circumstances, I would consider what Jesus would have done...All the actions and the entire life of the Son of God are only for our example and instruction...”- St. Louise de Marillac- (Gibson and Kneaves, Praying with Louise, p. 55)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Jesus told us that we must forgive others “from our heart.” Who needs your forgiveness?

Closing Prayer:

Come, Lord of Healing and Unity, we are in need of Your divine help,
-help us to find a way to peace and understanding.
Let our hearts be ready to see Your way of loving and forgiving.
-may we be servants of pardon and make us as forgiving as You. Amen



Forgive your
brother or sister
from your heart.”

Mt 18:35

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
September 20, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 20:1-16)

Jesus told his disciples this parable: *“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard....When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.’ When those who had started about five o’clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day’s burden and heat.’ He said to them, ‘My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ...What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?’ Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last.”*

Reflection:

We all put off to the eleventh hour some piece of work that we have to do with respect to God or each other: prayer, forgiveness, charity, justice, etc.) If this parable teaches us something about how great God is and how generous, then we are called to this same greatness and generosity. Wouldn’t nations be different if debts could be forgiven and those who have were generous to those who have not? Wouldn’t families be different if hurtful behavior ceased and was forgiven generously? Wouldn’t individuals be different if we measured another only by his or her goodness? The landowner says to his grumbling laborers, “Are you envious because I am generous?” God’s generosity with us goes far beyond any measurement by human standards. (Living Liturgy, p. 240)

Vincentian Meditation:

St. Vincent knew himself to be sustained by God’s motherly and fatherly love. He could not conceive of a harsh and dreadful God. From his boyhood, he had prayed to the all-merciful, warm, and loving Father of Jesus, an **Abba** (Daddy) who called all of his children beloved. Vincent rested and warmed himself in God’s parental care and protection. Compassion, in Vincent’s view, was God’s name. Vincent once wrote: “God will take the place of father and mother for you. He will be your consolation, your virtue, and in the end the recompense of your love.(McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.30-31.)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

How have you experienced the “motherly and fatherly love” of God?

Closing Prayer:

God, our father, give us generous hearts,
 -help us to find a way to peace and forgiveness.
God, our mother, give us compassionate hearts,
 -help us to be merciful and loving. Amen



FEAST OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL
September 27

Gospel: (Mt. 5:1-9)

When Jesus saw the crowds he went up on the mountainside...his disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them: *"How blest are the poor in spirit: the reign of God is theirs. Blest too are the sorrowing; they shall be consoled. Blest are the lowly; they shall inherit the land. Blest are they who hunger and thirst for holiness; they shall have their fill. Blest are they who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs. Blest are the single-hearted, for they shall see God. Blest too the peacemakers; they shall be called children of God..."*

Reflection:

St. Vincent de Paul's gift for integrating service with a profound life of prayer is one of his greatest attractions to contemporary Christians. Vincent's mix of praying and doing has appealed to tens of thousands of believers over the last three centuries. He is still a valued spiritual companion for people who :

- struggle to integrate prayer and meditation with service to their needy neighbor;
- become exhausted by their activity instead of being nourished by it;
- have seen God in the eyes of poor, sick, homeless, despairing people.

Vincent will be a good companion to anyone who seeks balance between action and contemplation, organizing good works and relying on divine providence, intelligent activity and trusting surrender. (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 13-14)

Vincentian Meditation:

Frederic wrote about his patron, Saint Vincent de Paul: "A patron ...is a model one must strive to imitate, as he himself imitated the model of Jesus Christ. He is a life to be carried on, a heart in which one's own heart is enkindled, an intelligence from which light should be sought; he is a model on earth and a protector in heaven. A two-fold devotion is owed him, imitation and invocation..."(Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p. 38-39)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How has Vincent's heart enkindled your own heart?

Closing Prayer:

St. Vincent de Paul, apostle and witness of the charity of Christ,
**-help us to abandon ourselves to God's Providence, and
faithfully discovering his action in all the events of our lives.**

St. Vincent de Paul, servant of the poor,
**-obtain for us a tender heart filled with compassion for the
distress and suffering others.**

St. Vincent de Paul, accompany us in our service.
**-so that in our work, our families, and in our parishes we
become impassioned by his Gospel of love. Amen**



TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
September 27, 2020

Gospel: (Mt. 21: 28-32)

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders: *“What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’ He said in reply, ‘I will not,’ but afterwards changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, ‘Yes, Sir,’ but did not go. Which of the two did his father’s will? They answered, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him.”*

Reflection:

This Gospel is a great example of saying, “actions speak louder than words.” It is a reminder that belief isn’t a matter of saying yes or professing creeds. Belief is action, follow-through. Those who believed in John the Baptist changed their minds, that is their lives, by repenting. Those who believe in Jesus do the same. If tax collectors and prostitutes (symbols for great sinners) can enter the kingdom of God, then there’s got to be great hope for all of us! Taking their lead, all we need to do is make change a permanent part of our life. Spirituality is about growth that can only come from the willingness to let go and change. (Living Liturgy, p.244)

Vincentian Meditation:

“Aren’t the poor the suffering members of our Lord? Aren’t they our brothers and sisters? ... We should assist the poor in every way and do it both by ourselves and by enlisting the help of others... To do this is to preach the gospel by words and by work.” –St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 64)

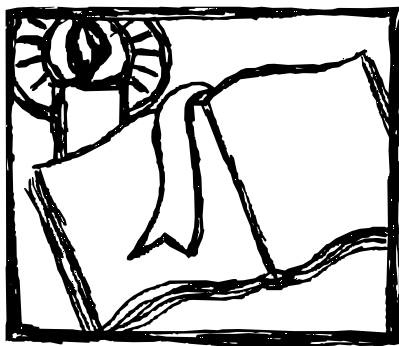
Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

Do our actions speak louder than our words?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, servant of the poor,
 -may we be carriers of your good news to the poor
Jesus, servant of the poor,
 -help to serve those who lack resources, who lack options, who lack power over their lives.
Jesus, servant of the poor,
 -may we help the poor by acts of compassion that alleviate their needs and give them hope.
Jesus, servant of the poor,
 -grant that we may bring the goodness of God to the poor, in our actions and our words. Amen.





LITURGICAL YEAR-Cycle A
4th Quarter-2020
October-November
December (Cycle B)

OCTOBER

October 4	Twenty-seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time
October 11	Twenty-eight Sunday of Ordinary Time
October 18	Twenty-ninth Sunday of Ordinary Time
October 25	Thirtieth Sunday of Ordinary Time

NOVEMBER

November 1	All Saints Day
November 1	Thirty-first Sunday of Ordinary Time
November 2	All Souls Day
November 8	Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 15	Thirty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time
November 22	Christ the King

DECEMBER-Cycle B

November 29	First Sunday of Advent
December 6	Second Sunday of Advent
<i>December 8</i>	<i>The Feast of the Immaculate Conception</i>
December 13	Third Sunday of Advent
December 20	Fourth Sunday of Advent
<i>December 25</i>	<i>Christmas</i>
December 27	Feast of the Holy Family

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
October 4, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 21:33-34)

Jesus said, *"Here is another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard... When vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to obtain his produce. But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they killed, and a third they stoned... Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.' They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?"* They answered him, "He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants..." Jesus said to them, *"Did you never read in the Scriptures: The Stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes? Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."*

Reflection:

The good news of this gospel is that the kingdom will survive no matter how the "tenants" act because the cornerstone is Christ. This provides a metaphor for our own living. No matter what shape the vineyard of our own lives is in--whether we need pruning or we seem to be in a dry desert--if we keep our eyes on Christ as the cornerstone of our own lives we will be fruitful. God cares for the vineyard of our lives: we are nurtured by God, fed at God's table, helped by the commandment of love. All we need to do is let God tend us and bring us to produce good fruit. All we need do is be faithful; God will take care of the rest. (Living Liturgy, p.248)

Vincentian Meditation:

"Do not be upset if things are not as you would want them to be for a long time to come. Do the little you can very peacefully and calmly so as to allow room for the guidance of God in your lives. Do not worry about the rest."- St. Louise de Marillac- (Gibson and Kneaves, Praying with Louise, p.40)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

What worries do you need rest from? Or put to rest?

Closing Prayer:

Those who walk with integrity proclaim the steadfast love of our God. In trust, we pray,
 -walk with us, Lord.
Teach us to do what is right,
 -and to speak the truth with courage.
Teach us to serve the poor,
 -and to recognize the face of Christ. Amen



The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

October 11, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 22:1-10)

Jesus said: *“The Kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they refused to come. ...The king then said to his servants, ‘The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come. Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find’. The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, and the hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to meet the guests, he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment. The king said, ‘My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment? But he was reduced to silence. Then the king said to his attendants, ‘Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.’ Many are invited, but few are chosen.”*

Reflection:

It is incredible that the invited guests could refuse to come to such a significant and lavish banquet! But we are invited to a feast even more lavish and we, too, can fail to see its significance and fail to prepare ourselves. Our everyday living is not inconsequential—even the little things we do are helping us put on our own wedding garment. Our continual conversions from sin prepare us for the feast of heaven. (Living Liturgy, p. 252)

Vincentian Meditation:

“In our calling, we are patterned more closely to Our Lord Jesus Christ, who, it would seem, made it his principal task to assist and care for the poor: “He sent me to preach good news to the poor.” If somebody asked Our Lord, “Why did you come on earth?” He would answer: “To assist the poor...” And so, are we not then the happiest of people to be part of the Mission for the very same reason that moved God to become one of us?
—St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 54)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

How have you come to realize that God has “called and chosen you” to serve the poor?

Closing Prayer:

“Called and chosen” as followers of Jesus, we stand with those struggling to embrace their dignity as children of God. For them we pray,

-God of mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who love without measure, yet feel unloved by others,

-God of mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who give to other, yet are deprived of basic needs.

-God of mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who strive for justice, yet endure persecution for their efforts.

- God of mercy, hear our prayer. Amen



Many are called, but few are chosen.

Mt 22:14

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

October 18, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 22:15-21)

The Pharisees went off and plotted how they might entrap Jesus in speech. They sent their disciples to him saying, “Teacher, we know that you a truthful man and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. And you are not concerned with anyone’s opinion, for you do not regard a person’s status. Tell us, then, what is your opinion: Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?” Knowing their malice, Jesus said, “*Why are you testing me, your hypocrites? Show me the coin that pays the census tax.*” Then they handed him the Roman coin. He said to them, “*Whose image is this and whose inscription?*” They replied, “Caesar’s.” At that he said to them, “*Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.*”

Reflection:

Jesus’ answer puts things into perspective. There are different spheres of rule, and our loyalties are not either/or, but there are appropriate behavior belonging to both spheres. Christian living is being comfortable in all spheres, all having their just due, without compromising God’s sovereignty. When God is truly the center of our lives there is no problem with giving others their due. Conversely, giving others their due doesn’t necessarily compromise God as the center of our lives. Jesus shows that single-mindedness about God is even better expressed when we know clearly God’s place and everyone else’s place. (Living Liturgy, p.256)

Vincentian Meditation:

“Ah! My dear friend, what a troublous, but what an instructive time it is, through which we are passing! We may perish, but we must not regret having lived in it. Let us learn from it. Let us learn, first of all, to defend our belief without hating our adversaries, to appreciate those who do not think as we do, to recognize that there are Christians in every camp, and that God can be served now as always! Let us complain less of our times and more of ourselves. Let us not be discouraged, let us be better.” –Bl. Frederic Ozanam- (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p.51)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

As in Frederic’s day, we also are living in a “troublous but an instructive time.” What are we learning...?

Closing Prayer:

Christ died to bring peace to the world. And so we pray:

-Lord Jesus, grant us peace.

For an end to bitterness and hatred, we pray,

-Lord Jesus, grant us peace.

For an end to divisions among races and religions, we pray,

-Lord Jesus, grant us peace.

For an end to hostility between nations, we pray,

-Lord Jesus, grant us peace. Amen

I am the LORD, and there is no other.



Is 45:6

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
October 25, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 22:34-40)

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a scholar of the law, tested him by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? He said to him, *"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."*

Reflection:

The love of God is central to our lives: love with all one's heart, soul, and mind. If the second commandment to love neighbor as self is like the first, then we might surmise that we must love our neighbor *in the same way* as we love God. Loving God isn't merely a matter of fervor in our hearts; it is expressed in doing good for the sake of others. (Living Liturgy, p.260)

Vincentian Meditation:

"Let us love God, my brothers, let us love God. But let it be with the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brow." –St. Vincent de Paul-
(McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.64)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

As you pray the words of Vincent, picture instances when you did love God in actions of charity and justice. Recall two sincere attempts that you made to be helpful to someone, one of which worked and the other which did not. Share on any differences between the two acts of charity.

Closing Prayer:

We have given ourselves to the service of our sisters and brothers.
Mindful of our need for grace, we pray:

**-Jesus, help us to "love God with the strength of
our arms and the sweat of our brow."**

So many are hungry and have no means of support,

-may we respond with generosity and availability.

The sick and the poor wait for healing,

-may we respond with generosity and availability.

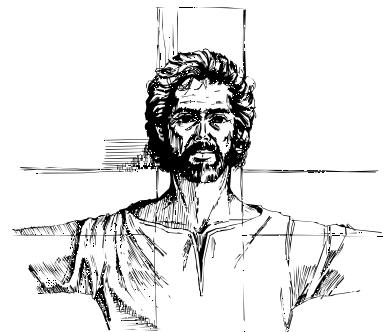
To those who are saddened by the burdens of life,

-may we respond with generosity and availability.

For the grace to love God with our whole heart, mind and
soul, and our neighbor as ourselves,

-may we respond with generosity and availability.

Amen



I AM COMPASSIONATE.

EX 22:27

FEAST OF ALL SAINTS

November 1

Gospel: (Matthew 5:1-12)

Jesus went up the mountain, and he began to teach them saying, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”*

Reflection:

This solemnity of All Saints is a reminder and promise that through our baptism we already share in the glory of the saints whom we honor. The saints stand out as models who have been faithful to their baptismal commitment and give us courage and strength that we, too, can be faithful. We know some of the saints who have been canonized by name. And there are also countless other saints, our deceased relatives and friends among them, whom we also know by name. This multitude of faithful followers of Christ beckon us to hear what Jesus teaches in the gospel: “Blessed are you...” (Living Liturgy, p.240)

Vincentian Meditation:

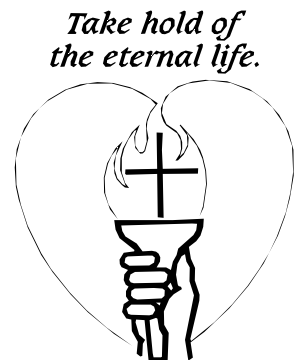
The Beatitudes are a new scale of values. We might say that the Beatitudes are an invasion of God’s madness into the world of what humanity considers to be good sense. Have you ever tried to make a list of what you would consider your eight beatitudes? This could be very revealing and might show a very deep chasm between the values of our Lord and those by which we daily live. Do you feel comfortable with our Lord’s Beatitudes? Or has it been your experience, as it has been mine, that when you start to think or talk about one beatitude, you prefer to drop it because of its difficulty, and move on to another which you would consider more simple and easy? The beatitude that makes you feel most uncomfortable is probably the one that is most relevant to you personally. (McCullen, *Deep Down Things*, p.739)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts after a moment of silence*)

Who is your favorite “Saint” canonized formally or informally?

Closing Prayer:

May we work together to build up the kingdom of God,
-Saints of God, intercede for us.
May our desire for God draw us more deeply into prayer,
-Saints of God, intercede for us.
May we comfort the broken hearted in their sorrow,
-Saints of God, intercede for us.
May we feed the hungry and bring mercy to the poor,
-Saints of God, intercede for us.
May we be peacemakers,
-Saints of God, intercede for us. Amen



THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
November 1, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 23: 1-12)

Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, *“The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen...They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation ‘Rabbi.’ As for you, do not be called ‘Rabbi.’ You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one earth father; you have one Father in heaven. Do not be called ‘Master’; you have but one master, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Reflection:

Jesus tells us that there is only one God-(one Father, one teacher, one master) and all our direction comes from keeping God central. When our focus is right, then our relationships are right. God as center leaves us servants-both of God and of one another. Keeping our focus on God doesn’t allow us to seek honors and recognition. It allows us to serve God in one another. The surprise and good news is that when we keep our focus on God and serve one another, God exalts us! (Living Liturgy, p.268)

Vincentian Meditation:

“Let us stop saying, ‘It is I who have done this work.’ For every good thing ought to be done in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. God pours out his inexhaustible gifts on the humble, those who recognize that all the good done by them comes from God.”
–St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.74)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)*

Share the times when you have found that God indeed “pours out his inexhaustible gifts on the humble”.

Closing Prayer:

We celebrate the mystery of your presence in our lives.
Filled with joy, we pray:

-Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

There are those who do not know your presence,
-may our lives be a sign of faith for them.

There are those who do not know your presence,
-may our lives be a sign of hope for them.

There are those who do not experience your love,
-may our lives be a sign of love for them.

There are those who are poor and oppressed by others,
-may our lives be a sign of justice for them. Amen



COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

November 2

Gospel: (John 17:24-26)

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: *“Father, those whom you gave me are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them.”*

Reflection:

Remembering our departed loved ones in our prayers on this feast day of “All Souls” is a way of keeping them close to us. Also, praying for the dead, and to the dead, is an important part of the grieving process. Just as we grew in our relationships with our loved ones during their lifetime, so do we continue to deepen our love for them as we remember them in prayer after their death. Praying for the dead reminds us that death isn’t an end but a beginning of new life. Our prayers can be a concrete expression of our belief in everlasting life. (Living Liturgy, p.242)

Vincentian Meditation:

In reflecting on death, St. Vincent wrote: “All our life is but a moment which flies away and disappears quickly. Alas, the seventy years of my life which I have passed, seem to me but a dream and a moment. Nothing remains of them but regret for having so badly employed this time. Let us think of the dissatisfaction we will have at our death, if we do not use this time to be merciful. Let us then be merciful and let us exercise mercy towards all in a way that we will never find a poor man without consoling him....O Saviour, do not permit that we abuse our vocation. Do not take away from us the spirit of mercy, because what would become of us if You should withdraw your mercy from us. Give us, then, that mercy along with the spirit of gentleness and humility.” (McCullen, *Deep Down Things*, p.137)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

Who do you remember and pray for especially this “All Souls Day”?

Closing Prayer:

Let us remember our friends and family who have gone before us,
-may they celebrate now in the feast of heaven.
Let us remember those who suffered death in violence and war,
-may they be gently received at the table of love.
Let us remember all the poor who have gone before us,
-may they receive the wine of peace and the bread of life.
Let us remember the members of our Conference who have died,
-may they rest in the mercy of God. Amen



THIRTY-SECOND WEEK OF ORDINARY TIME

November 8, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 25: 1-13)

Jesus told his disciples this parable: “*The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five of them were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps.... At midnight, there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’... The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise ones replied, ‘No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.’ While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him... Afterwards the other virgins came and said, ‘Lord, Lord, open the door for us!’ But he said, ‘Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.*”

Reflection:

Our readiness for the Bridegroom is something for which we prepare during our entire lives. The gospel suggests that our waiting and watching must also include *seeking*. We must go out to *meet* Christ. Waiting and keeping vigil without seeking for the Bridegroom might be metaphors for living our daily lives without paying attention to the times when God breaks in upon us. It might be closing our eyes to the need of another. It might be keeping ourselves so frenetic with activity that we never take time to look seriously at ourselves, the priorities of our lives, and how we are (or are not) growing spiritually. Seeking while waiting for the Bridegroom prepares us for his coming by helping us to see all the little decisions in our everyday lives as directly related to our being ready, the door being open, and our going into the feast. (Living Liturgy, p.272)

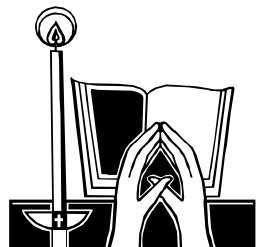
Vincentian Meditation:

For Vincent, true holiness meant that all of his decisions, plans, struggles, and actions had to revolve around the person of Jesus Christ. His own relationship with Jesus Christ developed in three stages. During his boyhood, his parents passed on their convictions about Jesus. Vincent believed, but not enough to move mountains. The second stage occurred in his twenties. A string of personal defeats and some sound spiritual direction caused Vincent to look deeply into himself. In was known only to Vincent and God, Vincent’s encounter with Jesus moved him to rearrange the map of his life. Finally, as he became more involved in ministering to the poor, Vincent discovered Jesus Christ in the faces of these humble souls. Vincent’s live then revolved around the person of Jesus, whom he encountered in the poor, sick and homeless people. (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.41-42)

Discussion: (*Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)
How have you been seeking Jesus in your life’s journey?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, give us the grace to seek you in our lives,
**-so that all of our decisions, plans, struggles and actions
revolve around you. Amen**



Maintain justice,
and do what is right.

THIRTY-THIRD WEEK OF ORDINARY TIME
November 15, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 25: 14-30)

Jesus told his disciples this parable: *“A man going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third one—each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. Likewise, the one who received two made another two. But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master’s money.”*

Reflection:

The wealth of God has no limits; neither are there limits to what God shares with us. What a remarkable God! What kind of master entrusts his slaves with this kind of wealth? What kind of God shares divine life with adopted children? Ultimately this is what Jesus has been trying to tell us all these Sundays in these parable about the kingdom. God lavishes on us divine Life. God Life isn’t a quantity to be measured, however, like talents. God’s Life is a relationship that can never be exhausted. The curious thing about God’s generosity with God’s Life is that the richer in it we become, the more likely we are to be faithful in the small matters so we can grow in what we already have. The shock of this gospel is the extravagance of what is being given us. All we need do is be faithful in “small matters.” The cost of fidelity has no comparison to the reward given. (Living Liturgy, p.276)

Vincentian Meditation:

A man appeared before Saint Peter, who asked him, “Where are your wounds?” The man replied, “I have no wounds.” To which Peter rejoined, “Was there no passion in your life, no cause in which you spent and risked yourself that would invite scars?” Frederic had a passion in his life—the passion for truth. He had the scars to prove it—scars sustained because of the promise he had made to God to give his life to the service of the truth. Frederic’s passion for truth manifested itself in his loving adherence to the Catholic faith; in his professional work of study, writing, and teaching; and in his ministry with other Vincentians to the needs of poor people. Frederic’s passion and mission was for truth and the service of the poor. He believed the truths of his faith were absolutes, made clearer through prayer and study. Frederic wrote, “Truth has no need of me; but I have need of it.” (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p.43,46)

Discussion: *(Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

What is the “passion in your life”?

Closing Prayer:

O God, give us the grace to have a “passion” in our life,
-so that we may use the talents you have given to us.
O God, give us the grace to be faithful Vincentians,
-walking in the footsteps of Vincent and Frederic. Amen



THE SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING

November 22, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 25:31-46)

Jesus said to his disciples:... *“the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ and the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me.’”*

Reflection:

Christ exercises his sovereignty, his kingship, in the right to judge. The basis for his judgment of us is whether we care for the least of our brothers and sisters. Growth in discipleship and living the paschal mystery is measured by the extent to which we look upon the other as Christ, loving that person as Christ, doing for that person as Christ. This is how we come to joy. This is how we “share in the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world.” Think about it: from the first moment of creation, God planned for us to share in God’s everlasting life and joy. (Living Liturgy, p. 280)

Vincentian Meditation:

Frederic wrote to Father Pendola of Tuscany, who had just started a Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, desiring that the young be introduced to the living reality of Christ in the world: “You have amongst your children many who are rich, Reverend Father-oh! What a salutary lesson, how strengthening for those soft young hearts, to show them the poor, to show them Jesus Christ, not in pictures painted by great masters or on altars resplendent with gold and light, but to show them Jesus Christ and His wounds in the person of the poor!” (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p.96)

Discussion: (*Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How can we better “strengthen soft young hearts by showing them the poor and showing them Jesus Christ and His wounds in the person of the poor”-so that they will also hear the words “whatever you did to the least of mine, you did for me”?

Closing Prayer:

Let us pray to Christ our King, source of compassion and love,
-**heal the sick, comfort the dying, and bring peace to all who have lost hope.**
For the wisdom to recognize God’s hand and holiness in each person and event,
-**serving God in the least of my brothers and sisters.**
That we may have the courage to work untiringly for peace and justice,
-**may your kingdom come! Amen**



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT November 29, 2020

Gospel: (Mark 13:33-37)

Jesus said to his disciples: *“Be watchful! Be alert. You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work; and he orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cock crow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”*

Reflection:

Advent symbolizes our human condition. We long. We hope. We rejoice in what we have. We yearn for what we have not. Even nature conspires during Advent time to make us feel our human incompleteness. As the darkness of winter descends, we long for the light. As cold numbs us, we yearn for the warmth of God’s love. As plants and leaves die, sometimes with a final flash of brilliance, we hope for resurrection and new life. The Lord is about to create something new. Isaiah cherishes this theme. He repeats it again and again. “See, I am doing a new deed, even now it comes to light: Can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness, paths in the wilds.” (Maloney, Seasons in Spirituality, p.49)

Words of Father Robert Maloney, C.M.

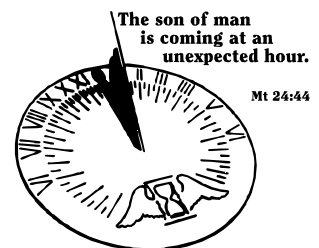
“I encourage all the members of the Vincentian Family to give themselves wholeheartedly to the Church’s preferential option for the poor. Whatever choice in life others make, our is for the poor. Today, therefore, I ask each one to find the way to best touch the lives of the poor....we should honestly identify the way in which our life and works will have a real effect on the poor, the most abandoned, in society. Also, one of the signs of our trust in the Lord, and our self-gift to him, will be faithfulness to personal prayer daily, even in the midst of our multiple activities. We have a wonderful vocation! We are called to live among the poor as signs of boundless hope, with profound confidence in the Lord’s presence, his love, his creative power. “Behold I make all things new”. With you, in this Advent time, I pray that the Lord “when he comes may find us watching in prayer, our hearts filled with wonder and joy.” (Maloney, Seasons in Spirituality, p. 50-51)

Discussion: (Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)

How does Advent speak in your heart? What does Advent call you to do?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, you come to bring courage and hope,
-may we proclaim your coming with our lives.
You come as a visible sign of love,
-help us to serve the poor with compassion.
Strengthen us to the end by your grace,
-so that we may always be on guard, watching and alert. Amen.



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 6, 2020

Gospel: (Mark 1:1-8)

As it is written in Isaiah, the prophet: Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins... This is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Reflection:

John knew the Advent secret: He focused his whole life on the coming of Jesus. He realized that his all-consuming vocation was to prepare the way of the Lord. Our own vocation is very similar. Saint Vincent tells us that the person of Jesus must be absolutely central in our lives, as it was for following Christ. We seek to share in his love and reverence for the Father and his compassionate and effective love for the poor. With him we trust in God's providence, which rules over all. For Vincentians, as for John the Baptist, there is nothing else but Jesus. (Maloney, Seasons in Spirituality, p. 47)

Words of Father Robert Maloney, C.M.

John the Baptist's life makes it very clear that the following of Christ involves a demanding asceticism. He knew how to focus attention not on himself but on the Lord whom he served. He knew humility, and the ground for enormous freedom that humility gives. The humble recognize, with Vincent, that "all good which is done by them comes from God." Power, prestigious positions, the praise of others, wealth—all these mean little to the humble. The humble recognize their own gifts and their own limitations. Saint Vincent described humility as a missionary virtue that was utterly necessary in the service of the poor, saying: "Let us work hard at acquiring virtue and principally humility, yes humility. Let us ask God constantly that he be pleased to give us this virtue" (Maloney, Seasons in Spirituality, p.45-46)

Discussion: (*Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How do you see the virtue of humility alive in your Conference?

Closing Prayer:

Come Lord Jesus, give us the grace to "Make straight your paths"
-**teach us humility recognizing "all good comes from God."**
We so often lack power and human resources,
-**deepen our trust in the power of your Spirit working in us.**
With John the Baptist,
-**may we prepare the way for the coming of Christ.**
As we eagerly await your coming, come to all people
-**especially the poor and the forgotten.** **Amen**



FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
December 8

Gospel: (Luke 1:26-38)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And he said to her, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you...Do not be afraid, Mary for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus...The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age...for nothing is impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Reflection:

The dogma of Mary's being conceived without sin—what we refer to as the Immaculate Conception—was defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854. Mary is the model of holiness who calls us to be who we were meant to be: innocent before God. Mary's innocence and holiness were God's special favor to her. This solemnity reminds us that God's desire for each of us is to have the same innocence and holiness. Just as Mary and her divine Son said "yes" to God's will for them, so are we called through our baptismal commitment to do the same. But that doesn't mean that their example of holiness and fidelity is beyond us. Their lives were ordinary—wife and mother, son of a carpenter—but they lived the ordinary according to God's word. Our ordinary days—being wife or husband, mother or father, brother or sister, neighbor or friend, employer or employee—are to be lived as a "yes" to God. This is how we are holy too. (Living Liturgy, p.6)

Vincentian Meditation:

Frederic Ozanam had a strong devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, from his youth to his death. Frederic was insistent that the Society take Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception as its patroness. The first members of the Society chose December 8th as their special Marian feast twenty years before the formal proclamation of the dogma in 1854 by Pope Blessed Pius IX and a year after Frederic's death! Vincentians implore Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, their patroness, to intercede for their Councils and Conferences, their lives and ministry. (SVDP Manual, p.34-35)

Discussion: (*Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How does our Conference show devotion to Mary?

Closing Prayer:

Through Mary, conceived without sin,
 -we ask for the grace of holiness.
Through Mary, and her Immaculate Conception,
 -we ask for healing for those who are brokenhearted.
Through Mary, patroness of our Society.
 -we ask for the grace of fidelity for all Vincentians. Amen



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 13, 2020

Gospel: (John 1:6-8)

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?" he admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ." So they asked him... "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" He said: "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord."

Reflection:

John knew how to die. He knew how to speak the truth even when it cost dearly. He knew how to engage in an active public ministry to which crowds flocked, but also how to withdraw into the desert for prayer and penance. John the Baptist makes it very clear that we will live genuinely for Christ only if we are willing to die for him. Only the person who is practiced in the art of daily dying will be able to hand himself over to God in an act of final resignation, as John did. Daily dying consists in pouring out one's energies in the service of the poor, in listening attentively, in praying faithfully, in living harmoniously with others, in seeking reconciliation, in doing penance, in renouncing anything that is an obstacle to the following of Christ. John the Baptist calls us to prepare the way of the Lord by eliminating from our lives whatever impedes his coming. (Maloney, Seasons in Spirituality, p.48)

Words of Father Robert Maloney, C.M.

"Let me suggest that today, for us members of the Vincentian Family, an asceticism like that of John the Baptist might take these forms especially: rising early to praise God and strengthen our brothers and sisters in daily prayer; employing moderation and a critical sense in using television and other media; withholding divisive words and negative criticism; being disciplined and balanced in what we eat and drink; working hard, as servants do, for our "lords and masters," the poor." (Maloney, Seasons in Spirituality, p.48)

Discussion: (*Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

What form of John the Baptist's asceticism do you feel called to practice this Advent?

Closing Prayer:

As our Advent journey continues, we turn in hope to Christ and ask:

-Come, Lord Jesus, and do not delay.

Watch over all children, that they may know your love,

-Come, Lord Jesus, and do not delay.

Protect all who are abused and neglected,

-Come, Lord Jesus, and do not delay.

Strengthen all Vincentians in their efforts to reveal your love to others,

-Come, Lord Jesus, and do not delay. Amen



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 20, 2020

Gospel: (Luke 1:26-38)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. He said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you... Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and shall name him Jesus... And Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age... for nothing is impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Reflection:

Joseph receives little attention these days, even in Advent, but Joseph stands right beside Mary at the center of the stage. Joseph stands, with eager expectation, at the threshold of transcendence. From the darkness of his own limited understanding, he is continually peering into the mystery of God. Surely he cannot fathom the virginal conception of Jesus that the angel announces, but with loving compassion he bows in reverence to God's incomprehensible ways. Surely he does not understand how this child, who seems like any other, could be "God with us", but he abandons himself, in faith, to the task of loving the child and educating him. There is something very beautiful about Joseph's contact with the transcendent mystery of God. He was a carpenter and in the midst of his daily manual labor and family life, Joseph was surrounded by the mystery of God and he penetrated it with faith. He trusted in God's daily providence. (Maloney, Seasons of Spirituality, p.53)

Words of Father Robert Maloney, C.M.

"Imagine how Joseph felt as the birth of his mysterious son approached: puzzled, excited, awed. Deep faith was his light in the darkness. It enabled him to see the presence of God even where suffering, privation, and violence appeared to reign. Joseph knew the pain and embarrassment of poverty when there was no room in the inn. He witnessed violence when Herod unleashed his wrath against the children in Bethlehem. He felt persecution when he fled to Egypt. Yet he believed. He believed that God walked with him, that God is faithful to promises, that God is alive, and we can find God not only in the light but also in the darkness. He lived on the edge of mystery and was not afraid to gaze into it with courage in order to find God." (Maloney, Seasons of Spirituality, p.54)

Discussion: *(Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

How does Joseph speak to you this Advent?

Closing Prayer:

As we prepare for Christmas we pray for the grace to be like Joseph, so that:

For those who live in doubt,

-our lives will be a sign of faith.

For those who live in fear and oppression,

-our lives will be a sign of hope.

For those who do not experience God's love,

-our lives will be a sign of charity. Amen



CHRISTMAS

December 25

Gospel: (Luke 2:1-14)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled... And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child and she gave birth to her firstborn Son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds living in the fields and keeping watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold I bring you good news of great joy...for a savior has been born for you who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."...When the angels went away from them, the shepherds said to one another, "let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

Reflection:

The angel told the shepherds that the Savior was born and where to find him. How and when are we told? If we wait for the heavens to open and angels to speak to us, we will be waiting a lifetime. We are told in less spectacular ways of God's presence and saving activity on our behalf, but no less powerful or revealing. God does speak. God reveals divine presence in the smile of another, in someone's generous offer, in a plea for help, in the cry of the poor and the oppressed, in the child needing reassurance, in the aged needing a listening ear, in the sick needing a consoling hand. This is how we "make known the message": to reach out to another with God's compassion, mercy, forgiveness, healing, love. The mystery of Christmas is that God is incarnate. Today we see not a Baby in the manger, but a saving God working through and among us. (Living Liturgy, p.24)

Words of Vincent:

"Love is inventive, even to infinity." (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.103)

Discussion: (*Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How have we seen our saving God working through and among us this Christmas?
In what ways has "Love been inventive, even to infinity?"

Closing Prayer:

On this day, joy was reborn into the world,
 -may we share the joy of Christ with everyone today and always.
On this day, hope was reborn into the world,
 -may we bring the hope of Christ to those who are most in need.
On this day, love was reborn into the world,
 -may we bring the love of Christ to others in compassion,
On this day, peace was reborn into the world,
 -may we bring the peace of Christ to our family and our world. Amen



THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

December 27, 2020

Gospel: (Luke 2:22-40)

The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted-and you yourself a sword will pierce-so that the thoughts of many may be revealed."...When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Reflection:

All the wonderful gifts of grace bestowed on the Holy Family did not preserve this family from hardship and suffering. These simple parents surely had their own apprehensions-"you yourself a sword shall pierce." Yet they responded faithfully and obediently. This is the interface of our own modern families and the Holy Family: as they did, we too all face challenges in responding to God faithfully and obediently. The holiness of a family is not dependent upon perfection or an easy road. Whether we are a traditional family or a single parent, whether we have biological or adopted or foster children or no children, whether we live in an expensive home or a subsidized rental unit makes no difference for living as a holy family. What makes the difference is believing and trusting in God, responding to both hardships and God's wonderful gifts of grace in fidelity and obedience. Trust in God's ways. You, too, are a holy family. (Living Liturgy, p. 28)

Words of Frederic:

"...A new blessing has come to me, the greatest joy, probably, it is possible to experience here below! **I am a father!**... Ah! What a moment that was when I heard the first cry of my child; when I beheld that little creature, but that immortal creature, which God has confided to me, who brought me so many delights and so many duties...We have called her Marie, which is her mother's name, as well as that of the powerful protectress to whose intercession we attribute this happy birth...How could I dare teach her lessons that I did not practice? Could God have found a kinder way of instructing me, of correcting me, and setting my feet on the road to heaven?" (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p. 70-71)

Discussion: (*Share thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How has "God found the kindest way of instructing you, correcting you and setting your feet on the road to heaven" in your own "holy family", as Frederic's.

Closing Prayer:

With hopeful hearts we pray:

May our own "holy families" gather at the table of peace,

-to celebrate God's creative love in the human family

May the family of the Church gather at the table of the Eucharist,

-to celebrate our unity in the body and blood of Jesus

May the Vincentian Family gather at the table of the poor,

-to celebrate the presence of Christ among the lost and broken. Amen



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