

Spiritual Reflections for the month of March 2024

Please choose a prayer, reading and questions for reflection.

Reflection: Vincentians' Most Difficult Task

Literature dating from the earliest days of the Society reflects that alleviating Neighbour's material needs is often easier than meeting their need for encouragement, sympathy and friendship. As was written nearly two hundred years ago:

"Love and peace are two blessings which we endeavour to preserve amidst us; and, if we enjoy them ourselves, should we not attempt to diffuse them, especially among the poor, whose... miseries we try to alleviate? Who, in fact, is not aware that physical want is often the least of their misfortunes? The old man alone in the world, the orphan child, may no doubt suffer from cold and hunger; and yet, of possible evils, these may possibly be the least dreaded; for public commiseration may readily come to their assistance. But that which afflicts them is, that no friendly hand ever presses theirs, [and] no kind heart shares the burden of their sorrows..."

"Here the Society of St. Vincent de Paul endeavours to fill up the chasm. Its members go forth among the poor, not simply to dispense material help but, with the tender heart from which, through the grace of Christ, flow words of consolation, which are truly gifts of the best kind, they bring home to the poor man the conviction that he is not only assisted, but beloved. It is the part of the Vincentian Brother to pay not merely a flying visit to the abode of the indigent, but to enter leisurely; to seat himself on, perhaps, the only chair the room contains, to listen to his tale of misfortune; to encourage the disclosure of some soul-oppressing secret; to mingle tears with tears; and thus, by gentle patience and kind demeanour, to implant gradually in that withered heart feelings of gratitude for the friendship shown him."

Introduction – the Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul – 20th Edition

Reflection Question:

1. It is easy to hand over a packet of grocery cards at the Neighbour's door, with a brief exchange of "how are you" and "thank you". How does a Vincentian gain the confidence of our Neighbour's in order to convey a sense of friendship and concern to them? What obstacles stand in the way of doing so.? How might these obstacles be overcome?

Let us pray –

Gracious Lord, enlighten us on how best to convey your love and peace to the Neighbours whom we are called to serve.

- Submitted by Vincentian Sr. Debra Rolph, St. Anselm's Conference, Toronto East PC

A Daily Prayer for Lent

Dear Lord,

In this season of renewal, you call us to a closer walk with you through the inestimable gifts of faith, hope, and love.

Grant me the desire and means to share all that I am, all that I have, with everyone around me, especially those who walk daily in the shadow of poverty, illness, or despair.

Allow me to dispel their darkness by reflecting the light of your life into theirs.

Let not my heart become weary along the road. May I use any suffering you permit to unite myself more wholly with your Son, whose passion, death, and resurrection have opened the way to a life of eternal joy in your holy presence.

I ask this through Christ Jesus, our Savior, and His Immaculate Mother, Mary.

Amen.



- Submitted from Holy Family Conference, Durham Particular Council