

## Spiritual Readings for December 2019

### Scripture:

John 1:19-28;

“This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him who are you? He confessed and did not deny it but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

He said,

‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord’, as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet.” John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.’ ”

### Reflection and discussion:

1. Rabbi Sacks, the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, says that “humility is the orphaned virtue of our age; we say ‘if you’ve got it flaunt it.’ ” Do you think his observation is appropriate for you, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and our culture?

2. Our Rule (1.3.1.2) says, quoting Frederick Ozanam:  
“Our guiding rule should be neither to force ourselves on the public gaze nor to conceal ourselves from those who may wish to find us.” What do you think this means?

Do we conceal ourselves so much that people who may want to help, do not have the opportunity or awareness to support us and our neighbours in need?

So often people say, oh I didn't know the Saint Vincent de Paul did such and such a work or visited people in their homes or sponsored group homes. How can we bring correct and effective attention to the good works that we do so that they may speak to people who would support our mission by volunteering to serve or providing donations.

Is it vain and self serving to tell people what we do?

3. Saint John the Baptist was humble but not in a false way. He had gifts and talents; he was a fiery prophet and he spoke the word of God with passion. He also called himself simply “a voice crying in the wilderness, someone not worthy to untie Jesus' sandals.” Is it not false humility to say we have no gifts/talents and not to use the gifts/talents that God has given us for living the message of the gospel.

Please discuss the reflections #1, 2, or 3; or all please.