

# **Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Greater Toronto Central Council**

Spiritual reflection for the Annual General Meeting of September 26th, 2020  
prepared by Monsignor Bianco

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, C.43, vs. 1-3:

"But now says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you O Israel.  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not  
overwhelm you; when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned and the flame shall not  
consume you.  
For I am the Lord your God the holy one of Israel your saviour."

These words from Second Isaiah may be familiar to many of you. They are used in the hymn: 'I have called you by name'. The prophet Isaiah wrote them when Israel was in exile in the Babylonian Captivity, 550 B.C. Prior to the captivity, Israel, according to scholars, had been 'relatively prosperous, overly confident and material minded'. While this isn't true of all our world prior to Covid 19, is it a fair description of many parts of our world, particularly the wealthier parts? Destructive 'fire' and flooding 'water' are metaphors for man made and natural evils. In exile Isaiah saw that God's people (really all people who wanted justice) were 'discouraged, dazed, destitute'. The needed consolation and renewed faith in God's mercy and loving care. Does what Isaiah saw describe some of our need today?

Monsignor Bianco will reflect on the following questions:

1. Do Isaiah's words apply to us? Are we in some way in captivity to the epidemic and other disasters the majority of our own making?
2. How does Jesus, and how can we, offer concrete, practical consolation to one another?

Be silent and then together we pray:

Jesus, fire and water, the earth and our talents are meant to build your kingdom. We are grateful for your gifts of nature and human creativity. We pray we do not abuse your gifts: may we use them, with your grace, to heal our broken world,  
Amen