

Spiritual Readings for the month of January 2021

Please choose a reading and questions for reflection.

“The Way It Is”, composed by William Stafford (1914-1993)

There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you cannot get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.
You don't ever let go of the thread.

For Stafford, this thread is an analogy of the True Self which is where God lives within, inside our hearts and souls. It is Love! It is God! We cannot let go of the thread because God has stamped us from conception with His very own DNA. It is mine. It is yours. It is the treasure of every human being who was, who is and who is to come! Vincentians and Neighbors in Need alike. There is always a common thread within which makes us all the same like our unchanging God.

In Psalm 102 we read: Of old you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same and your years have no end!!

Questions for Reflection:

1. How do we co-operate with God in bringing this thread to it's true brilliance? Then we can see Love shining more brightly in one another.
2. Do we observe that sharing this Love, in many different ways, is a cause of joy and fulfillment in our own souls?
3. Do we really know and truly believe that God loves us endlessly at every moment of every day? It is difficult to grasp this concept. Only God can bestow this amazing grace.

Prayer:

Oh God you are the Source of all Love. Teach us everyday to search your face for wisdom and discernment in dealing with people who may appear to be different in thought or appearance. You have graced us all with this thread. We all possess the same needs, to be loved, to be cherished, understood and accepted. Help us to love one another as we place our trust in you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Submitted by Vincentian, Sr. Marie MacChesney

Servant Leadership by Robert K. Greenleaf

Servant and leader, can these two roles be fused into one real person in all levels or status or calling?

The idea of Servant as a Leader came out of reading Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East*. In this story, we see a band of people on a mystical journey. The central figure of the story is Leo who does his menial chores, but also sustains them with spirit and song. He is a person of extraordinary perseverance. All is well until Leo disappears. The group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned. They cannot make it without the servant Leo. The narrator, one of the party, after some years of wandering finds Leo, and is taken into the Order that had sponsored the journey. There he discovers Leo whom he had known first as a servant, was in fact the titular head of the Order, its guiding spirit, a great and noble leader.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How do we take the past message of Hermann Hesse and use it to respond to the contemporary voice?
2. How can more servants emerge as leaders? or should we just remain as servants?
3. In a wish to pursue good society in the Saint Vincent de Paul, how do we blend in strong individualism amidst community?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, provide us with the ability to respect the differences on the surface of those we encounter on our journey to meet the needs of those we serve. In realizing the strength and wisdom of individuals we serve, help us to realize that collegial leadership can create an effective community. Amen.

Submitted by Vincentian, Bro. Joe Brisbois