

Spiritual Readings for the month of April 2021

Please choose a reading and questions for reflection.

Frederic Ozanam:

April is the month the Society of Society Vincent de Paul celebrates Blessed Frederic Ozanam's birthday, principal founder, on April 23, 1813. It was 20 years later in 1833 Blessed Frederic and others celebrated his birthday and formed the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Blessed Antoine Frederic Ozanam was a remarkable individual with a clear-sighted vision on how to help impoverished people living in what was at that time, the slums of Paris, France. In a short life span of 40 years, dying on September 8, 1853, he inspired the Society and its service. Members remain faithful to the spirit and ideals originally inspired by Frederic Ozanam.

The two most outstanding traits in Frederic Ozanam's character:

1. The genuine sympathy which Ozanam felt for other humans was something much more than mere humanitarianism. It was an impulse of pure unselfish love that first caused God to call the world into being. Ozanam had long meditated on this fundamental truth. He radiated a glow of love and sympathy to all around him. Year by year, this love has gathered fresh strength and continued to light up the dark places of the world.

Question for Reflection:

When you have gone to visit a tired and lonely neighbor in need, did they actually console and strengthen you? How?

2. The second distinguishing trait in Ozanam's charity is his humility, modesty, and genuine spirit. Frederic Ozanam refused to ever allow himself to be elected president of the Society. He never used the Society as a means to pursue a career path.

Ozanam valued friendship and defended his friends no matter what the cost. He showed great tenderness when dealing with his family. He had a great reverence for his parents, and sacrificed his career in order to please them.

Question for Reflection:

Do you believe Ozanam's traits of selflessness and humility are the key attributes that endure in our minds today?

Prayer:

Turn our hearts to yourself, eternal Father, so that, always seeking the one thing necessary and devoting ourselves to works of charity, we may worship you in spirit and in truth.

Prepared by Vincentian Sr. Venera Fazio

April Spiritual Reflections, continued:

Called to Serve

The First Witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus, think about the role of women in this Gospel
Read the Gospel of Luke. 24: 1 - 11.

This part of the Gospel brings out the role of women in that time.

Women's words in the Court of Law were never trusted. Her Testimony had to be validated by at least 2 males. For all their dedication to the Messiah, the women did not qualify in the eyes of the men who ran their society, to be official Witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus. Their message..." Jesus is alive and will meet you in Galilee!"...had to be checked out. Peter and John ran out to the grave to see for themselves, because they did not believe the women!

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why do you think Women were not believed then and often not now?
 2. Why do we have mostly Women who come for help as our Neighbours in Need?
 3. What are the ways we can help the Women in need to be more successful in their lives.
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Loneliness

Taken from St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta

An Inspiration for Self Improvement. by Dr. G. Francis Xavier Ph. D.

People in many western countries are spiritually poor and lonely.

People today are hungry for Love, which is the only answer to loneliness and great poverty.

There is no hunger for bread but people suffer from terrible hatred, feeling unwanted; helpless and hopeless. They have forgotten how to smile; they have forgotten the beauty of the human touch. They need someone who will understand and respect them.

Mother says, "...Let us not be satisfied with just giving money. Money is not enough. I would like more people to give their hands to serve and their hearts to love....to recognize the poor in their own homes, towns and countries, and to reach out to them in love and compassion, giving where it is most needed, and share the joy of what we have. The Service in Christ. Prayer is very important. Teach children to pray no matter what religion they are. Give all the credit to God. Say the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, Make me a Channel of your Peace.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How do you think St. Mother Teresa followed the Gospel of Jesus?
2. How can I help or show love, to any lonely senior person, relative or neighbour, during this Season of Easter?
3. Read the life of St Mother Teresa or her teachings

Prepared by Vincentian Sr. Beatrice Zuzarte