

Spiritual Readings for the month of September 2021

Please choose a reading and questions for reflection.

First Reading; Feast of St. Vincent de Paul September 27th

In the month of September, we are mindful of the feast day of Saint Vincent de Paul on September 27. Saint Vincent said, “It is not sufficient for me to love God if I do not love my neighbor. I belong to God and the poor.” Yet another time he said, “If God is the center of your life, no words are necessary. Your mere presence will touch hearts.”

Today many often think of charity as nothing more than donating money to a good cause. The Bible teaches us, though, that charity is much more than that. In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, he writes, “I may give away everything I have, and even give up my body to be burned – but if I have no charity, this does me no good.” (1 Corinthians 13:3) Therefore, it is possible to give away all that we have and yet not have charity. Charity is much, much more than giving to those in need. Charity is a special love that people rooted in faith have for others. It comes from the heart.

Jesus teaches us to love one another, to care for our brothers and sisters in need. For when we show kindness to others, we are God’s children. By loving one another, we imitate the love of Christ which we have received. When we do this, we live charity, for charity is love.

Pope John Paul II once said that charity “is a need which springs from faith working through love.” In our service of love, we must care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to become neighbours to everyone and to show special favour to those who are poorest, most alone and most in need. In helping the hungry, the thirsty, the foreigner, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned – as well as the child in the womb and the old person who is suffering or near death – as Vincentians, we have the privilege to serve Jesus. He himself said: “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Questions for discussion:

1. How can we be more present to our neighbours in need?
2. Can you articulate some of the situations or times where you may have found it difficult to be charitable?
3. How can we sustain ourselves, so we are not overcome by this privilege?

Let us pray this day for the courage and compassion to bring charity to those who need our support and love ... in our parishes, in our workplace, in our neighborhood and in the world.

All: Gentle God, renew in us the spirit of our patron St. Vincent de Paul, kindle in us the fire of your love. Tender God, show us how to weep with those who weep, fill our hearts with compassion and love. Creator God, you call men and women to be Vincentians, give us eyes to see Christ in the broken and the poor and help us to be truly present to them. Amen

Prepared by Vincentian Sr. Donna

Second Reading: Feast Day of Blessed Frederic Ozanam September 9th

Gospel: (Luke 10: 25-37) “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied: “There was a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who fell in with robbers. They stripped him, beat him, and then went off leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road; he saw him but continued on. Likewise, there was a Levite who came the same way; he saw him and went on. But a Samaritan who was journeying along came on him and was moved to pity at the sight. He approached him and dressed his wounds, pouring in oil and wine as a means to heal. He then hoisted him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, where he cared for him. The next day he took out two silver pieces and gave them to the innkeeper with the request: “Look after him, and if there is any further expense I will repay you on my way back.” Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the man who fell in with the robbers?” The answer came, “The one who treated him with compassion.” Jesus said to him, “Then go and do the same.”

Reflection: Frederic heard the call of Jesus – to be merciful. He saw the works of mercy as calls to action. He believed that if he genuinely wanted to serve those in need and others, he had to direct his works of mercy to the moral and spiritual betterment of individuals, not only to the alleviation of their physical distress.

Question for Discussion: How are you living the spirit of Frederic in “justice and charity”?

Closing Prayer: A Litany in Honor of Blessed Frederic Ozanam:

Frederic Ozanam, defender of faith, pray for us.

Frederic Ozanam, promoter of hope, pray for us.

Frederic Ozanam, apostle of charity, pray for us.

Frederic Ozanam, exemplary husband and father, pray for us.

Frederic Ozanam, lover of poverty and the poor, pray for us.

Frederic Ozanam, advocate of the dignity of the human person, pray for us.

Frederic Ozanam, servant of the truth, pray for us.

Frederic Ozanam, model for Catholic teachers and professors, pray for us.

Frederic Ozanam, disciple of St. Vincent De Paul, pray for us.

Frederic Ozanam, faithful son of the Church, pray for us