

# Spiritual Reflections for the Month of February 2022

## Spiritual Reflection on the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus

I remember hearing this meditation at a retreat I attended way back. I found it to be very powerful.

A woman was given a Gospel reading for contemplation. It was the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector, a man who climbed a tree in order to see Jesus in the crowd. Jesus spots him and says He intends to visit him and stay at his house. Following the Ignatian style of prayer, the woman was to put herself in the story, and focus on who she might be and how she would react. She can picture Jesus telling her that He would like to visit with her at her home. She then pictures herself at home, somewhat anxious, preparing for the visit, tidying this, cleaning that. There is a knock, and it is Jesus! But she is not quite ready, so she asks him to wait a bit. When she finally goes back to the door, Jesus is no longer there.

First of all, I would encourage you to read the passage of Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19: 1 – 10) and put yourself in the scene. Who are you? What do you see? Do you speak? How do you feel? What do you do?

### **Reflections:**

1. In the case of the woman, no doubt she was devastated to find Jesus no longer there. Have you noticed Jesus knocking at your door? What kind of welcome do you offer?
2. Have there been times in our lives when we have left Jesus at the door, waiting?
3. How can I be more prepared when there is a “knock” at my door?
4. What might I want to say to Jesus at this time?
5. Could Jesus be in the person of our Neighbour in Need? What is our response when they knock at our door? At times have we kept them waiting ... by a less-than-willing-to-help attitude? ... by a routine response? ...by seeing them as unworthy or inferior in some way? ...by not recognizing that You are present in them and You love them as You do us?

### **Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, You knock at my door. Fill me with Your Spirit so that I might drop everything, and fling open the door to welcome You. Remind me that You are present in each person, and that each encounter with a Neighbour in Need is another opportunity to make You welcome.

*Vincentian Sal Badali, St. Mary Star of the Sea, Peel*

## **Spiritual Reflection: Using our gifts to lift up the whole community**

<sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.  
1 Corinthians 12:4-11 [NRSV]

When we reflect on our service with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, many of us will remember the initial fear going into unfamiliar buildings, interacting with families very different from our own, and frustration with being able to contribute so little in aid. Even so, if you are reading this, you have preserved in your commitment and find joy and meaning as a Vincentian, both through friendship with and awareness of neighbours in need, and in community with your fellow Vincentians.

1. Membership in the SSVP is not for everyone so what are the gifts, innate or nurtured though family example or personal experience that you bring to this work. How do you stay hopeful and maintain your interest and energy in visiting those in need?
2. Parish communities are foundational to the presence and work of SSVP conferences. In return, the SSVP conference mirrors Christian love and charity to the greater parish community. How do our gifts and the Vincentian experiences that we bring back to our parishes, enrich our parishes?
3. Frederic Ozanam and his friends, in their day, worked hard to make care of the needy a priority for Catholic laity. Can we today, use our Vincentian experiences to contribute in a positive way to the information gathering process for the Catholic Church's upcoming Synod On Synodality (i.e. Journeying Together)? - [Google Synod on Synodality, Share your Thoughts, Archdiocese Toronto]

**Prayer:** *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit*

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