

A Christmas Reflection

A Reflection adapted from John Vance (2021)

When I think about this year and all the extraordinary calls on our 'good works' which have been responded to, so openly, by our Members, Volunteers and Employees three words come to mind.

Faith, Hope and Love

It is said that Faith, hears the inaudible, sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible. Faith is an 'attitude of heart', and even given all the substantial pressures this year has brought, we have had faith in ourselves and each other to continue to bring about our Mission to 'serve Christ in the poor' because at the very heart of why 'we do what we do' is the desire to 'shape a more just and compassionate society' We are always open to; hear, see, believe and act because as Vincentians we know that we have the complete assurance and certainty that the Christ Child is with us, at our side every step of the way.

It has been said that; experience is great for the mountain tops, but faith is needed in the valleys.

Yet Faith cannot work alone, for Faith to function properly we need to embrace its sister – Hope; because if faith is our forward movement, then hope is the engine that propels it forward. Hope calls us to always have, in all our dealings an 'expectation of good'. Hope has been called the 'anchor for the soul'. As Vincentians we always seek to reach out with Hope because it is our fervent wish that all those we serve will, through our actions, encounter the certainty of Christ's love and come to believe in and support themselves. Our Vision calls us to respect our Companion's dignity and share our hope through encouraging them to take control of their lives. And further, our Mission states that our service is to bring Hope to our Companions. I realise, that at times, encounters with our Companions leave us with a feeling that there just is no Hope, yet, it is exactly then, that we need to trust and listen to the voice of Hope and have the courage to say, 'I know things will work out'. The frustrating element of this though is that we just don't know how or when? Yet this won't stop us from always continuing to strive to offer a hand-up and continue to support our Companions to find a way 'to take control of their own destiny'. At all times let us be positive because if we have Hope we will always expect 'the good'.

A Season of HOPE. The title is set against a background of a mountain range with a small town in the valley. The word 'HOPE' is written in large, bold, white letters with a purple-to-pink gradient. Above it, 'A Season of' is written in a cursive font.

A Season of HOPE

If we were to get into a helicopter and fly above our work, we would see that at the epicentre of what motivates us as Vincentians is Love, because to Love is to let ourselves value everyone, Love is known as the greatest of all of the virtues because it never ends. In Chapter 25 of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus made a promise that He would offer the Kingdom to, those who fed him, gave him water to drink, welcomed him, clothed him, visited him when sick and when in prison. Those who heard Jesus say this, asked, when did we do this to you? And Jesus' answer was, when you did it to the least of these sisters and brothers of mine you did it to me.

The Society's Vision and Mission calls us to do just this, they declare that 'we serve with love, respect, justice, hope and joy' while always 'seeking a way to provide a hand-up to people in need'. Even though the journey to attain the hand-up may be slow and incremental we should never lose sight of this central pillar of the Society's work.

It has been said that many things are possible for the person who sees with eyes of faith. Even more is possible for the person who expects hope. And still more is possible for the person who knows that love remains forever.

But everything is possible for the person who practices all three of these virtues.

Faith, Hope and Love

Wishing everyone a very happy and holy Christmas

John Vance
Director of Mission and Spirituality (2021)