



St Vincent de Paul Society
VICTORIA
good works

Our Mission – Our Story

Our **Reflection** Guide



'Slow me down Lord... to let me be present to myself, to others and to You'

Opening Prayers

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pause and open ourselves to the presence of God

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.

O God, by the light of the Holy Spirit, teach the hearts of the faithful and grant that by the same Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolation.

Through Christ Our Lord.

Prayer for the Church and all Vincentians

Compassionate God, we pray for our Church, especially our Pope, Bishops, Priests and Religious. May their leadership strengthen and nourish our Vincentian spirit. We pray for all members of the Vincentian family throughout the world, especially in those countries with which we are twinned.

We pray that like Saint Vincent de Paul, we are open to the presence of Christ in the poor and are always willing to share our spirit and resources.

Prayer for the Society Spirit

Lord Jesus, we share in the faith and courage of our founders, especially Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, Blessed Rosalie Rendu, Fr Gerald Ward and Cptn Charles O'Neill. May their spirit be renewed in the Society of today. May we be open to the needs of those suffering poverty and injustice, remaining receptive to the grace of the Holy Spirit. We pray that we build a sense of community wherever our members are gathered.

Prayer for Reconciliation

Holy Spirit, we pray that the St Vincent de Paul Society be a place in which the First Peoples of Australia are welcomed and deeply respected. May the Elders be blessed and honoured.

May this sacred land of ours truly inspire us to come together as one. Renew our hearts as we heal one another and build a future based on mercy, justice, faith, hope and love. May we listen and learn from each other as we walk together in a profound spirit of reconciliation.

Hail Mary, full of grace. Our Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

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Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the many members, volunteers and employees who have shared their stories of their Vincentian work. Some of these stories are featured within this Guide and others I have passed on to our Marketing & Fundraising Department for publication.

Thank you to the South Australian Society whose Values Cards were an inspiration for reflections featured, and to the many deeply thoughtful people from all sorts of traditions who helped shape my thinking for the reflection guide.

Excerpts are taken from The Congregation of the Mission (CM Global, online) and a whole world of Vincentian resources may be found on the internet.



Journey together towards holiness (the Rule 2.2)

Since I joined the Society in May 2016, I have been deeply humbled listening to the stories of our members and volunteers. Within this Reflection Guide, I have sought to let some of your light come out from under the bushel; to honour and capture examples of how you quietly, faithfully and courageously go about living the mission and values of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The reflections which accompany your stories I hope will prompt more sharing of your work, your heart and your Vincentian faith.

This series of reflections is therefore different from past editions that laid out the weekly Sunday and feast day Gospels with a commentary and a communal prayer. That weekly format was sourced from the USA St Vincent de Paul Society website and can still be freely accessible and downloaded from their website by visiting:

www.svdpusa.org/members/Programs-Tools/Tools/Spirituality-Formation/Vincentian-Reflections

I know whilst some conferences/councils used the previous Gospel commentaries regularly, others brought their own treasures to share, which I am sure will continue. Some members told me they didn't feel confident or knowledgeable enough to prepare anything else - that they would appreciate encouragement to build confidence and understanding of the role of reflection. Others said they wanted variety.

I hope the following pages might help in find meaning in or deepening your understanding of the challenging, diverse, heartfelt work of conferences, Vinnies shops and our special works. Reflecting together is an opportunity to foster a sense of shared spirituality which is at the core of being a Vincentian.

Our CEO Sue Cattermole has unified us, the staff to reflect deeply on our mission and values to provide invigorated support to conferences and special works in the coming year.

As always I welcome your feedback, comments and suggestions for ways I might help all Vincentians to deepen our spiritual life on this 'journey together towards holiness'. (The Rule 2.2)

In gratitude and with every blessing

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie".

Julie Fewster
Mission and Spirituality Director

Our Vincentian tradition as outlined by The Rule, asks us to reflect upon three areas:

- How what I do fulfills the mission of the Society to help the poor
- How what I do for the Society and the poor supports my spiritual life and faith
- How what I do nurtures my friendship with Society members.

Reflection on our spiritual journey together requires commitment to coming together with generous acceptance of ourselves and others. All the spiritual traditions recommend that we have space for reflecting on our faith. In the Christian tradition we are called to do that in community. Our Founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, was adamant that our work of charity can only be sustained through both a personal faith life and shared spirituality.

When we enter into silence we allow ourselves to be fully present to God, bringing no agenda, no demands, no requests. We let go of striving for any particular outcome, laying aside all our personal projects. We stop trying to build our own little kingdoms and submit to the greater kingdom of Christ.

In the practice of silence, stillness and sharing we are affirming that our identity lies, not in any external reality but in the secret hidden presence of the Divine at the heart of our being.

When we sit in silent prayer, we stop clutching and grasping. We let go of resistance and reactivity. We discover within ourselves the deep freedom that is life lived from within, rather than driven by external circumstance, or emotional needs, wants, and desires. We surrender to the hidden power of God at work in our lives.

Several members have told me that sometimes there is simply no time for reflection when there is so much to get through in a meeting. As Cardinal Edward Clancy once said to me *'If you have no time for God and one another, what are you here for?'*

How to use this reflection guide

I invite all members to take it in turns to lead a reflection. Remind each other that this is sacred space – the whole meeting is a prayer. Encourage people to be present by not reading papers, not looking at their phone, or worrying about time.

Many of the reflections within encourage that you include up to two minutes of silence. Inner reflection gives time to gather thoughts and feelings before inviting everyone present to offer thoughts or feelings without interruption or commentary.

You can dip in anywhere within this Guide to select a reflection or story that appeals to you. The questions are a guide only. I also invite you to try this gentle process of silence and comment when you bring your own reflections to conference meetings or other Vincentian gatherings.

Remember to bring this Reflection Guide to meetings.

On your busiest days I hope that some of these reflections will help you answer Jesus' invitation to 'Come away with me, rest a while'.

OUR FOUNDERS. OUR PATRONS.

OUR INSPIRATION.



Blessed Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853) was schooled in law, literature and philosophy and taught at the universities in Lyon and Paris. Challenged by a detractor of the faith to demonstrate the good he was doing socially in France, Frédéric and six companions founded the Society of St Vincent de Paul on April 23, 1833. On June 23, 1841 Frédéric married Amelie Soulacroix, and their only child, Marie, was born in 1845. He succumbed to ill health and died on September 8, 1853. Pope John Paul II beatified Frédéric Ozanam in Paris on August 22, 1997.



Blessed Rosalie Rendu (1786-1856) was a Daughter of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, who worked for the poor in the Mouffetard district of Paris, France. Her zeal for the poor drove her to establish the means to educate poor children; to care for infants; to support the elderly; to serve the poor in their homes; and to supervise young working girls. One of her disciples in her mission of service was Frédéric Ozanam and the first members of the St Vincent de Paul Society. She gave to them her gift of insight in serving the poor when she told them, *“Be kind and love, for love is your first gift to the poor. They will appreciate your kindness and your love more than all else you can bring to them. If you wish to be loved, you must love, and if you have nothing to give, give yourself.”*



St Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) was founder of the Congregation of the Mission, Daughters of Charity, Confraternities of Charity, and Ladies of Charity. A man of deep faith, keen intellect, and enormous creativity, he has become known as the “The Apostle of Charity” and “Father of the Poor.” His contributions to the training of priests and organizing parish missions and other services for the poor shaped our Church’s role in the modern world.



St Louise de Marillac (1591-1660), a contemporary of St Vincent de Paul, was inspired and directed by Vincent’s spiritual leadership. She was Vincent’s collaborator in founding the Daughters of Charity and organising hospitals for the sick and poor, asylums for the orphaned, workshops for the unemployed, championing literacy for the uneducated, and establishing standards for local charities. Louise was a wife, mother, teacher, nurse, social worker and religious foundress.



Father Gerald Archbold Ward (1806-1858) was born in London and migrated to Australia in September 1850. In March 1854 the first Australian Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society was established at St Francis Church to assist people affected by rapidly expanding immigrant population. Today the presence of the St Vincent de Paul Society still exists at St Francis Church in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

VINCENTIAN VOCATION

‘The vocation of the Society’s members, who are called Vincentians, is to follow Christ through service to those in need...Vincentians serve in hope.’ (The Rule Part I, 1.2)

Vincentians offer service regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender or lifestyle.

In the Gospel story of Jesus washing the feet of the friends, his apostles Jesus first took off his outer garments. **What outer garments do we take off to be the servant of the poor?**

Prejudice, mental attitudes, biases, our unreasonable expectations, our frustration, leave behind any resentment they may be feeling about having to go out tonight. Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist. Vincentians wrap themselves in His love, His wisdom, His patience, to go out to those seeking service.



The hand of Christ the blesses the cup
Represents the pierced hand of Christ who suffered, died and rose from the dead - assistance being offered is inspired by our Christian values.

The hand of love that offers the cup
Represents those who do the service - our members, volunteers and staff. The cup represents the assistance being given. **It is the cup full of hope and love.**

The hand of suffering that receives the cup
Represents the people we serve receiving the assistance we offer.

Reverence for the poor (The Rule 1.8)

Vincentians serve the poor cheerfully, listening to them and respecting their wishes, helping them to feel and recover their own dignity, for we are all created in God’s image. In the poor, they see the suffering Christ.

Group Activity

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

What outer garments do I take off to be the servant of the poor?

What is in my cup? How full is it? How do I refill it?

I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

Mathew 25:35



WHY I AM A VINCENTIAN

My Story, and Yours

By telling [our] stories, we come to see the significance and coherence of our lives as a gift, as something not of our own heroic creation, but as something that must be told to us, something we would not have known without the community of faith. The little story I call my life is given cosmic, eternal significance as it is caught up within God's larger account of history. The significance of our lives is frighteningly contingent on the story of another.

Stanley Hauerwas & William Willimon: Resident Aliens

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

Isaiah 61:1

Group Activity

The reflection leader reads out 'The Call to Meaning' slowly.

The Call to Meaning

What brought you here? What were you dreaming you might accomplish when you first came to work here? These questions always elicit a deep response because so few of us work for trivial purposes. Most people come to their organisations with a desire to do something meaningful, to contribute and to serve. Everybody needs an inner belief that you are in some sense meant to be here, that you can leave the world a little different in a small way. If we are asked to recall that inner belief, and if we have colleagues speak about their own inner yearnings to make a small difference, we feel energy for the work and for each other. The call of meaning is unlike any other, and we would do well to spend more time together, listening for the deep wells of purpose that nourish us all.

Margaret Wheatley: Turning to one another, Simple conversations to restore hope to the future

Allow two minutes for silent reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- What words or phrases struck you about this reading?
- Why did you join the St Vincent de Paul Society?

NEVER, NEVER, NEVER

JUDGE ANOTHER PERSON

A story from Barbara Waterman, St Patrick's Conference Wangaratta

Dear Julie,

You asked me to send you the story I relayed on Saturday at our spirituality day, so here goes!

While sharing a small office building with another church agency, the St Vincent de Paul Society conference was getting ready to deliver hampers to some of our needy friends. A man who shared a low rental house and kitchen run by the council for single men came in looking for a bit of Christmas cheer. He was very dirty, smelly, drunk and carried a carton of cigarettes.

The lady who ushered him into us remarked on the side that she didn't think he needed our help, 'he seemed to have enough to buy grog and smokes.' He was a real miserable soul, not wanting to talk much and I must say, my co-worker and I were not overly friendly.

We explained that we would like to deliver some Christmas goodies and food, but he would need to be home when we came as some of the food would need to be refrigerated. He said he would be there.

I repeated again, stressing the date, and telling him not to forget. I will never forget his sad look as he said, 'How could I forget such a date. That was the day my wife and children were burnt to death when our house burnt down.'

Never, never, never judge another person.

Sincerely,

Barbara Waterman



Dear Julie,
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WHEN LIFE TURNS UPSIDE DOWN

A story recalling a recent home visit from the Wantirna Conference.

A perfect example of how life can turn upside down within a short period of time.

An average family - mum, dad and three children. All, somehow, coping with the pressure of their mum being delivered with a diagnosis of cancer, chemotherapy and an operation too.

Amongst all of this stress, their father is injured at work and is forced to seek Work Cover for a serious shoulder injury. The Work Cover claim took time, which left them without any income.

They tried to survive as long as they could, and even considering selling their house, but realised that renting a home was twice as expensive as the mortgage they paid.

This is where Vinnies comes in. We were able to relieve some of the financial burden the family were experiencing.

This loving family are now looking forward to getting back to a normal life, with hope, love and support from their Vinnies friends.

Good news too, their mother has been cleared of cancer and successfully treated – a true blessing.

REFLECTING ON OUR VINCENTIAN VALUES

It is recommended to consider one Value each conference meeting. The reflection leader reads out the passage then asks the questions. Allow two minutes for silent reflection, then invite all members to comment on one of the questions.

Our Values

1. COMMITMENT

Loyalty in service to our mission, vision and values

Our Mission: The St Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organisation that aspires to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy, and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society.

Our Vision: The St Vincent de Paul Society aspires to be recognised as a caring Catholic charity offering ‘a hand up’ to people in need. We do this by respecting their dignity, sharing our hope, and encouraging them to take control of their own destiny.

Group Activity

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- What attracts me to our mission and vision?
- What parts of this can be challenging?
- How do I keep going when life throws up challenges, disappointments and anxieties in conference meetings and in my work as a Vincentian?
- What reconnects me with my faith when it seems that all I do for the people we serve, often changes nothing?

2. COMPASSION

Welcoming and serving all with understanding and without judgement

When compassion wakes up in us, we find ourselves more willing to become vulnerable, to take the risk of entering the pain of others. We open our lives to them in a genuine willingness to be known. We tell them our own story of suffering as a way of offering healing and hope. We feel their heart bleeding into ours; we catch their tears. We relieve their pain as much as we are able, and by relieving theirs, we relieve God's.

Sue Monk Kidd: Firstlight

Group Activity

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- When have I experienced standing alongside another person, who is in pain/poverty?
- What has been my response?
- What have I learned about myself and my capacity to be with people experiencing pain/poverty?
- Do I find it challenging to be vulnerable and not in control? Being the giver more than the sharer?



DRESSING WITH DIGNITY

A story from the Hoppers Crossing Vinnies Shop.

We received a call from a man who asked if we had clothing for plus size ladies, as he was looking for something for his mother. He told us that she had been admitted to hospital, but had passed away and was to be buried the next day. He couldn't get into her unit to get her clothing.

So we invited him into the shop. We asked him what kind of clothes his Mum wore for a special outing. She liked dark colours and sparkly things. We rushed around to find some options for him to choose; some sparkly scarves, glittery broaches and dressy dresses. When he arrived at the shop with his 13-year-old daughter in tow, he was so grateful for our effort. He wasn't really sure of the right size so Sue the Manager suggested she ring the funeral home to check.

The whole team was on board to find his mum a lovely outfit. Providence provided and we discovered a size 24 beautiful black lace dress, classic crystal broach and a lovely shawl with multi-coloured Lurex thread. A gorgeous outfit for a very special occasion. The man was relieved and happy to be able to do this last thing for his mother.

Meanwhile, his young daughter was also sorting through racks looking for something to wear to the funeral. Helped by our team, they found a simple black dress that she was thrilled with.



A WARM WELCOME

CatholicCare rang the Call Centre asking for help for a refugee family.

When we arrived at the house we were made most welcome. They informed us that they had come from Persia (Iran) via Indonesia and had been imprisoned on Christmas Island for nine months. The brother of one of the men had drowned during the crossing.

The man and woman said they were married. She was touching her ring finger, embarrassed. I asked if she had lost her wedding ring. She replied that Australian guards had confiscated all their valuables on Christmas Island. Despite months of repeated requests, nothing was returned.

They could not offer us seats because they had none. When we inquired how we could help they opened the kitchen cupboards. They had one large pot (which a fellow refugee had loaned them), one serving spoon and a knife block.

The couple were sleeping on a mat on the bedroom floor and three men on a mat in the lounge room without blankets or doonas. The wardrobes were sparse with clothing. There was only one or two old towels in the bathroom.

We were shocked; but we got to work.

We organised kitchen utensils, beds, cupboards, kitchen table, chairs, lounge furniture, manchester, clothing and gift cards to buy food.

We were close to tears as we said goodbye.

Now in Christ Jesus all of you are sons and daughters of God through faith. Here there is no longer any difference between Jew or Greek, or between slave or freed, or between man and woman, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Romans 10

REFLECTING ON OUR VINCENTIAN VALUES

3. RESPECT

Service to all regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender, or political opinions

I wonder

I wonder what would happen if I treated everyone like I was in love with them, whether I liked them or not and no matter what they say or do to me even if I see things in them which are ugly twisted petty cruel vain deceitful indifferent, just accept all that and turn my attention to some small weak tender hidden part and keep my eyes on that until it shines like a beam of light like a bonfire I can warm my hands by and trust it to burn away all the waste which is not never was my business to meddle with.

Derek Tasker 2007

Group Activity

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- What does respect look like in our conference meetings?
- How well do we welcome people who are different from us at our conference or special works?
- What does respect look like when we visit those in need or they come to our centres?

4. INTEGRITY

Promoting, maintaining and adhering to our mission, vision and values

There is no happiness if the things we believe in are different from the things we do.

Dame Freya Stark

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

Archbishop Oscar Romero

Group Activity

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- How do we as conference members/ volunteers encourage one another to adhere to our mission, vision and values?
- What do I/we do well in acting with integrity?
- Where do I/we fail or limit undertaking our mission?



GIVING BACK

A story from the Youth & Education Team.

In January 2016, the Youth and Education Development team welcomed a group of teachers who volunteered their time to assist in the development of our social justice workshops.

At the end of the week, each of the volunteers had an opportunity to share a reflection on their experience. One of the women was quite moved and spoke of the way Vinnies supported her family when she was young. She had always been grateful for this support and had appreciated the opportunity to 'give back' through volunteering.

While she had initially put her hand up to help with the workshops, because she felt she had skills to offer, she hadn't anticipated the richness and emotion that she would find in engaging with the Society once again.

So you will walk in the way of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will inhabit the land, and those with integrity will remain in it...

Proverbs 2:20-21



APPRECIATION FROM THE HEART

A story from the Bentleigh/Moorabbin Conference.

Paul, a young plumber had everything going for him. A wife, a son and a mortgaged house. Life was good until one day he was hit by a truck, which nearly cost him his life.

His injury left him with brain damage and difficulty walking. Soon after, he lost his house and his marriage fell apart.

Social services provided him with a one bedroom apartment and his is now living on a disability pension. Financially, times are tough, and he sometimes calls on our conference for assistance.

His main concern was running cost of his big old fridge which was given to him for free. He was also doing the washing by hand, standing up on his fragile legs, as he had no washing machine. So we came to his aid to replace the fridge and to buy him a washing machine.

Paul supplements his income by playing his guitar at the local shopping mall and tries not to call us unless he is too weak or the weather is too cold and wet to earn those precious extra few dollars. He is a happy go lucky person and never feels sorry for himself.

On my last visit to Paul, where he just asked for food vouchers, I extended an invitation to see if we could further assist – and he said he needed to give us both a hug as thanks for what St. Vincent de Paul Society has done for him.

Appreciation from the heart.

REFLECTING ON OUR VINCENTIAN VALUES

5. EMPATHY

Establishing relationships based on respect, trust, friendship and perception

Hospitality means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines. It is not to lead our neighbour into a corner where there are no alternatives left, but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment.

Fr Henri Nouwen: Reaching Out

A gesture of love is anything that helps others discover their humanity. Any act where we turn to one another. Open our hearts. Extend ourselves. Listen. Any time we're patient. Curious. Quiet. Engaged. Conversation does this. Speaking to each other involves risk. It's often difficult to extend ourselves, to let down our guard, especially with those we fear or avoid. When we are willing to overcome our fear and speak with them - that is a gesture of love.

Margaret Wheatley

Group Activity

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- Tell a story of a 'gesture of love' that extended you out of your comfort zone.
- How do I know when I have truly listened and heard another person?
- How does it feel when I have been listened to?
- How would your conference or work colleagues describe your capacity to empathise?

6. ADVOCACY

Working to transform the causes of poverty and challenging the causes of human injustice

Yours must be a work of love, of kindness, you must give of your time, your talents, yourselves. You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis. You must study their conditions and injustices which brought about such poverty, with the aim of long term improvement.

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

Do not depend on the hope of results - you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results, but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself. You gradually struggle less and less for an idea and more and more for specific people. In the end, it is the reality of personal relationship that saves everything.

Fr Thomas Merton OCSO

Group Activity

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- What do we do to speak up for the voiceless?
- Do I stand up for someone being teased or vilified, speak up for 'dole bludgers', counter arguments in our conference, families and friendship when people say things like 'they brought it upon themselves' or say hello to the homeless person on the street?
- What do we do to educate ourselves on the causes of poverty? What do we need?



A LESSON IN THE REALITIES OF THE WORLD

An excerpt from a letter of thanks sent from a parent, after members of the Youth & Education Team visited St Kevin's Primary School.

I just wanted to drop you a quick note to share a very animated conversation I had with my son this evening.

The lesson today on homelessness and food security had a huge impact on him and has really raised his awareness of the realities of the world we live in. It's helped him to understand the many reasons why a person can end up homeless and has given him, I feel, a deeper sense of empathy.

As he said to me, "It's not because they're not trying or something mum. Sometimes they don't have the opportunities. We learnt that in the game we played."

For a parent hearing this... wow! Now that's learning!! Thank you for including these sessions in the school's curriculum. I'm really delighted that the kids were exposed to such great and important education concepts.

Thank you!!

PS A direct outcome of today's discussion... Our family now signed up for big sleepout.



HOPE AND LOVE: THE REASON I VOLUNTEER

A story from the Dandenong Tutoring Program.

When asked why she volunteers as a tutor, Rachael said: *“These children are our future and knowing that I can use my skills and knowledge to positively impact another person, even if it’s simply getting a particularly shy or withdrawn child to smile and speak with another student, is a true blessing. This sense of purpose and grounding is the reason I volunteer and will continue to volunteer for many more years.”*

Rachael is regularly taken aback by the pure hope and love that radiates from her students. While writing letters to asylum seekers currently in immigration detention centres, one of the students exclaimed: *“I’ve been there – the camp place – and I’m going to say that I can’t wait for you to come home and for you to come here and us to meet”.*

It made Rachael realise that through her voluntary role she was able to provide a safe, friendly and respectful space for people from refugee backgrounds. She is confident that these very students will make a similar positive difference on the lives of others, in order to shape a more just and compassionate society where all are welcomed.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Phil 4: 6

REFLECTING ON OUR VINCENTIAN VALUES

7. COURAGE

Encouraging spiritual growth, welcoming innovation and giving hope for the future

Many people tend to associate prayer with separation from others, but real prayer brings us closer to our fellow human beings. Prayer is the first and indispensable discipline of compassion precisely because prayer is also the first expression of human solidarity.

Why is this so? Because the Spirit who prays in us is the Spirit by whom all human beings are brought together in unity and community. In the intimacy of prayer, God is revealed to us as the One who loves all the members of the human family just as personally and uniquely as God loves us. Therefore, a growing intimacy with God deepens our sense of responsibility for others.

Fr Henri Nouwen

In my life I want to become better and do a little good.

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

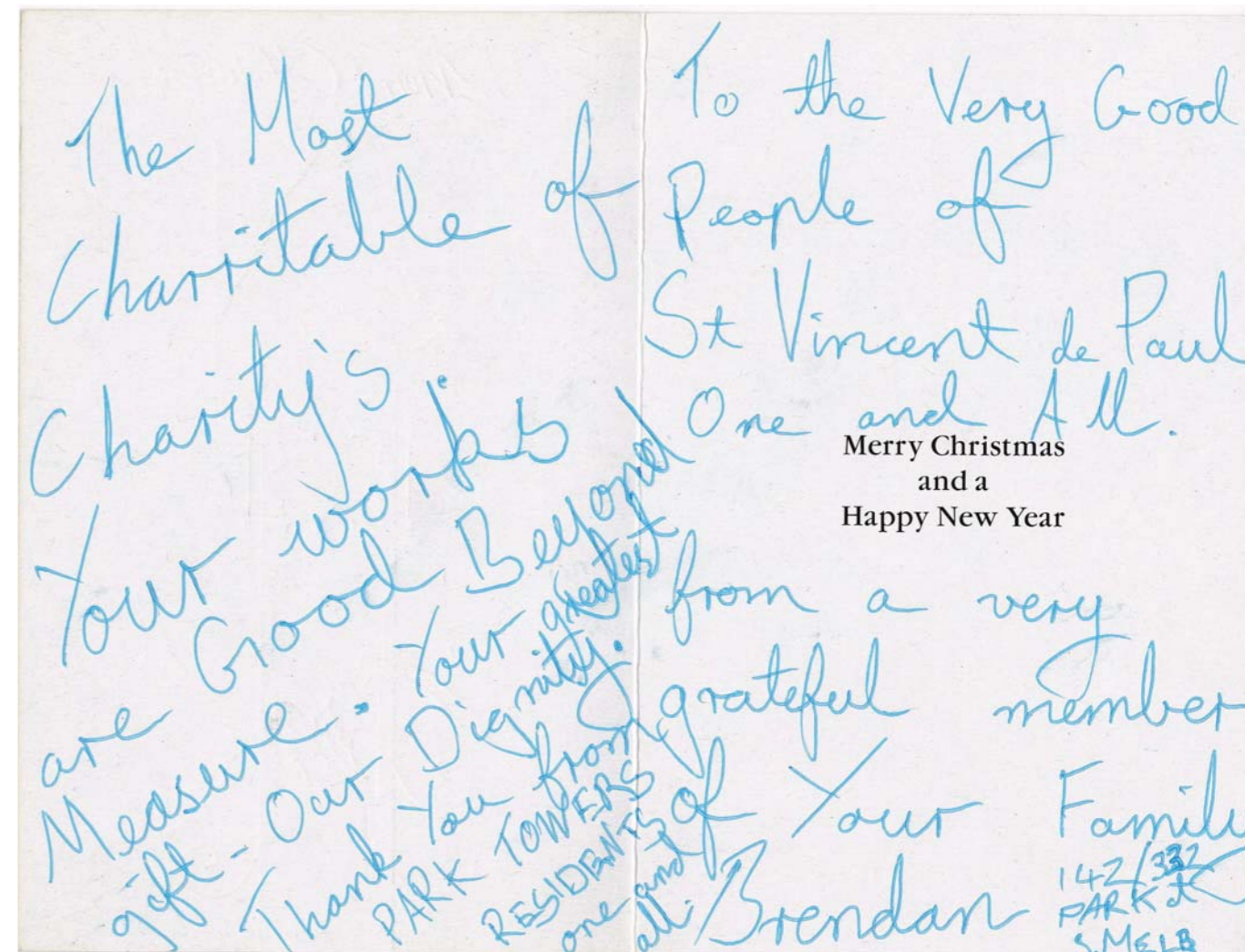
Group Activity

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- Who do I know who has shown courage of character and strength?
- How can I continue to grow spiritually as a member/volunteer with the Society?
- Where do I find hope in my work as a Vincentian?

YOUR GREATEST GIFT – OUR DIGNITY

A 2016 Christmas card from a resident of a block of flats in South Melbourne to the visiting team.



‘The most charitable of Charities. Your works are Good beyond measure. Your greatest gift – our dignity’.



A FITTING SOLUTION

A story from the Bendigo Conference.

The local conference had worked with the family for several years; before and after the father's tragic death.

His 14-year-old son John never recovered from his father's death. He experienced constant small problems with the local police. School was seldom on his agenda and he had so much spare time.

The conference solved this problem by buying a ferret, a box to house the ferret, and a bicycle; and instead, John spent his leisure time rabbiting around in the nearby countryside with his new companion.

Problem solved.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL'S

FIVE VIRTUES

St Vincent de Paul wrote and spoke about the five virtues that he valued the most. They represent what it means to be Vincentian – the spirit, the attitude or the thought essential to be a Vincentian.

His words from 400 years ago, still have relevance today.

1. SIMPLICITY

- Be truthful
- No double talk or talk with double meaning
- Saying something (describing) as it exists
- Speaking the truth
- Be genuine and real
- Personal integrity
- Transparency - not being plastic
- Purity of Intention
- Doing things for God alone and for his people
- No ulterior motive (like money or prestige)

This is the virtue of transparency – personal and institutional. For St Vincent, it meant learning to be the same on the outside as you are in the inside. Learning to tell things as they really are.

This is the virtue St Vincent loved most. *“It is my gospel,”* he said.

Group Activity

Reflection leader reads list and explanation.

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- Where or how might my interactions within my Conference better reflect St Vincent's 'simplicity'?

2. HUMILITY

- Dependency on God
- Recognise all good is from God
- Always be grateful to God
- Accept our own lowliness and sinfulness
- Have confidence in God's mercy
- Think that others are better and more worthy than us
- To allow ourselves to be evangelised by the poor

Humility or humbleness is a quality of being courteously respectful of others. It is the opposite of aggressiveness, arrogance, boastfulness, and vanity. Rather than, “Me first” humility allows us to say, “No, you first, my friend.” Humility is the quality that lets us go more than halfway to meet the needs and demands of others.

Jesus said *“Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.”* Humility is basic to gospel spirituality. The kingdom of God belongs to the poor in spirit. God resists the proud; he raises up the humble. We must stand before God humbly in our daily prayer, and have the attitude of a servant.

Group Activity

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- Where do I need to accept the truth of my gifts without boastfulness and of my frailties?



GETTING MORE THAN I GIVE

A story recalling the early days from one of the first Fitzroy Soup Van volunteers.

We were basically a small group of uni students and a few others. We were just crazy kids and the Society gave us money and support and I'll never forget that. They showed their trust and willingness to allow us time to find our way, even though it was very disorganised and haphazard at times. It was fabulous for us.

When I look back on my life - and in recent years I've returned to being a Vannie, this time on the Collingwood Soup Van - the van has given me stability. It has grounded me. The soup van has always brought me back to a reality because you see and meet people who have vastly different lives.

I have got far more from every encounter than I've ever given — that is my most enduring message. This is from both the volunteers I go out with and the people we meet through being on the soup van. My life would be so less rich if not for the contact I've had with people through the van, so I am very grateful to have had this opportunity.



GOING THAT EXTRA MILE

A story from one of our employees at Gerald Ward House.

A few months ago I was visiting the Vinnies Swan Hill when I met a male customer who was passionate about read-along-books from Disney, the audio tape versions. His birthday was coming up and in discussions with the shop manager I became aware that he visited frequently looking for these books, but they were rarely donated.

I realised that he was likely to be the sort of person that we often speak with and look out for.

I knew that he would love greater access to these books, so I looked further afield and found a package of multiple books and tapes in the USA. I couldn't resist the purchase and within a few weeks I received them and posted them off to the Swan Hill Vinnies Shop. I received a lovely thank you card from the gentleman and his mother; apparently he is loving them and playing them over and over.

Some people are not fortunate enough to start their life on a level playing field, so whatever we can do to make their lives easier or richer is an opportunity that should not be passed up.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL'S

FIVE VIRTUES

3. SELFLESSNESS

- Generosity
- Subject our passion and desires to reason and prayer
- Exercise self-control and moderation in doing things that give pleasure
- Have goals and channel our energies to achieve them
- Develop discipline, determination and commitment in pursuing our goals
- Be faithful to our state of life, accepting our duties and obligations that go along with it and perfecting them even when they are in conflict with what is pleasant

St Vincent urged his followers to become detached and be slow to condemn.

Jesus calls us to follow him even unto death. He asks us to die to sin daily. St Vincent knew these gospel imperatives very well. We must be faithful to our duties of serving the poor, and prefer them when they conflict with other more pleasurable things.

Group Activity

Reflection leader reads list and explanation.

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- Where do I need God's help with self-discipline or selflessness?
- How do I deal with being resentful about the poor 'taking' from us?
- Do I go the extra mile?

4. GENTLENESS

- Being approachable, gentle, lovable and likable
- Being able to handle anger positively
- Not to suppress but to express anger appropriately
- Have a serene and peaceful disposition at all times
- Be forgiving when offended and be understanding of the weakness of others
- Be gentle yet firm
- Learn to balance all of the above

The virtue of gentleness or meekness moderates anger and its disorderly effects. It does this by controlling the passion of anger and by not permitting one's anger to be aroused over trivial things. It restrains resentment at another's character or behavior. It has nothing to do with weakness and timidity.

Patience is another form of meekness. It helps us to handle difficulties without giving into sadness or reacting with a growing sense of rage.

Jesus says that the meek shall be happy. St Vincent believed this word of the Lord and won the hearts of the poor because his meekness developed as warmth, approachability, openness, deep respect for the person of others. Although he tells us that he was irritable by nature, he asked God to change his heart: "Grant me a kindly and benign spirit."

Group Activity

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- What would you like God to 'gentle' within you, develop within you or change?



A MAN WITH NO SHOES

A story from the Flemington Conference.

Peter* is handicapped by chronic rheumatoid arthritis, which early this year became acute. His fingers were twisted into claw-like balls; his toes were bent under his feet. When he travelled on a tram or train he had to physically unlock each finger and put it around to a grab-rail before it closed-up. Can you imagine the pain he suffered despite taking many, many pain-killers?

After several operations Peter's fingers were straightened with metal chains inserted in each finger. Once he rolled over in bed not realising that one finger was caught in a sheet and snapped the chain. His toes were also straightened, but he was advised to wear special podiatry shoes for comfort, instead of the slippers he had been wearing for so many years. Peter eventually found these shoes at a store which fitted him for the correct size, but he could not afford to pay \$267 for them.

We presented the shoes to him and never was there a man so happy – he broke down crying with joy as he hugged us. We were misty-eyed too, at the happiness we were able to bring to his life.

**Please note this name has been changed to protect the identity of the person featured.*



A PRICELESS HOLIDAY GIFT

An excerpt from a letter sent by a Yarrawonga teacher about children who attended a Young Vinnies Camp.

I have spoken with the kids and they gave lots of positive feedback about their experience. One of them even wrote a song about the camp.

His face was beaming the whole time he was telling me about his experience: "It was great fun. I was even allowed to play in the mud with a friend and I never got into trouble doing it. We got all dirty and then we were allowed to go and clean ourselves. Even the camp people were laughing at us."

They both had the best time. It also gave them a feeling of accomplishment as normally they are very subdued upon returning to school listening to all the other children's holiday tales.

We appreciate very much the fact that you went out of your way to give these children a wonderful experience. Thank you very, very much.

Love must be sincere. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12

ST VINCENT DE PAUL'S

FIVE VIRTUES

5. ZEAL

Zeal in the service of God and His people:

- Zeal is love on fire
- Zeal love for God and His people
- Zeal is preserving love; it is easy to love for a while, very difficult to love for life
- Zeal is to be inventive in one's love, to be resourceful in expressing one's love for others
- Zeal is hardworking

Vincent loved, with a burning love.

"Let us beg God to enkindle in our hearts a desire to serve him."

We must labor long as servants of the poor, while remembering that although the Lord asks us to cooperate in his work, it still remains His work. So we must strive to live a balanced life, so that we might have the energy that nourishes zeal.

Group Activity

Reflection leader reads list and explanation.

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- What nourishes your zeal as a Vincentian?
- What keeps you going?

HONOURING ONE ANOTHER

God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Be sure to use them well to help each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings.

1 Peter 4:10

To be a great community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, a heart of grace and a soul generated by love.

Coretta Scott King: Civil rights leader, wife of Martin Luther King Jnr

Group Activity

- At the end of a conference meeting, place the names of each conference member present in a hat and draw one out each at random. Until the next meeting pray on the gifts of that member and write 2-3 sentences affirming their gifts as a Vincentian.
- At next scheduled meeting, the reflection leader reads the passage from St Paul (below). The reflection leader asks that everyone listens attentively to one another without distraction or commentary to the person speaking.

St Paul's letter to the Romans 12

Just as each of us has various parts in one body, and the parts do not all have the same function: in the same way, all of us, though there are so many of us, make up one body in Christ, and as different parts we are all joined to one another. Then since the gifts that we have differ according to the grace that was given to each of us: if it is a gift of prophecy, we should prophesy as much as our faith tells us; if it is a gift of practical service, let us devote ourselves to serving; if it is teaching, to teaching; if it is encouraging, to encouraging.

When you give, you should give generously from the heart; if you are put in charge, you must be conscientious; if you do works of mercy, let it be because you enjoy doing them.

*Let love be without any pretence. Avoid what is evil stick to what is good. In brotherly love **let your feelings of deep affection for one another come to expression** and regard others as more important than yourself. In the service of the Lord, work not half-heartedly but with conscientiousness and an eager spirit.*

- Each member takes it in turn to face the member they have been praying for and read out the statement of affirmation of their Vincentian spirit.
- Allow 30 seconds to let the words of acknowledgement sink in before moving on to next member.



A GRATEFUL HEART

A note from Carol*, a woman who found herself unexpectedly experiencing financial hardship and was assisted by the Bairnsdale Conference.

*Please note this name has been changed to protect the identity of the person featured.

To Albert and Steve,

I want to thank you both with a grateful heart for the empathy and non-judgement you both showed me at this very difficult time in my life over the last twelve months.

And then, I found out my finances were in such a mess, and by a lady I have known for years – from church!

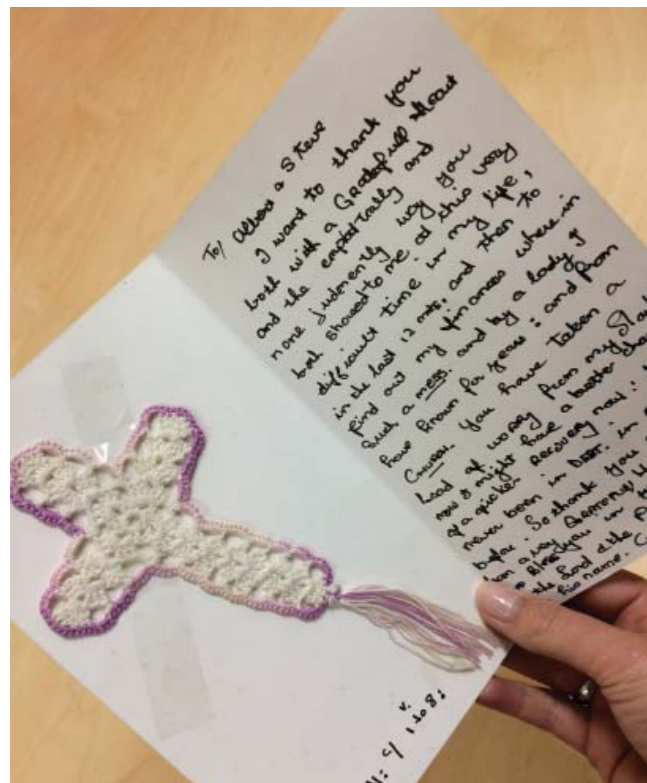
You have taken a load of worry from my shoulders and now I might have a better chance of a quicker recovery. I have never been in debt in my life before.

So thank you once again from a very grateful heart.

May God bless you in your service for the Lord and the Powers that be.

In His name,

Carol



The handwritten card from Carol featured a hand crocheted cross, as a mark of gratitude for the support from her local conference in Bairnsdale.

LOVING THE LEAST

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Matthew 25

What if the “least of these” that Jesus talks about turns out to be part of our own selves? The parts of ourselves that are sick and homeless and hungry and thirsty and naked.

In the reign of God we are called to love ourselves in our entirety: to honour every part of ourselves — not just our strengths but our manifold weaknesses. Even our anger and despair and doubt. In the reign of God we are called to accept all in ourselves that we have abandoned and hidden or denied or undervalued, to drop the pretence and posturing we adopt to make ourselves acceptable, to reconcile our inner conflict and division against ourselves, judging ourselves harshly and badly, neglecting ourselves — to love ourselves as we are loved by God.

In the reign of God we are called to face our true centre, to resolve to live out of the selves that have

been loved since the foundation of the world, to stand united and free and whole in the light. In the reign of God we are called, too, to love one other as we love ourselves. Indeed, how we love ourselves may determine how well we can love the other: we are all made in the image of God.

So who do we find most difficult to love? Aren't they people who remind us of the parts of ourselves we fear or dislike?

We are called to love each other in our entirety. Even the parts, especially the parts, we would prefer to ignore, deny or overlook.

We are called to value each other equally. We are one body, after all, like it or not, hand, foot, eye and armpit. And we are called to love even those we make the outsider, who represent the things that we have banished.

Rev Sheena McMMain

Group Activity

Reflection leader reads the passages.

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- When do I find it hard to 'love the least'?
- What in myself do I find hard to love?
- Who among the people we help do I find it hardest to love?

I'M STILL TRYING

A story of hope from Sharon 'Shazie' Sheppard who was supported for over nine years by the Drouin Conference. They hadn't heard from her for over two years, then she sent them this note...

Hi John, Cathy and the St Vincent de Paul team,

I hope you are well. It's been so long since I've seen you!

Things have improved in my life, I've put on lots of weight, I was under 4 stone and now I'm well over 10.5 stone. I've learnt to budget – I'm not great at it but it gets me from fortnight to fortnight.

Every Friday I cook a healthy lunch for the parent group at Ramahyuk House. The lunch is for 20-30 people, plus 6-12 children. I'm also a public speaker for MIND Australia, the group is called Ambassadors of Hope. We give talks to groups such as the police, drug and alcohol counsellors, and schools.

I'm still not doing great around the house, but it has improved somewhat. Somewhere there was a glitch in my therapy and the chaos in the house is stuck. My therapist had to resign, so it's a tough problem, I'll just have to keep working at it.

I'm also planning to write a book as many people have suggested it. I've done some fact gathering and I will see how it goes – hopefully someone will publish it.

There's not much more I can tell you, except I'm still trying.

Yours,

Sharon 'Shazie' Sheppard



Sharon Sheppard is pictured with Conference visitors Cathy and John.

A video of Shazie's deeply moving 'Story of Hope' is available from Social Justice in the City seminars on:

https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Publications/VICTORIA/Social_Justice/



Photo courtesy Melbourne Catholic

EMBRACING MY OWN BROKENNESS

LETS ME EMBRACE OTHERS

Vincentians are aware of their own brokenness and need for God's grace. (The Rule 2.2)

The Rule and the Gospels reminds us that we are all broken, nor perfect or whole, with our own issues and flaws and irritations. There is something about reaching a breaking point that causes us to seek the Lord more sincerely.

King David was once a broken man, and he prayed, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

If we can embrace our own brokenness, our own imperfection and have compassion for ourselves we are acknowledging our interdependence with others – we have a shared humanity and we all suffer in different ways. This helps us, leads us to have true compassion for others. Because we can see ourselves in others.

First we have to have empathy – to allow ourselves to connect with others. This leads to compassion for others which is a response to empathy: 'There but for the grace of God go I.'

We must be willing to admit to the contradictions inside of us, and still let God love us in that partial state. Once we agree to see our own shadow side, our own foolishness, and our own sin and still know that God has not abandoned us, we become a living paradox that reveals the goodness of God. This is what the tax collectors and prostitutes had to do, and this is what changed them.

Once we know that God lives inside our contradictions, and God's love is not dependent on our perfection, then other peoples' contradictions don't scandalise us or surprise us anymore.

I am a mass of contradictions and yet I am also a saint. I am a very good person, and I am also a sinful person. I get it and yet I oppose it too. Are both of these true? Yes, both are always true and forever true; for some wonderful reason that is what God loves.'

Fr Richard Rohr OFM

To embrace one's brokenness, whatever it looks like, whatever has caused it, carries within it the possibility that one might come to embrace one's healing, and then one might come to the next step: to embrace another and their brokenness and their possibility for being healed. To avoid one's brokenness is to turn one's back on the possibility that the Healer might be at work here, perhaps for you, perhaps for another.

Robert Benson: 'Living Prayer'

Group Activity

Reflection Leader, read the passages aloud. Share your response to these reflections.

- How hard is it to admit and accept my brokenness? And accept the brokenness of others?

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalm 34:18

Slow Down...Wait

When I am told that waiting seems to belong to the heart of the spiritual life, I'm not pleased, for I want answers, direction, clarity—and I want them pronto. I desire to feel happy and to know what God is up to; I need my life to make sense - now. I'm pleased to live a spiritual life, but I want to be in charge of it and to make it unfold according to my schedule.

There is that old joke about the pilot who comes on the intercom and says, "I have good news and bad news, folks: The bad news is that we're totally lost; the good news is that we're making excellent time!" Maybe we're forced to wait because God wants us seriously to reconsider the course we've charted, to stop hurtling down a dangerous road.

Robert Barron
"What Are You Waiting For" (U.S. Catholic Dec 2003)

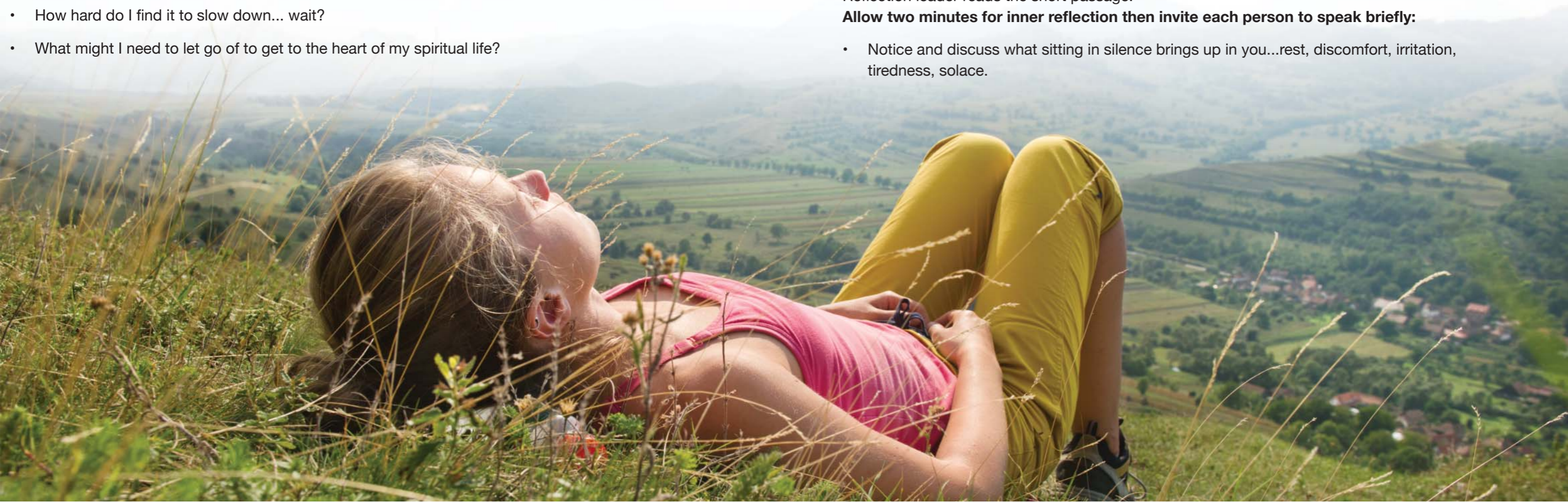


Group Activity

Reflection leader reads the short passage.

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- How hard do I find it to slow down... wait?
- What might I need to let go of to get to the heart of my spiritual life?



Sinking down into the self where the Spirit resides

Sinking down into the self where the Spirit resides and the waters run deep is close to impossible in a culture built on noise and talk and information and advertisements and constant movement and a revolving door schedule. Silence and space and solitude are light years away from the raging list of unending activities we carry always in our heads.

Instead, as a culture we are forever on our way to somewhere else. Being here, now, bringing to the present moment all the self we have, is more myth than reality. It is an ideal fondly to be acclaimed, seldom to be achieved. Shouldn't we be doing something our souls shout at us? Shouldn't we be going somewhere, doing something, at least saying something holy?

But it is the voice of God within that brings calm and direction. It drains the negative energy out of the present so that we can go on, calmly aware that there is nowhere where we are alone.

Joan Chittister OSB



Group Activity

Reflection leader reads the short passage.

Allow two minutes for inner reflection then invite each person to speak briefly:

- Notice and discuss what sitting in silence brings up in you...rest, discomfort, irritation, tiredness, solace.

WHEN THERE IS NO TIME...

St Teresa of Calcutta, then known as Mother Teresa of the Missionaries of Charity, was once asked about her prayer life.

The interviewer asked, "When you pray, what do you say to God?"

Mother Teresa replied, "I don't talk, I simply listen."

Believing he understood what she had just said, the interviewer next asked, "Ah, then what is it that God says to you when you pray?"

Mother Teresa replied, "He also doesn't talk. He also simply listens."

There was a long silence, with the interviewer seeming a bit confused and not knowing what to ask next.

Finally Mother Teresa breaks the silence by saying, "If you can't understand the meaning of what I've just said, I'm sorry but there's no way I can explain it any better."

Group Activity

Invite people to sit with no distractions, close their eyes and simply 'rest a while' with the Lord.

Set your time on a phone, or use your watch. At the end, quietly say, "Our reflection time is up, slowly bring your attention back to the room and to one another. Thank you."

Allow 30 seconds for people to gather their papers before going on with the meeting.

Take two minutes to hear and listen to God.



WHAT TOUCHED YOUR HEART?

The Spirituality of the Home Visit

The spirituality of the Society began with the home visit. All the works of charity began for St Vincent de Paul with a home visit in 1617 in Chatillon in France out of which grew the Daughters of Charity. Two hundred years later in 1833, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam was guided in the work of visiting people in their homes in the Mouffetard district of Paris by Blessed Rosalie Rendu. Both Vincent and Frédéric were deeply transformed by their encounters with the poor in their own home. Vincent wrote that reflecting on that first home encounter he realised the poor **'touched his heart'** in a profound way.

The home visit has two dimensions each filled with grace. **First**, we find joy in being able to bring help to someone in need.

Second, we are transformed by those we encounter. If we give them time and space they will bring forth in us a depth of love we didn't know, nothing less than the presence of Christ. They show us how to empty ourselves of self-preoccupation, self-importance, selfishness and judgement.

During home visits or person-to-person encounters we are challenged to find out to what extent our love of our neighbours can stretch us and move us out of our comfort zone.

St Vincent de Paul Society USA



I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me.
Matthew 25

MEDITATION ON A HOME VISIT OR

ENCOUNTER WITH SOMEONE IN NEED

YOUR NOTES

Find 15 minutes in your day and a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Allow your mind to wander through some of the home visits you have made or an encounter with a person in need.

Choose one person/family you visited whom you are especially thankful to have been able to meet or who you were particularly challenged by.

Prayerfully reflecting on your home visits, or encounters with those in need and sharing your insights at conference meetings will lead each Vincentian to spiritual growth.

These questions might help your reflection:

- What is it about them or their story that made you thankful for the encounter?
- Who was in their household?
- What did the home look like on the outside? On the inside?
- What was your reaction to their physical circumstances?
- What emotions/feelings did you feel as you made the visit?
- What touched your heart?
- What specific help did the person need? Why?
- What positive characteristics did you see in the client?
- How might you have behaved differently?
- Can you name where you found God's presence in the visit? In what ways did your visit reveal the Vincentian virtues? (simplicity, humility, gentleness, selflessness, zeal)

Activity

Use the notes page to record your reflection.

Each member is invited to schedule this recorded reflection as part of conference reflection time to share insights into their experiences and reflections.



Monsieur Vincent Movie

An inspiring resource is the 1947 movie **Monsieur Vincent** which beautifully tells the confronting story of Vincent and Louise and what prompted their conversion to their mission for the poor and the establishment of the Vincentian charism and works.

The DVD can be ordered from:

Catholic Central Bookshop
322 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000
Ph: 03 9639 0844

A copy is available to borrow from the Development Officers at Gerald Ward House in Box Hill Ph: 03 9895 5800.

400th Anniversary of the Charism of St Vincent de Paul as Celebrated by the Famvin Network

On **25 January 1617**, what we call the **'first sermon of the Mission'** took place by St Vincent de Paul in Folleville: the confession of a dying peasant, in Gannes, who publicly proclaimed his joy, and the immediate success of the sermon in Folleville, make Saint Vincent aware of the moral misery of country people.

This first sermon is followed by a series of other in the lands of the Gondi, with similar success.

Another event during that year enlightened St Vincent about what his way in the coming years would be: in Chatillon, in the region of Dombes, *"he is made aware of a sick family. He heartfully talks about them from the pulpit. From that call made from the pulpit, a crowd of people go, in pious anarchy, to bring relief to the unfortunate family. This procession of good will is a revelation for St Vincent: charity, to be a fire that lasts, must be organised."*

This event marks the birth of the first institution created by St Vincent de Paul: the Charities, known nowadays as International Association of Charities (IAC).

For more information visit www.famvin.org

Closing Prayers

Jesus taught us to call God our Father and so we have the courage to say:

Our Father...

Prayer of Service

Lord Jesus, in service You washed the feet of Your disciples, offering us a model of humility, love, and respect. Open our hearts to Your presence in those we assist. That we may offer them the same spirit of dedicated service, compassion and love You showed. May we, through our actions of service and generosity, lighten their burdens by providing for their immediate necessities and offering them hope, peace and justice.

Prayers for Christian Unity

Lord Jesus Christ, at Your last supper You prayed to the Father that all should be one. Send Your Holy Spirit upon all who bear Your name and seek to serve You. Strengthen our faith in You and make us love one another in humility. May we who have been reborn in one baptism, all be united in one faith under one shepherd and continue to be inspired by the founders of the Society.

Canonisation of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

Father, we pray that Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Through the intercession of Blessed Frédéric

Ozanam we offer our prayers and intentions. If it is Your will, may the holiness of Your faithful servant Frédéric be recognised by the church through his canonisation.

Pause to offer our personal prayers...

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Litany

Most sacred heart of Jesus	<i>Have mercy on us</i>
Immaculate heart of Mary	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Joseph	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Vincent de Paul	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Louise de Marillac	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Mary MacKillop	<i>Pray for us</i>
Blessed Frédéric Ozanam	<i>Pray for us</i>
Blessed Rosalie Rendu	<i>Pray for us</i>

May the souls of our departed members and all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.



We want to hear your feedback, comments and suggestions for resources, retreat days and other ways in which we can reflect upon our mission and deepen our spiritual life together as Vincentians.

Please contact the St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Mission & Spirituality Director, Julie Fewster:

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St Vincent de Paul Society
VICTORIA
good works