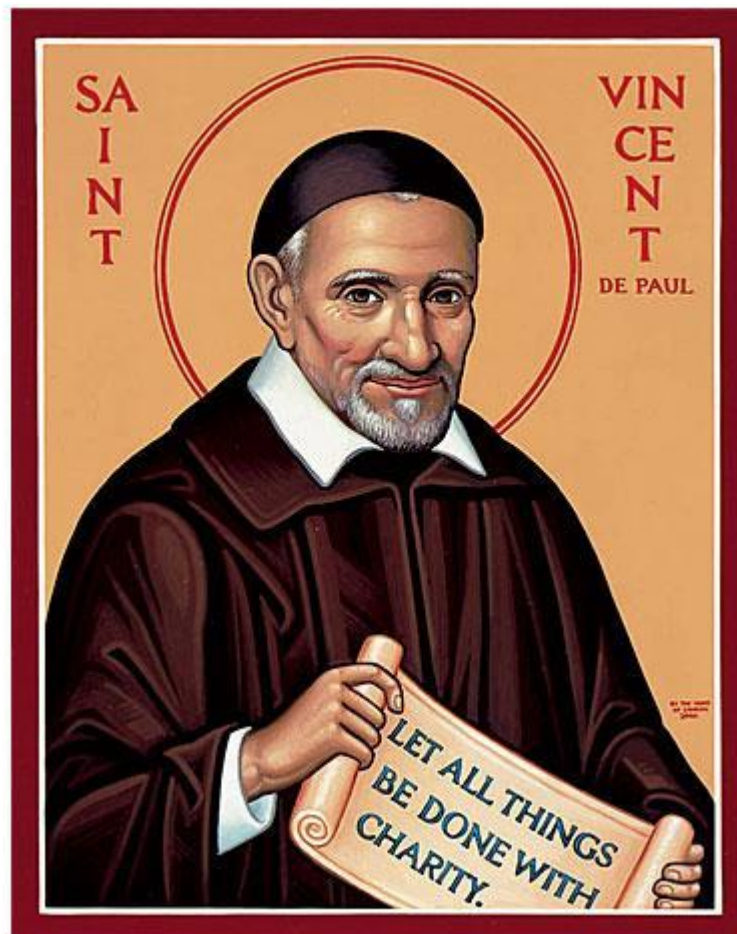


MAXIMS AND COUNSELS OF ST VINCENT



DE PAUL

1. We cannot better assure our eternal happiness than by living and dying in the service of the poor, in the arms of Providence and with genuine renouncement of ourselves in order to follow Jesus Christ. Vol 3 p384
2. If you want to follow Jesus Christ, you must separate yourselves from worldly persons who are opposed to Him. Vol 10 p119
3. Simplicity is the virtue I love the most and to which, I think, I pay the most attention in my actions; and, if it is permissible for me to say so, I would say that I am practicing it with some progress by the mercy of God. Vol 1 p265

4. Remember, Monsieur, we live in Jesus Christ through the death of Jesus Christ, and we must die in Jesus Christ through the life of Jesus Christ, and our life must be hidden in Jesus Christ and filled with Jesus Christ, and in order to die as Jesus Christ, we must live as Jesus Christ. Vol 1 p276
5. The good God, Who has ordinarily provided you with everything at the right moment, will not abandon you on this occasion. Vol 1 p342
6. Monsieur, let people think and say whatever they wish. Rest assured that the maxims of Jesus Christ and the examples of His life are not misleading; they produce their fruit in due time. Anything not in conformity with them is vain and everything turns out badly for one who acts according to the contrary maxims. Such is my belief and such is my experience. Vol 2 p316
7. Here is just one, which is that a Superior must be firm as to the end and humble and gentle with regard to the means, steadfast in the observance of the Rules and holy customs of the Company but gentle in the means of seeing that they are observed. And because only the Spirit of Jesus Christ Our Lord is the true director of souls, I beseech His Divine Majesty to grant you His spirit for your own guidance and for that of the Company. Vol 2 p336
8. How happy are those who give themselves to Him without reserve to do the works Jesus Christ did and to practice the virtues He practiced, such as poverty, obedience, humility, patience, zeal and the others! In this way, they are the true disciples of such a Master. Vol 2 p389-390
9. You know, Monsieur, that, although the contemplative life is more perfect than the active life, it is not, however, more so than one which embraces at the same time contemplation and action, as does yours, by God's grace. p 173 Vol 3

10. I ask Our Lord to be your protector and consolation, to keep you united among yourselves, and to grant you the fidelity proper to the practice of virtue, especially of prayer, recollection, mortification, and conformity to the Will of God. p279 Vol 3

11. "Remember that when you leave meditation and Holy Mass to serve poor persons, you lose nothing, Sisters, because to serve those who are poor is to go to God, and you should see God in them. Conference 1 Vol 9 p5

12. 'Yes, my God, I'm determined to begin to practice those good things you taught us. I know I'm weak, but with Your grace I can do all things, and I feel confident that You'll help me. I implore you by the love that prompts You to teach us Your holy Will, and I beg you to give us the strength and courage to live them. Vol 9 p 10

13. "But, Sisters, all our resolutions are nothing without grace. That's why we really have to ask God to give us strength and set to work courageously. Vol 9 p 10

14. "The happiness of Christians consists in remaining always in the state that makes them most pleasing to God so that there's nothing that can displease Him. Vol 9 p13

15. "To be true Daughters of Charity you must do what the Son of God did when He was on earth. And what did He do mainly? After submitting His Will and obeying the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph, He worked constantly for His neighbour, visiting and healing the sick and instructing the ignorant for their salvation. Vol9 p14

16. Nothing can change the most embittered hearts more than gentleness. If we want to obtain something from a person, we ask for it respectfully and gently, and in that way are almost always sure to get it. Vol 9 p 207

17. Respect and gentleness foster peace. Where there is peace, God abides. Works done in a spirit of gentleness and peace are much more pleasing to God, and He may be glorified by the good example the neighbour receives from them. Vol 9 p 207

18. He always acted in conformity with the Will of God His Father, and He wants you to conform your will to His in everything. He says of himself that He did the Will of God His Father, and we must be ready to conform our wills to His, not only in spiritual matters but even in temporal ones. Vol 10 p 418

19. My greatest desire is to wish only the accomplishment of His holy Will. 402 Vol 1 p579

20. Our Lord humbles in order to raise up, and allows the suffering of interior and exterior afflictions in order to bring about peace. He often desires some things more than we do, but wants us to merit the grace of accomplishing them by several practices of virtue and to beg for this with many prayers. Vol 2 p350

21. By the grace of God, we belong to Him; what else should we desire except to please Him? Vol 3 p509

22. "With all my heart I ask Our Lord Jesus Christ, who willed to come on earth to submit himself not only to His parents but to the most wicked of all men and to His enemies; who did not come to earth to do His own Will but that of His Father; who did not come to command but to obey; I ask Him, I repeat, to put into your hearts the true desire for perfect obedience, the true spirit of obedience that He himself had, and to give you His true Spirit to act with everyone and in all matters in accordance with His holy and divine Will. Vol 9 p243

23. Can a soul who desires to please God want anything else than to do God's Will? Vol 9 p 251

24. But if we want him to grant us this grace, let's strive for humility, especially since the more humble we are, the more charitable we'll be toward our neighbour. Vol 11 p1
25. O Mademoiselle, who will grant us enough humility to consider our place at the bottom of hell if we are not faithful to His eternal designs by serving Him as He wishes, and if we do not abandon ourselves entirely to His most admirable and most amiable guidance! Vol 1 p 576
26. When I said that you must be unwavering as to the end and gentle as to the means, I am describing to you the soul of good leadership, and one without the other spoils everything. Vol 2 p403
27. Monsieur, how blessed are those who give themselves to God in this way to do what Jesus Christ did, and to practice, after His example, the virtues He practiced: poverty, obedience, humility, patience, zeal, and the other virtues! Vol 5 554
28. Profound humility is needed in order not to be complacent about such progress and public applause; a great but most necessary humility is required to refer to God all the glory from your work. Vol 5 p635
29. To that end, honour the prudence, foresight, meekness, and exactitude of Our Lord. Vol 1 p178
30. Moreover, each of you personally benefits from this by putting in practice the virtues of faith, hope, charity, justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude, mortification, humility, and the other virtues. Vol 10 p 419
31. I must not judge a poor peasant man or woman by their appearance or their apparent intelligence, especially since very often they scarcely have the expression or the mind of rational persons, so crude and vulgar they are. But turn the medal, and you will see the light of faith that the Son of God, who willed to be poor people; that he scarcely had a human face in his passion, and passed for a madman in the mind of the Gentiles and a stumbling block in the mind of the Jews. With all that, he describes himself as the Evangelizer of the poor Vol 11 p 26

32. Let us Love God, brothers, let us love God, but let it be in the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brows; for very often many acts of love of God, of devotion, and of similar affections and interior practices of a tender heart, although very good and desirable, are nevertheless, very suspect if they don't translate into the practice of effective love. Vol 11 p 32
33. God is very simple, or, rather, He's simplicity personified; consequently, where there's simplicity, there God is found Vol 11, p40
34. "You're going to an area where it's said that the inhabitants are shrewd and crafty. Now, if that's the case, the best means to help them is to act very simply with them; for the maxims of the gospel are totally opposed to worldly ways of acting, and since you're going for the service of Our Lord, you must act according to His Spirit, which is with straightforwardness and simplicity. Vol 11 P41
35. One of the effects of prudence and wisdom is not only to speak well and to say good things, but also to say them at the right time so that they may be well received and beneficial to the person to whom we speak. Vol 11 p41
36. Prudence and simplicity have the same goal and aim, which is to speak and act well in the sight of God. Since one cannot act without the other, Our Lord recommended them both together. Vol 11 p 42
37. Without humility we mustn't expect to make any progress for ourselves or benefit for our neighbour. O Saviour give us this holy virtue, which is characteristic of you, and which you brought into the world and love so much. Vol 11 p46
38. Pay attention to Our Lord's recommendation to us in these words: 'learn from me for I am humble of heart, "and beg him to help you understood. Vol 11 p 50
39. Let's always honour the perfections of God; let's take as our aim whatever we have to do that are contrary to our imperfections, such as His gentleness and mildness, directly opposed to our anger, His

knowledge, so contrary to our blindness; ...Let us strive to do all our actions to honour and glorify this perfection of God. Vol 11, p 52

40. God considers not so much our external actions as the degree of love and purity of intention with which we do them. Insignificant actions done to please God are not so subject to vainglory as other, more brilliant ones, which quite often vanish into thin air. In a word, if we want to please God in great actions, we must accustom ourselves to please him in humble ones. Vol 11, p 53
41. There are no people more constant and steadfast in doing good than those who are gentle and good-natured. Vol 11, p54
42. The real time to recognize the spiritual mettle of a soul is the time of temptation and tribulation because the way we are during these trials is usually the way we are afterward. We can acquire greater merit in a single day of temptation than in many other peaceful ones. Vol 11 p56
43. Our obedience must not be limited simply to those that have the right to give us orders, but must go beyond that; for we'll be very careful not to fail in the obedience that is of obligation if, as Saint Peter recommends, we submit to every human creature for the love of God. Vol 11, p 58
44. And we can rest assured that the measure of the progress we're making in the virtue of mortification, which is particularly necessary for those who have to work for the salvation of souls; for it's useless for us to preach penance to others, if we don't practice it ourselves and if it isn't obvious in our actions and behaviour. Vol 11, p 59
45. The man who makes little account of external mortifications, saying that interior ones are much more perfect, makes it rather clear that he isn't mortified at all, either interiorly or exteriorly. Vol 11, p 59
46. To bear sickness with impatience is to fall into a very great defect.
47. Let us pray God will fill our hearts with a burning desire to serve him; let us give ourselves to Him to do whatever he pleases. Vol 11, p 62

48. Go, Messieurs, in the name of our Lord! It is he who is sending you; it is for his service and glory that you are undertaking this journey and mission; he will also be the one who will guide, assist and protect you. We hope for this from His infinite goodness; always remain in loyal dependence on His faithful guidance. Have recourse to Him everywhere and on all occasions; throw yourselves into His arms, as one you must recognize as your very good Father, with the firm trust that He will assist you and bless your work. Vol 11, p 65
49. Do merchants stop going to sea because of the dangers they face, and soldiers to war because of the wounds –and even death- they may be risking? And should we stop carrying out this duty of helping and saving souls because of the difficulties and persecutions to be encountered in it? Vol 11, p 66
50. A heart truly on fire with this virtue makes its ardour felt; and everything in a charitable man breathes and preaches charity. Vol 11, p 66
51. Charity is the soul of virtues and the paradise of communities. Vol 11, p 67
52. If it is forbidden to judge others rashly, it is even less lawful to talk about them, since it is the distinctive feature of charity, as the holy Apostle states, to cover a multitude of sins. Vol 11, p 69
53. Give me a man of prayer and he'll be able to do anything; he can say with the holy Apostle, "I can do all things in Him who sustains and comforts me." Vol 11, p 76
54. The faults of the past should truly humble us but not discourage us; regardless of any faults we may commit, we mustn't lessen the confidence God wants us to have in Him but always renew our resolution to start over and be careful not to relapse, with the help of his grace which we have to ask of Him. Vol 11, p 80
55. We have to do our utmost to bring virtue to the highest degree possible and to see that it can be so, not by our own efforts but by recourse to God and frequent prayers. Vol 11, p 86
56. To give ourselves entirely to God to serve Him in the vocation to which it has pleased Him to call us. Vol 11, p 92

57. God gives us His graces according to our needs. God is a fountain from which each of us draws water according to the need we have of it. Vol 11, p 102
58. Love is inventive to infinity... Vol 11, p 131
59. Be united among yourselves and God will bless you; but let it be through the charity of Jesus Christ, for any other union that's not cemented by the Blood of this divine saviour can't subsist. Vol 11 p 137
60. Let us take care to offer our actions to God especially the principal ones; and even if, in our morning offer, we offer all the actions of the day to God, it's still good to offer each one in particular during the day. Vol 11, p 171-172
61. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the true model and that great invisible portrait on which we must fashion all our actions. Vol 11, p 201
62. Is there any risk in loving God? Can we love him too much? Can there be any excess in something so holy and divine? Can we ever have sufficient love for God, who is infinitely loveable? It's true that we can never love God enough and can never go to excess in this love if we consider what God deserves from us. Vol 11, p204
63. Virtue always lies in the middle, my dear confreres; each virtue has two vicious extremes; no matter from which side we happen to move away, we fall into one of these faults ; for our actions to be praiseworthy, we have to walk a straight line between the two extremes. Vol 11, p 206
64. Let's say to him often, *Teach us to pray*; give us, Lord this gift of meditation; teach us yourself how we should pray. This is what we ask Him today and every day with confidence – great confidence – in His goodness. Vol 11, p 209
65. Divine Saviour, You who came to earth to preach to us in simplicity and to teach us this holy method by Your own example, we humbly entreat You to help us all to adopt Your spirit of simplicity and to give us this holy method by your grace, so that by this means we may effectively proclaim Your holy word and carry it throughout the world like your holy disciples, to whom you gave it. Vol 11, p 257

66. Perfection doesn't consist in ecstasies but in doing the will of God. Vol 11, p 285
67. The practice of the presence of God is very good, but I think that adopting the practice of doing God's will in all our actions is even better; for the latter embraces the former. Vol 11, p287
68. When we go to visit poor persons, we have to sympathise with them in order to suffer with them, and put ourselves in the disposition of that great Apostle, who said *I have made myself all things to all men*, so that the complaint Our Lord formerly made through one of the prophets, *I looked for sympathy and there was none*, doesn't fall on us. Vol 11, p 308
69. So then, let us be merciful, brothers, and let's practice mercy towards everyone Vol 11, p 309
70. God loves the poor, consequently, He loves those who love the poor, for, when we truly love someone, we have an affection for his friends and his servants. Vol 11, p 349
71. Come then, my dear confreres, let's devote ourselves with renewed love to serve persons who are poor, and even to seek out those who are poorest and most abandoned; let's acknowledge before God that they're our lords and masters and that we are unworthy of rendering them our little service. Vol 11, p349
72. O beautiful and holy humility, how pleasing You are in the eyes of God, since Our Lord Jesus Christ willed to come down to earth expressly to teach it to us by both word and example. Vol 11, p 382
73. In a word, then, in what does our holiness consist? In doing all our actions well (1) as rational men, getting along well with our neighbour and respecting his rights, (2) as Christians, practicing the virtues of which Our Lord has given us the example Vol 12, p 69
74. Mortification is also necessary because we have to be very firm with ourselves in order to renounce freely what we give to God, and it's by this virtue that we overcome ourselves. Vol 12, p 136

75. Simplicity consists in saying things as we have them at heart – note this, as they are at heart, as we think them. Anything else is called cunning, slyness, duplicity, which are contrary to the virtue of which we are speaking. Vol 12, p 143-144
76. Gentleness not only helps us to excuse the affronts and injustices we receive, but it would even have us treat gently and with pleasant words those who do these things to us. Vol 12, p 159
77. Regardless of how charitable a man is, if he's not humble, he has no charity; and without charity, even should he have faith enough to move mountains, or should give all he has to the poor and his body to the flames, all that would still be useless to him. Vol 12, p 172
78. So then, it's by mortification that we have to remove from ourselves anything that displeases God; it's what helps us to carry the cross with Our Lord and to do it every day, as He commands, if we mortify ourselves each day. Vol 12, P 185
79. O Saviour! You so loved uniformity that not only did you become man to have it along with other men, by conforming yourself to their way of acting, but you recommended all Christians, in speaking to your disciples, to be only one among themselves, in the same way that you were only one with Your Father. Vol 12, p 212
80. Now, if we're really called to take the love of God far and near, if we must set nations on fire with it, if our vocation is to go throughout the world to spread this divine fire, if that's the case, I say, if that's the case, brothers, how I myself must burn with this divine fire. Vol 12, p 215
81. Simplicity, which consists in doing everything for the love of God and having no other aim in all our actions but His glory. That, strictly speaking is simplicity. All the acts of this virtue consist in saying things simply, without duplicity or subtlety, being straightforward, with no evasion or subterfuge. Vol 12, p246
82. So then, humility, which consists in emptying ourselves completely before God, overcoming ourselves in order to place God in our heart, not seeking the esteem and good opinion of others, and struggling against any impulse of vanity. Vol 12, p 247
83. So then, gentleness and forbearance are necessary among ourselves and for our service to our neighbour. Vol 12, p249

84. If love of God is a fire, zeal is its flame; if love is a sun, zeal is its ray. Zeal is unconditional in the love of God. Vol 12, p 250
85. Simplicity causes a person never to use duplicity, to speak as he thinks, always to consider God, and never himself, in divine things, and to be mindful of God in the acts of religion and charity he practices. Vol 12, p255
86. The human mind is quick and restless, and the most active and enlightened persons are not always the best, if they're not the most discreet. Those walk surely who don't stray from the path which most of the wise have used. Vol 12, p383
87. Some people always think well of their neighbour, as much as true charity allows them, to do. They can't see virtue without praising it, or virtuous persons without loving them. Vol 12, p 383
88. "Let's leave that to Our Lord, for it's his work. It has pleased him to begin it, so we can be sure that he will bring it to fruition in the way he deems best... Have courage trust in Our Lord, who will be our help in the work, we have begun and the undertaking to which he has called us. Vol 12, p 388
89. O Monsieur, the treasury of God's providence is immense; it's good to cast our cares and our thoughts upon Our Lord; He won't fail to supply our nourishment as He promised us. Vol 12, p388
90. Once God has begun to do good to a creature, He continues to do so to the end. Vol 12, p389
91. To conform ourselves in everything to the Will of God, and to take all our pleasure In this is to lead a truly angelic life upon earth, and even to live the very life of Jesus Christ. Vol 12, p 389
92. Among the multitude of thoughts and feelings that constantly come to us, many seem to be good, yet, they don't come from god and are not pleasing to Him. How, then, can we discern them? We should examine them carefully, have recourse to God in prayer, and ask for his light. We should reflect on the motives, purposes, and means to see if all are in keeping with his good pleasure. Vol 12, p 389

93. There's not much to be hoped for from a man who doesn't love to converse constantly with God. In addition, if he doesn't carry out his ministries in the Lord's service as he should, it's because he's not attached enough to God and hasn't asked, with perfect confidence, for the help of His grace. Vol 12, p 390
94. The best virtues are humility, the recognition of our nothingness before God, mortification of the passions and the unruly movements of nature, interior recollection, uprightness and simplicity of heart, attention to the presence of God, total dependence on His will, and frequent aspirations to God's goodness. Vol 12, p390
95. What's done out of charity is done for God. It is a great happiness for us if we are found worthy to use what we have for charity's sake, that is, for God who has given it to us. We should thank and bless His infinite goodness to us. Vol 12, p391
96. All those who love the poor in life will have nothing to fear from death, as I seen on many occasions. Vol 12, p 391
97. Where human prudence fails, the light of divine wisdom begins to dawn. Vol 12, p 399
98. We should spend as much time thanking God for His favours as we did in asking for them. Vol 12, p 399
99. Not for anything in this world would I do something against God or my conscience. Vol 12, p 399-400
100. We can practice mortification in every situation, even holding our bodies in a position that might be uncomfortable, without, however, failing in moderation. We can deprive our senses of things that might give them a certain satisfaction, and accept willingly good weather as well as bad. Vol 12, p400

101. For you must take care of yourselves for the service of those who are poor, and give your bodies their just due. Vol 9 p 3
102. The happiness of Christians consists in remaining always in the state that makes them most pleasing to God so that there's nothing that can displease Him. Vol 9, p 13
103. ...for whoever is in charity is in God and God is in her. Vol 9, p 14
104. So you see, Sisters, you may do all the good you like, but if you don't do it well, it will profit you nothing. Saint Paul taught us this: give all your goods to the poor, but if you don't have charity, you're doing nothing; no, not even should you give your lives. Vol 9, p18
105. You should speak to them with such charity and kindness that they see that only God's glory and their own salvation Vol 9, p19
106. for how, dear Sisters, could you practice charity and gentleness with persons who are poor, if you didn't practice those virtues among yourselves? Vol 9, p44
107. When you serve poor persons in this way, you'll be true Daughters of Charity, that is to say, daughters of God, and you'll be imitating Jesus Christ. For how did He serve persons who were poor, Sisters? He served them corporally and spiritually; He went from place to place, healing the sick, giving them what money He had, and instructing them about their salvation. Vol 9, p50
108. ...to do all you have to do in a spirit of humility, charity, and gentleness, and to honour the holy life of Our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. Vol 9, p 96
109. Sisters, give yourselves to God to serve them with great charity and gentleness, and accustom yourselves to see God in them, and to serve them in God and for His love. Vol 9, p 107
110. I thought that this cordial respect, united with great gentleness, is the best means to avoid quarrels, to preserve mutual love, and to give good example to the neighbour Vol 9, p 118

111. But do you know what it means to do it in charity? It's to do it in God, for God is charity, and it's to do it purely for God; it's to do it in the grace of God, for sin separates us from the charity of God. Vol 9, p197
112. It was said in the first place that gentleness and respect are most pleasing to God. Isn't that true, dear Sisters? And is anything more pleasing to Him than respect and gentleness, which are the virtues of the Son of God? Vol 9, p 211
113. ...for what is charity if not love and gentleness? Vol 9, p211
114. "May God in His goodness, dear Sisters, be pleased to pour forth abundantly on you His Spirit, which is nothing other than love, gentleness, graciousness, and charity, so that, by the practice of these virtues, you may do all things in the way He wants you to do them, for His glory, your salvation, and the edification of your neighbour! Vol 9, p221
115. Another means is to be strongly convinced that poor persons are the members of the Son of God and that, in them, we serve the person of Jesus Christ. Vol 9, p286
116. Since prayer is the food of the soul, if we fail to make it, our soul is in danger of growing weak, just as the body does when we don't eat. Vol 9, p322
117. "God gives us daily in prayer sufficient grace to work at our advancement and helps us to see what is suitable for us to achieve it, or what we have to avoid." Vol 9,p 322
118. Believe me, Sisters, God is the one who has led you to discover that this is one of the most effective means for preserving charity among yourselves because, if you consider your neighbour in the same light as you would like to be considered, you'll never think that she's wrong; on the contrary, she'll always seem to you to be right. Vol 9, p412