



OZANAM MEDITATION

“The Poor are our Masters”

Scripture Reading:

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me...Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25: 31-46)


Social Justice Teaching of the Church: The Dignity of the Human Person

We believe that every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and therefore is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family.

Frederic’s Ideas and Ideals:

In regard to serving those living in poverty, Frederic wrote in 1836: “We should fall at their feet and say... Tu est Dominus et Deus meus. You are our masters, and we will be your servants. You are for us the sacred images of that God whom we do not see, and not knowing how to love Him otherwise shall we not love Him in your persons?”

Frederic’s genuine love for those living in poverty inspired him to become a true friend of those he visited, always and everywhere ready to work with them and defend their interests. The personal visit was intended to empower the person in poverty and to provide insights into her/his genuine needs. Frederic attentively listened; then he would attempt to engage the visited person in the process of recovery. His manner towards the poor was one of the warmest and most kindly respect, he never failed to take off his hat and say with the gracious bow: ‘I am your servant.’”





Our Vision:

Systemic Change is based upon a deep respect for the dignity of the human person. We find that we must “listen carefully and seek to understand the needs and aspirations of the poor, creating an atmosphere of respect and mutual confidence and fostering self-esteem among the people.” And we must “involve the poor themselves, including the young and women, at all stages: in the identification of needs, planning, implementation, evaluation and revision.”

Sharing:

A respectful attitude toward those who are poor neither glorifies nor distains them but rather respects them as equal human beings who we choose to serve as our masters.

What has helped you keep this Vincentian attitude of respect toward the poor?

Closing Prayer:

○ God, give us creativity in helping the poor meet their basic human needs. Open our minds and hearts so that we might stand at their side and assist them to change whatever unjust structures keep them poor. Enable us to be brothers and sisters to them, friends who walk with them in their struggle for fundamental human rights.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen