



OZANAM MEDITATION

“Transparency and Solidarity”

Scripture Reading:

“Thus says the Lord: This is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.” (Isaiah 58: 6-9)

Social Justice Teaching of the Church: The Principle of Solidarity

Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family. The virtue of solidarity means learning that “loving our neighbour” has global dimensions in an interdependent world. Over and over in Scripture we find God’s command to live our lives in solidarity, especially with those who are poor.

Frederic’s Ideas and Ideals:

Ozanam promoted both transparency and solidarity within the fledgling Society of St. Vincent de Paul. For example, in a report in 1838 Frederic listed the membership and the monies of the Society in Lyon, and he took great care to provide the most accurate figures as well as a description of the works they have accomplished. Today, our Rule Part I: 3.14 states: “The Society’s funds must be handled with the utmost care, prudence and generosity. Money must not be hoarded. Decisions regarding the use of money and property are to be made after reflection in the light of the Gospel and Vincentian principles. Accurate records must be kept of all money received or spent.”

Our Vision:

Systemic Change requires that participants “be transparent by inviting participation in preparing budgets and in commenting on financial reports. There must be careful controls over money management . . . , while those participating fully support and respect the mechanisms for promoting solidarity that exist among the community members.”

Sharing:

In our service we must have credibility and sound organization.

How do you find the structure of the Society and our Rule to be an important resource for Systemic Change?

Closing Prayer:

O 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

