



St Vincent de Paul

FEAST DAY



27 SEPTEMBER



Introduction

As he encountered the poor, the heart of Father Vincent, began to be transformed and he started to reach out to the exploited, wounded, marginalized and excluded, he saw them as the victims of the system. Vincent concluded that service to the poor was not some pious or occasional past time, nor were the poor simply a statistic that upset good people. Rather to him they became a passion that God placed before him, demanding an urgent and bold response. His heart began to ache for them, and as a result he began to love them with an understanding of their plight and a resolve to bring dignity and worth to their lives.

In this “divine task” Vincent brought together two complementary dimensions of Christian love: the curative and the preventive and combined these with an attitude of gratitude. He saw that in light of Jesus’ command and commitment the option for the poor becomes a reality of faith and a theological truth. It is God who first of all opts for the poor. Thus, the cause of the poor is God’s cause, and the question of the poor is God’s question.

Vincent discovered that there was only one coherent and real response: the option on behalf of the poor as a visible and credible expression of the Church.

Opening Prayer

We gather together this morning on this Feast of St Vincent de Paul to celebrate the Patron Saint of Charities, and especially of the St Vincent de Paul Society, because he saw service to those in need as a ‘divine task’ and we ask him to bless us as we carry on his work today.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Reading

Matt 25:34-40

The King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me. Then the upright will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you? "And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these sisters and brothers of mine, you did it to me.

Reflection on the Gospel

In reflecting on the work of the St Vincent De Paul Society, I frequently think of this reading and the clear strong image it brings to us of seeing Christ in the faces of those we serve.

This reading, the Parable of the Talents, instructs us about making best use of the resources, the gifts we have, in the service of others: the hungry, the sick, the thirsty, the naked, the homeless. Our gifts come as time, talents and treasure and we need to think wisely about how best to put them to use in Christ's name. Wise use comes with maintaining a good balance in the use of our time, our money and our skills.

We know that helping others is about the long haul, we need to watch out for burnout. Taking time for yourself is not something selfish, it is essential maintenance. Mindfulness exercises, contemplative prayer, experiencing nature, friends and family, all keep us fit for service. Similarly, with our money, we need to be mindful of expenses and plan our giving to fit our budget. Being willing to learn new skills, being open to new ideas and innovation is a positive thing.

Getting our life of service in balance means we will be fit for the long haul and we will be resilient when new challenges arise.

Living as Jesus invites us to live is not easy. Being one of his disciples can be hard. Sometimes, being generous is hard. And that's why this reading reminds us of the Christian response. It is a helpful encouragement about how to be generous with our gifts.

On this Feast Day of St Vincent de Paul I will leave you with this quote from him: Charity is the cement which binds communities to God and persons to one another.

God Bless

Prayers of the Faithful

Leader:- In the spirit of St Vincent de Paul, who reminds us, that Charity is the cement that binds communities to God and persons to one another, we place our prayers before the Lord.

1. Let us pray for the grace to be more like St Vincent de Paul in the way we serve, grounded in humility. Lord hear us, Lord hear our prayer.
2. Let us pray for an unconditional love that reaches out to the poor without judgment. Lord hear us, Lord hear our prayer.
3. Let us pray that we live as genuine disciples of charity, realising that all we do in the service of others we do in Your name. Lord hear us, Lord hear our prayer.
4. Let us pray that we be inspired by the words of St Vincent de Paul who reminds us, 'You must empty yourselves of self to put on Christ'. Lord hear us, Lord hear our prayer.

Leader:- With great faith and humility, we bring these prayers to you, O Lord.

Amen

Concluding Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the example of your servant Vincent, may we who now carry on his ministry to the poor, always be guided in our endeavours by the model of our patron Saint.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen