



We are Faith and Mission

On 29 June, each year, we celebrate the feast day of St Peter and St Paul. It is interesting to note that both saints are often grouped together. In our Archdiocese we have the Sts Peter and Paul Cathedral in Goulburn, as well as, two Sts Peter and Paul Primary schools. The reason probably lies in the fact they both undertook a major role in the continuation and growth of the early Church. Both were not without fault, Peter was the denier and Paul the persecutor, yet God empowered them, with the help of the Holy Spirit to take the Church forward. God knew of the frailty within them yet entrusted Peter and Paul, as well as the communities that gathered around them, with the tasks of establishment and growth of the Church. Peter is seen as Faith, the 'rock', the foundation, on which the Church developed, whereas, Paul is Mission, taking God's message far and wide, especially to the 'gentiles'.

Because of Peter and Paul, the work of Jesus took root and now through us continues today. As Vincentians we are people of both St Peter and St Paul because of the support we show our companions through our 'good works' we ourselves are both Faith and Mission, we grow in our faith and by taking it outwards to others we carry out mission. This is the essence of our vocation in the Society, that as we work with our companions we grow spiritually and our reaching out to our companions affords us the opportunity to seek Christ through them. Blessed Fredrick tells us that this is the reason why we undertake the work we do, it is not the charity itself, as was discussed with the first conference.....

It was also agreed, somewhat surprisingly, that the primary goal of the Society was not charity, but spiritual growth of its members. While this appears to relegate love of neighbour to a secondary status, the decision is being made in the context of the debate about whether or not the Society was simply a means of giving welfare to the poor. The point behind it remains profound: without attention being given to nurturing Christian love, there will be no capacity for self-sacrificing love of one's neighbour and charity will become welfare (1)

1- from 'Love and Politics': The Revolutionary Frederic Ozanam – John Honer, p30 2007