

# **Living and Growing As a Vincentian**

## **Vincentian Spirituality in Everyday Life**

### **Prayer in the Vincentian Tradition**

Prayer and action go hand in hand in a healthy Vincentian spirituality. Divorced from action, prayer can turn to escapism – lost in fantasy and creating illusions of holiness. Similarly, service or “busy-ness” divorced from prayer can become shallow. A spirituality is at its best when it holds prayer and action in tension with one another. St. Vincent defined prayer as “an elevation of the mind to God by which the soul detaches itself, as it were, from itself so as to seek God in himself. It is a conversation with God, an intercourse of the spirit, in which God interiorly teaches it what it should know and do, and in which the soul says to God what He himself teaches it to ask for.” Through your encounter with the Christ of gentleness and compassion in prayer, you become more prepared to encounter and assist the same Christ when you return to renewed service of the poor.

### **Vincentian Spirituality in the Workplace**

You are invited to participate in the Vincentian mission by who you are and what you do. Through your work you can be a living example of Vincent, Louise, and Elizabeth’s legacy in today’s world. In your workplace- how do you stay true to your values, your ethics, your faith stance? What values are strongest in your department or organization? What do you want to strengthen? Good supervision, coaching, and mentoring can help. One of the best ways is by treating each challenge we face in the workplace as an ongoing learning experience, and then reflecting on our experiences.

### **Apostolic Reflection and Discernment**

At the end of the day, or as often as you can, go back and think about where you have met Christ that day. God was there– within you, in front of you, in this person, this child, these circumstances, these events. God is there in poor persons, in our experiences. Share your reflections with fellow Vincentians or others in your life. A key in apostolic reflection is the sacredness of every person in the group; each is a member of the Body of Christ, and, consequently, a gift.

## Who Is My Neighbor?

“And who is my neighbor?” This quote prompted the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37) which was a story of special personal significance to Frederic Ozanam, founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. This parable asks us to stop and think about our brothers and sisters in need– those who have been beaten, abused, and marginalized by an oppressive world. We are asked to look to our brothers and sisters in the world and to see the face of Jesus in them. Our neighbor is the one in need, the one who looks to us with hope and faith, the one who hopes for Christ. Do I see Christ in the face of my neighbor– and does my neighbor see the face of Christ in me?

Sources: [Congregation of the Mission in Ireland](#), [O'Donnell](#)

## What You Can Do

### Volunteer

“God demands first of all the heart, and then the work” –St. Vincent (Leonard, 4:114). Think about your reasons for wanting to be a Vincentian volunteer: What appeals to you about this work? What gifts and qualities will you bring? Which projects appeal to you most? What experiences have you had which would help in your service? What would you hope to gain from living and sharing with other volunteers? What fears might you have? What gifts and personal qualities could you contribute to the community? How is your Christian faith integrated into your life? How might volunteering help to deepen your faith?

### Activism & Advocacy

Strive to serve as a “Voice of the Poor” wherever and whenever you can.

### Donate

Donating and micro-lending are simple and effective ways to join in the work of the Kingdom of God. (For example, see [Zafen](#).)

### Vocations

Like many other religious orders, our congregations are suffering badly from a chronic shortage of vocations. As a result, a diminishing number of aging women and men

religious are trying their best to respond to the changing needs of the Church. Please pray for vocations, asking the Lord to send forth laborers into the harvest.

### **Vincentian Leadership**

Our founders, in their lives and works, truly modeled for us what it means to be a visionary, socially responsible leader. St. Vincent in particular was certainly in many ways an organizational and management genius. Think about these questions: What is my sense of commitment to the broader human community and world? How well do I know the Vincentian vision and values? How comfortable am I with hearing ideas that differ from my own? How I am living my commitment to contribute to my communities? Can I inspire others through my actions and words?

### **Missionary Work**

Interested in an actual and personal relationship with persons from another culture? This is a beautiful way of living, as described in this excerpt from the Congregation of the Mission [Constitutions of 1980](#):

Clear and expressed preference for the apostolate among the poor, since their evangelization is the sign that the kingdom of God is present on earth (cf. Mt 11:5);

Attention to the realities of present-day society, especially to the factors that cause an unequal distribution of the world's goods, so that we can better carry out our prophetic task of evangelization;

Some sharing in the condition of the poor, so that not only will we attend to their evangelization, but that we ourselves may be evangelized by them;

Genuine community spirit in all our apostolic works, so that we may be supported by one another in our common vocation;

Readiness to go to any part of the world, according to the example of the first missionaries of the Congregation