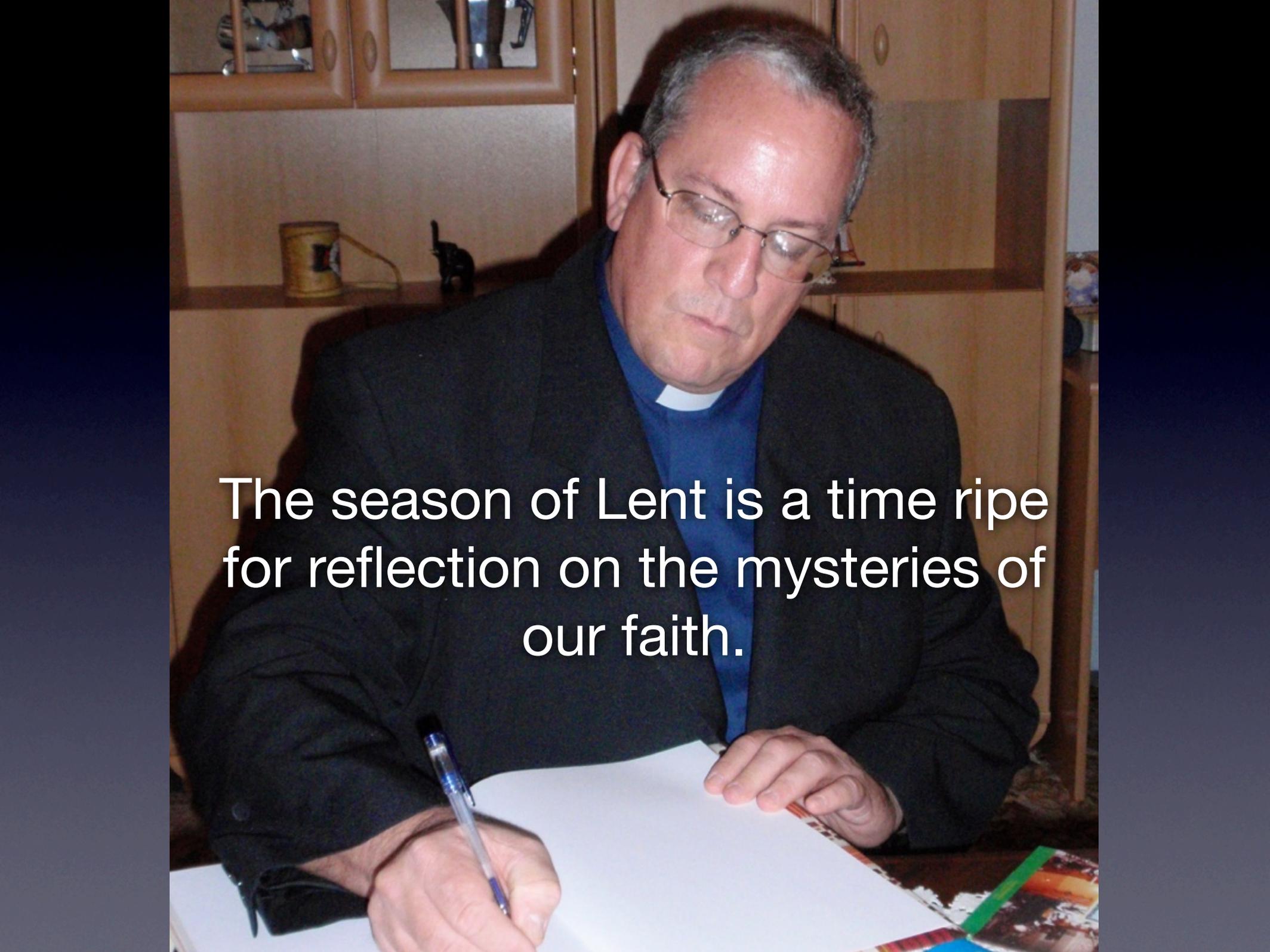
A middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a black suit jacket over a blue clerical shirt with a white collar, is seated at a desk. He is focused on writing on a large sheet of white paper with a blue pen. His left hand rests on the paper. In the background, there is a wooden cabinet with shelves holding various items, including a yellow container and a small black figurine. The scene is lit with indoor lighting, creating a warm atmosphere.

My dear Brothers and Sisters of the
Vincentian Family,

A middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a black suit jacket over a blue clerical shirt with a white collar, is seated at a desk. He is looking down at a large sheet of white paper on the desk, holding a blue pen in his right hand as if writing. His left hand rests on the paper. The background shows a wooden cabinet with various items on shelves, including a yellow container and a small black figurine. The lighting is indoor and somewhat dim.

The season of Lent is a time ripe
for reflection on the mysteries of
our faith.



Once again, we are invited to join Jesus



on His journey to Jerusalem,



to accompany Him to Calvary,



to wait quietly



at the Tomb,



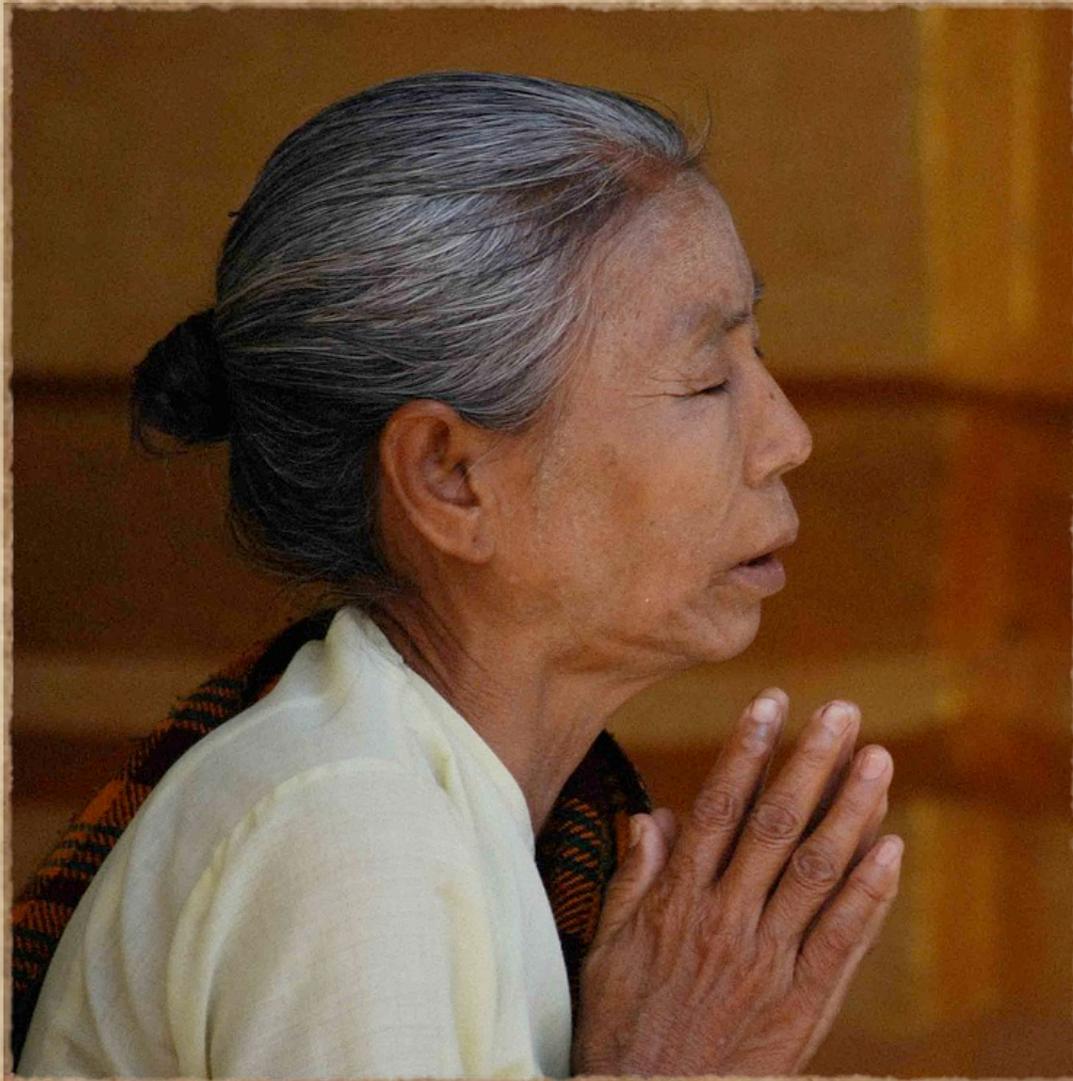
and to know the glory of His Resurrection,



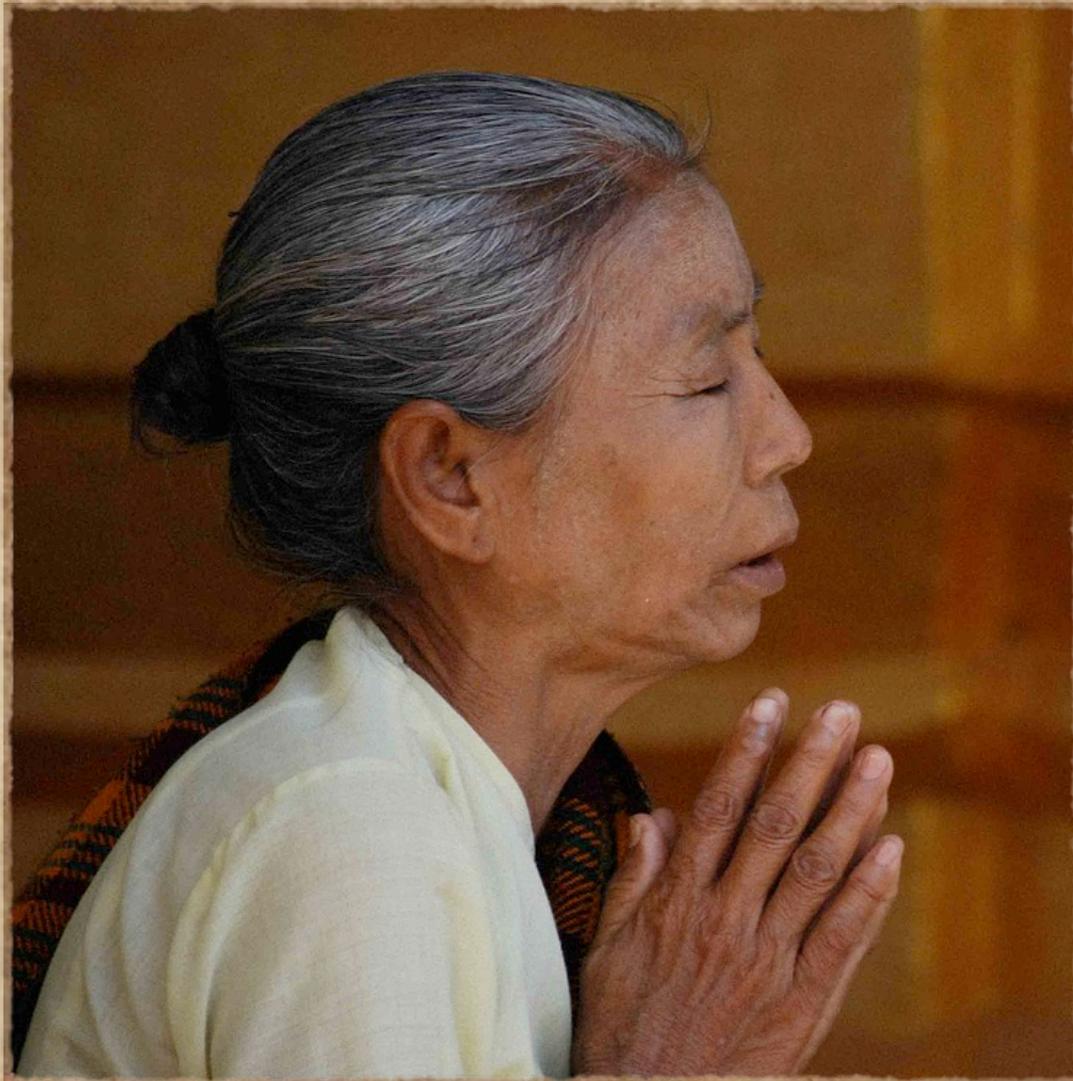
which He shares with us.

The Gospel for Ash Wednesday reminds us that, underneath the rich outward symbols of this season of grace, Lent is an inward journey:

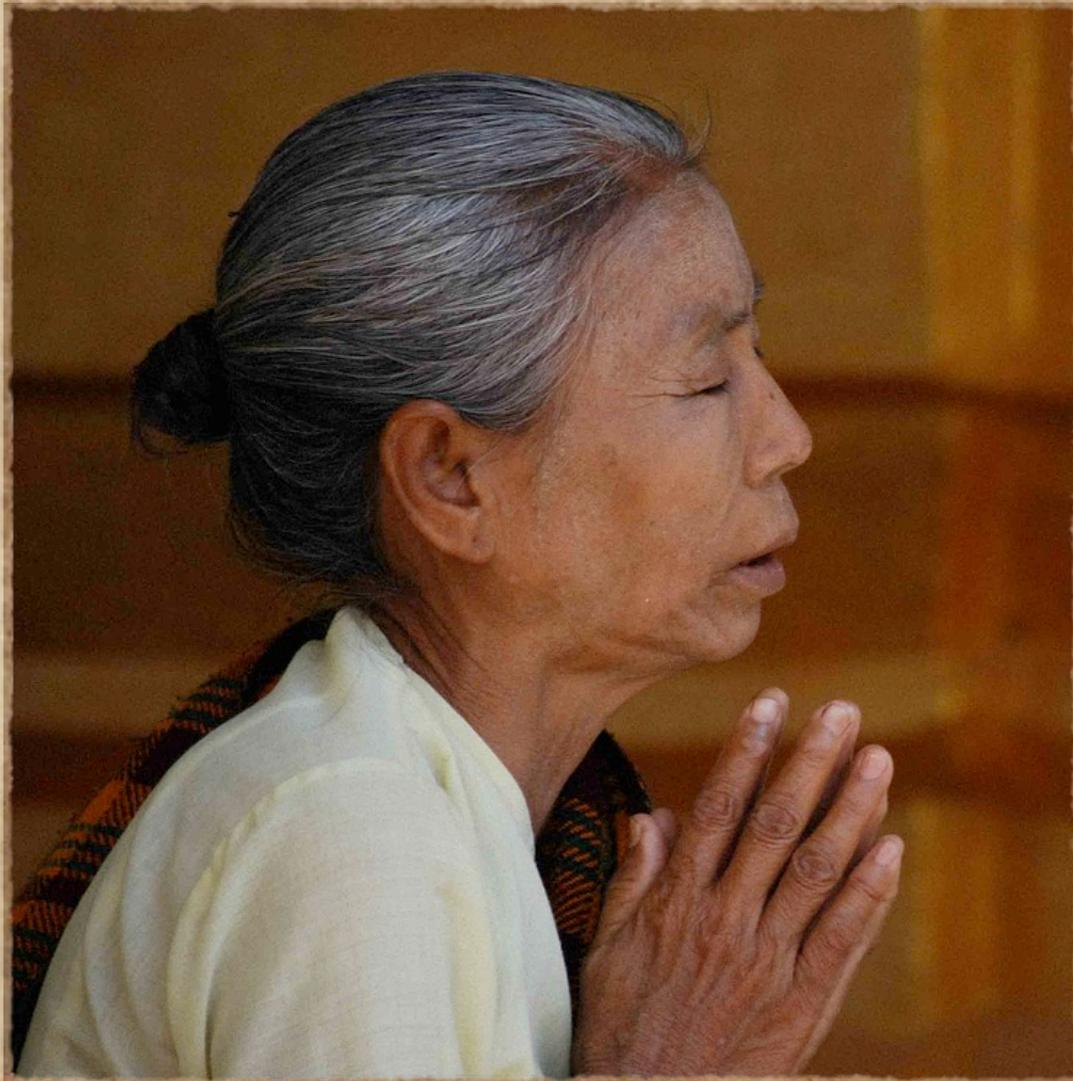




*“But when you pray, go to your
inner room,*



close the door, and pray to your
Father in secret.



And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.” (Mt.6:6)

A middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a black suit jacket over a blue clerical shirt with a white collar, is seated at a desk. He is looking down at a large sheet of white paper, holding a blue pen in his right hand as if writing. The background shows a wooden cabinet with various items on shelves, including a yellow container and a small black figurine. The lighting is indoor and somewhat dim.

My theme for this Lenten reflection
centers on
reconciliation, peace, and humility

Reconciliation



When I visited the Daughters of Charity in South Korea, they brought me to “Reconciliation Park,”



a strip of land between South and North
Korea.



Koreans come there to reflect and pray for reconciliation on a peninsula made up of two nations,



but one people who share the same history,
language, and culture.



This experience relates to Lent, which calls us to seek reconciliation in our own lives,



starting with inner reconciliation, as we realize we are God's beloved children.



May we be people whose lives and actions mirror the reconciling love of Christ.

Peace



A fruit of reconciliation is peace, which brings me to my second pilgrimage in Kobe, Japan.



When visiting my Vincentian confreres and the Daughters of Charity, we went to Nagasaki, a city with the largest number of Catholics in Japan.



The “Peace Park” there, constructed after the horrific experience of the atomic bomb of 1945,



is filled with symbols of peace donated by nations and people across the world.



This statue is meant to symbolize that seeking peace entails a need for contemplation (a crossed foot), and action (a foot on the ground).



The outstretched hand: all people must be peacemakers; the hand reaching upward: divine assistance is needed to bring about true peace.



Saint Vincent reminds us:
“Charity demands that we strive to sow peace
where it does not exist.”

(CCD: Vol. 5, Letter 2054, p.602, 23 April 1656).



As a Vincentian Family, may we strive to cultivate peace, and promote it in any way possible.

Humility



A movement toward reconciliation, whose fruit is peace, comes about in practicing the virtue of humility.



Home of the Daughters of Charity, Sfax, Tunisia

I saw this virtue in action in a very powerful way during my visit to the Daughters of Charity in Mauritania and Tunisia.



Sister Marie Claude, Sister Rosa and Sister Anna

To exercise their ministry of service to the poor in these countries, the Daughters of Charity must do so an unassuming, humble way.



In countries like this, the Daughters practice great humility, because they work in secular service associations serving the poor. They are not in charge but must work with others who direct their activities.



The presence of the Daughters in North Africa is a quiet, but firm witness to the virtue of humility.



Others in the Vincentian Family serve in similar situations across the world. In their humble, often hidden service, they become one with the poor.

A middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a green clerical cassock and a white lace collar, is shown in profile, speaking. He is seated in a wooden chair with a white rope draped over it. The background is a wooden wall.

From my own experience, to work for reconciliation and gain peace in one's heart, we must acquire and practice the virtue of humility.

A photograph of a middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a green clerical vestment over a white shirt. He is looking down and to the right, holding a book or a set of papers. The background is a wooden wall with a white railing. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

May this Lent help us grow in love of Christ and our Vincentian charism, as we walk the way of reconciliation and take the path of peace, with “humbled and contrite hearts.” (Ps. 51:19)



Your brother in Saint Vincent,
G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

Text:

Letter of G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
*Lent 2015: Walking the Way of Reconciliation,
Peace, and Humility*
Rome, 18 February 2015

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