

The Prophetic Dimension of the Vincentian Charism

In Light of the Social Doctrine of the Church

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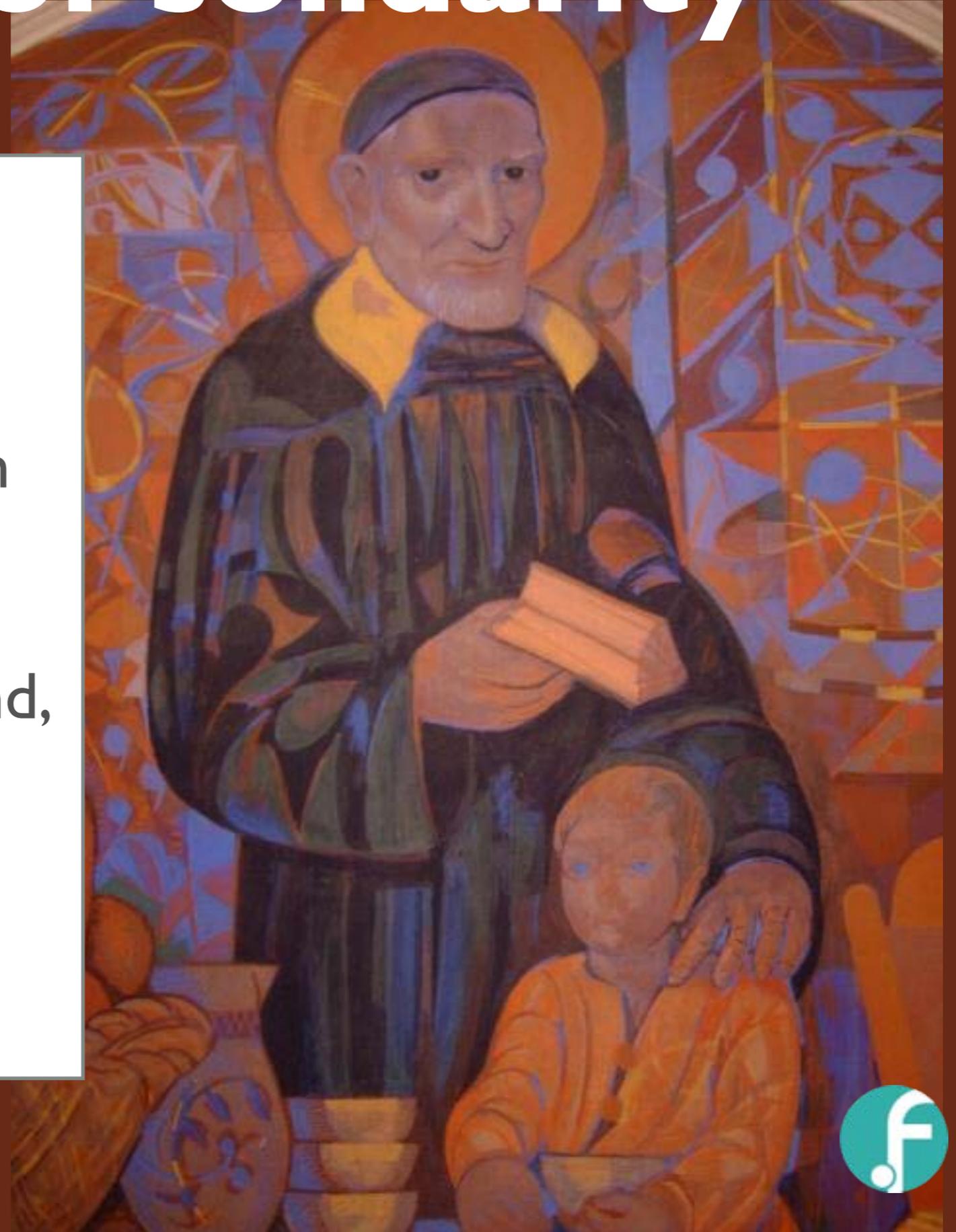
Connecting the way St. Vincent lived his life, and the life and words of Pope Francis



Message of solidarity

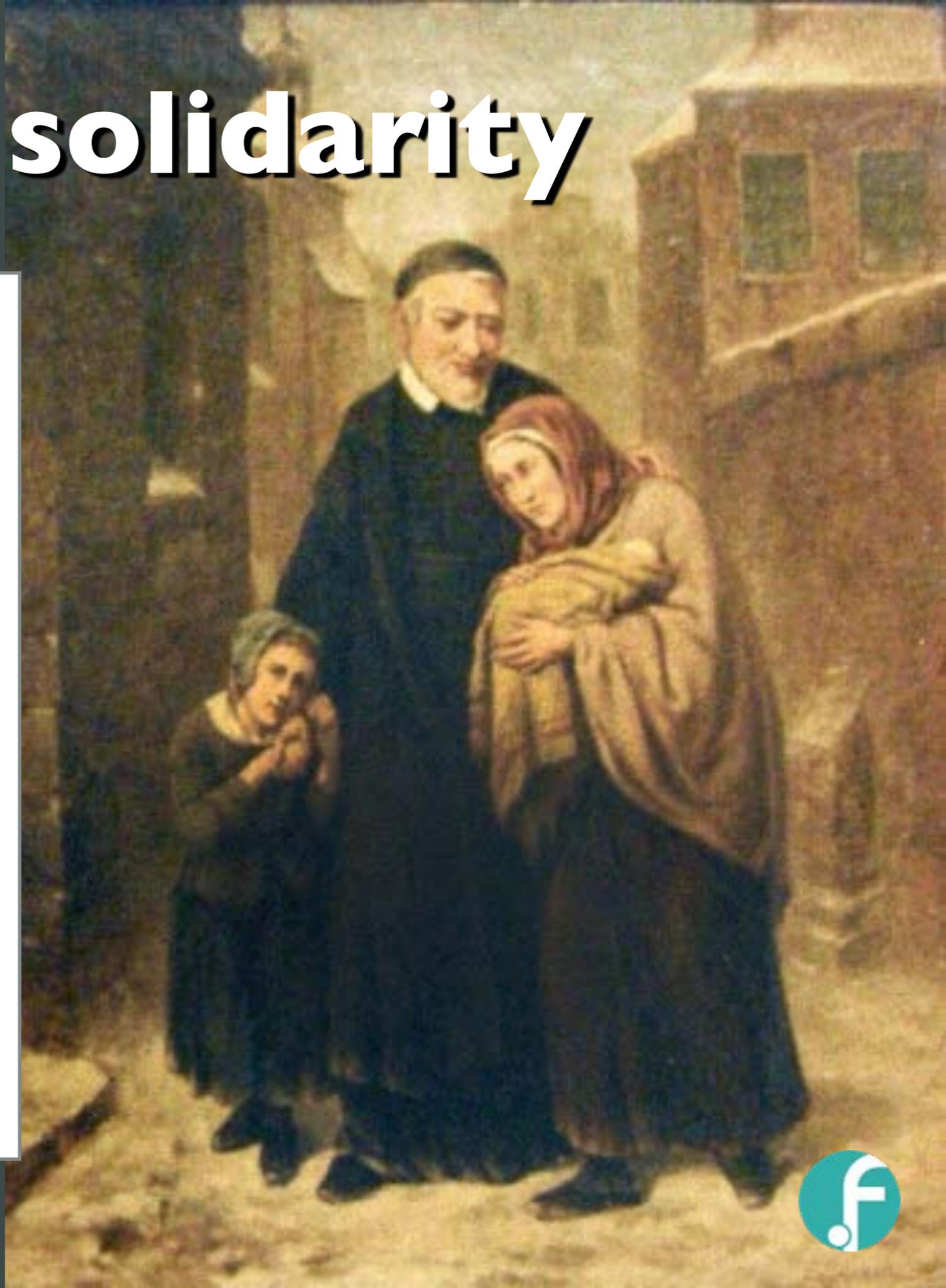
We do not find in any of Vincent's writing the word "solidarity". This word was not used until the nineteenth century.

In Vincent's writing we do find, however, expressions of compassion toward those sisters and brothers who suffer.



Life of solidarity

Sister Pilar writes: "Vincent spoke about the common good and through his life he gave witness to the meaning of solidarity as an encounter: the experience of finding oneself in the midst of the world of suffering and injustice and not remaining indifferent, and having the ability to think and live differently.



Foundation of solidarity

She continues by quoting Scripture: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness (Genesis 1:26). This scriptural text, simple and yet profound, is the theological and Christian foundation of solidarity." God is our neighbor and all humans are our neighbors.



Solidarity as a mindset

Pope Francis has written, “The word “solidarity” is a little worn and at times poorly understood, but it refers to something more than a few sporadic acts of generosity. It presumes the creation of a new mindset which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few.” [Evangelii Gaudium 188]



A culture of encounter

During one of his morning homilies (9-13-2016) he elaborated on this mindset as working toward a culture of encounter. "An invitation to work for "the culture of encounter", in a simple way, "as Jesus did": not just seeing, but looking; not just hearing, but listening; not just passing people by, but stopping with them; not just saying "what a shame, poor people!", but allowing yourself to be moved with compassion; "and then to draw near, to touch and to say: 'Do not weep' and to give at least a drop of life".



Reflection questions

- How do I encounter those who are poor and live in solidarity with them?
- If all peoples live in God's neighborhood, what am I doing to clean up the neighborhood?