

The following prayer service was used at a Vincentian Family Gathering with Fr. Gregory Gay at the conclusion of his formal visitation of the Vincentians of the Eastern Province.

Opening Song: "We are the Light of the World" (Greif)

Opening Prayer

Leader:

Lord Jesus, expand our vision and fire our creativity in the service of your people, and especially those who live in poverty. Draw us together with others who also seek to serve the dignity and rights of each person. Lead us peacefully on our way through all the tension and pressures of working together as your Vincentian Family. May your spirit fill our hearts and give us wisdom. We ask this through the intercession of St. Vincent de Paul and the founders of our Vincentian Family.

All: Amen.

Reflection: (Reader)

About Vincent:

Vincent sought to focus all of his efforts on the direct service of poor people. However, he knew to do so, he would need to gather, motivate, and negotiate with diverse groups of people. Vincent de Paul constantly devised ingenious ways to pool the resources of the wealthy and the talents of willing co-workers.

His creativity manifested itself even in the recognition of potential helpers. He tapped assistance, skills, or talent, as well as financial resources, from socialites, politicians, professors, jailers, military officers, prisoners, farm laborers, merchants, parish priests, and cloistered nuns. He did not allow current norms to limit his creativity in the service of the poor.

With characteristic imagination, Vincent recruited individuals and organized groups into an ever-widening circle of men and women to care for the poor and to change society.

Vincent's legacy is a mixture of single-mindedness and openness. With his heart set on God and neighbor, Vincent de Paul searched for whatever methods might make that love active and credible. Approaches that

escaped other people's attention caught his eye because of their potential. After deliberating, he would step out beyond the tried and the true when he saw a need to be met or a good to be done.

Vincent's Words:

Encouraging one of his communities to overcome obstacles to their work, Vincent said, "Love is inventive, even to infinity."

Leader:

Ask yourself: Have I sometimes held on to comfortable ways of serving when newer ways would have been more helpful?

(Pause)

Leader:

Like Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, may our dreams soar. Let all our inhibitions and fears disappear as we strive to make our hopes come into being. Give us the strength, courage and insight we will need as we work to bring the Vincentian vision to a deeper reality in our branch of the Vincentian Family, in our world, and in our culture today.

May we be guided in our imaginations and creativity by the spirit of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac so that worries and anxieties will not overcome us, for it is only through our dreams that the beauty and wonder of life will be realized.

Reader:

Dreams come and go in our lives.

Far more die than come to reality.

All:

What is it in us that allows us to let go of visions that could create new and beautiful worlds? Why do we so easily give in to barriers? Why do we let ourselves conform and be satisfied with what is?

Reader:

Reaching out to a dream, a vision can be risky. It can involve hardships that our imaginations never knew. Our comfortableness can so easily be

disturbed. But, beauty can be experienced as we accept the challenge of a dream!

All:

What a precious feeling to be supported, to have others say you can do it, we can do it together!

Reader:

Nothing is beyond our reach if we reach out together, if we reach out with all the confidence we have, if we are willing to persevere even in difficult times and if we rejoice with every small step forward, if we dream dreams that will transform our lives, our world.

All:

Nothing is impossible if we put aside our careful ways. If we build our dreams with faith— faith in ourselves, faith in our sisters and brothers, and faith in the belief, as Vincent said, that “Love is inventive, even to infinity.”

Leader: Gathering our prayers and praise into one, let us offer the prayer Christ himself taught us:

All: Our Father...

Leader:

Lord, the more we dream the farther our hopes will take us. Let us be carried on the winds of our dreams with a confidence yet unknown. May we accept our future challenges with unbounded enthusiasm and naïve expectations, for nothing is impossible in your midst. May we be blind to obstacles and limitations as together we build your glorious kingdom. We ask this through Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

All: Amen

Closing hymn: Salve Regina

“Consider God’s generosity towards you rather than your own unworthiness in His sight, and live in His strength, rather than in the thoughts of your own weakness.” - St. Vincent de Paul