Vincentians are called to journey together towards holiness (Rule: Part 1, 2.2), and it is with this inspiration that we hope for our Centennial Year to be a special time for us all to be reigned with Vincentian zeal. As the basic unit, “the grassroots” of the Society, our Conferences are vital to our celebration and renewal. Our Conferences constitute the very heart and life of Vincentian Spirituality and Service.

This toolkit includes resources to support you, at the Conference level, in reflecting on our collective Vincentian journey, to reconnect with the spiritual roots of the Society, and to go forth into the next one hundred years with a renewed commitment to hope, compassion and love-in-action. Find all of these resources – and more! – on the Centennial Conference Toolkit section of our website: www.svdpseattle.org/centennial.

ENCLOSURES

Sample letter to pastoral leadership
Sample Centennial Bulletin Insert English/Spanish – available to order!
Calendar of Centennial events and feast days English only
Suggestions for celebrating the Centennial in your community English only
Centennial Vincentian Commitment Ceremony English only
Centennial Prayer and Prayers of the Faithful English/Spanish
Hearts Ablaze memo
Centennial Monthly Reflections for Conferences English only
Centennial Prayer Cards (2) English/Spanish
Centennial Poster English/Spanish
King County St. Vincent de Paul History Book
January 27, 2020

Father John Smith
St. XYZ Parish
1234 Sycamore Street
Fun Town, WA 99999

Dear Father Smith:

On Saturday, January 25, 2020, Vincentians in the Archdiocese of Seattle gathered to remember and give thanks for 100 years of Vincentian charism in Western Washington. It was on the Feast of St. Paul, January 25, 1920 at St. Benedict Parish in Seattle that the first Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) conference was formed. For the past 100 years, members of the Society across our Archdiocese have prayed and lived out The Rule of St. Vincent to seek and to find Christ amongst those nearest to us who are in greatest need, living in fear, isolation, and poverty.

In 2020, there are over 100 parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Seattle with volunteer Vincentian members ready to go forth to their neighbors to listen, encounter, respond, and be transformed by the love of Christ.

**Please join us** as we celebrate our Centennial (1920—2020), which began with a special Mass at St. Benedict on January 26th and will culminate with a Mass at St. James Cathedral on September 27th, the feast day of St. Vincent de Paul, Patron Saint of the Society. *All are welcome!* Archbishop Etienne will be celebrant at this closing Mass at St. James Cathedral.

Enclosed please find materials you can use to share the SVdP ministry and spirituality with your parish community:

- **2 Posters** promoting 100 years of ministry – **English/Spanish**
- **Bulletin Insert**, please consider placing in your bulletin in February. – **English/Spanish. We can provide copies!**
- **Calendar** of Centennial events and feast days – **English only**
- **Centennial re-commitment ceremony** for current Vincentians – **English only**
- **Centennial Prayer** and Sample **Prayers of the Faithful** – **English/Spanish**
- **2 Centennial Prayer Cards** – **English/Spanish. We can provide copies!**
- A copy of King County’s SVdP most recent **history book** – **English only**

SVdP has a simple mission grounded in the spirituality of encounter taught and lived by St. Vincent de Paul, the Apostle of Charity.

Every day, Vincentians across the world engage in person-to-person service to the forgotten and the suffering, listening to the Holy Spirit and being a source of hope, compassion and advocacy.

(Over)
Vincentians are a dynamic force of human contact and affirmation of the value and dignity of all life. Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, along with Blessed Sister Rosalie Rendu, a daughter of Charity, remind us “No Act of Charity is Foreign to the Society.”

Vincentians across the world engage in prayer and discernment and respond to our neighbors’ needs by visiting individuals and families in their homes – or under bridges, in cars, at coffee shops, in hospitals and prisons, wherever needed! – to seek and to find the forgotten, to give what material help they can, but primarily to bring themselves as a concrete sign of God’s promise of hope and mercy.

Thank you for your support of the mission and ministry of SVdP. For more information, including electronic versions of this letter’s enclosures, visit our centennial resource page at www.svdpseattle.org/centennial.

St. Vincent, inflamed with the fire of perfect charity, pray for us!

Council Leader

Council Leader

PS: We invite you to connect with your St. Vincent de Paul Conference to plan ways in which your parish community can celebrate the mission of SVdP this Centennial Year!

[Conference President Name], Conference President
[Conference President Email]
[Conference President Phone]
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Centennial Celebration

“No Act of Charity is Foreign to the St. Vincent de Paul Society”

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, founder of the Society – 1833

And the Lord will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

-Matthew 25: 40

Did You Know?

Last year, Vincentians made close to 17,000 home visits, preventing evictions & bringing hope, assistance & advocacy.

SVdP has the 3rd largest Foodbank in Seattle - with clothes, health checks, community connectors, programs for people experiencing homelessness and more! A great location for service learning opportunities for students and teachers.

Centro Rendu serves 1,000+ Latino immigrant families annually with education, legal clinics & leadership programs.

Our Helpline/Call Center responds to approx. 40,000 calls per year - the #1 referral agency from the King Co. 2-1-1 Line.

Help your Neighbor! An SVdP Lent Campaign

As part of our Centennial “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” Campaign, we ask that you help someone this Lent (February 26 - April 9) and then share your story with a photo or video and tag us on Instagram!

#SVDPhelpingneighbors

Follow us @SVDPSeattle

Join the Ministry of St. Vincent de Paul!

To learn more, visit us at: www.svdpseattle.org/centennial
¡Ayuda a tu Vecino! ¡Campaña de Cuaresma!

Como parte de nuestro Centenario, la Campaña “Vecinos Ayudando a Vecinos” o en inglés “Neighbors Helping Neighbors,” te pedimos que durante esta Cuaresma (febrero 26 - abril 9) ayudes a otros y luego compartas tu historia, foto y/o video en Instagram con el “hashtag”!

#SVDHelpingneighbors
#SVDPayudandovecinos

¡Únete al Ministerio de San Vicente de Paul!

Visitanos y aprende más: www.svdpseattle.org/centennial

Sabias Que...

Este año pasado, los voluntarios Vicentinos visitaron cerca de 17,000 hogares, previniendo desalojos y trayendo esperanza, ayuda y abogando por nuestros vecinos en necesidad.

SVdP tiene el tercer banco de comida más grande en Seattle - con ropa, exámenes de salud, conexiones a recursos, ayuda para indigentes, oportunidades para servicio voluntario, y mucho más!

Centro Rendu sirve a más de 1,000 familias Latinas al año con programas educativos, asuntos legales, y programas de liderazgo.

Nuestra Línea de Ayuda responde a un promedio anual de 40,000 llamadas - somos la agencia # 1 para referidos de la Línea de Crisis 2.1.1. del Condado King.

¡Espiritualmente Enriquecidos por el Encuentro!

“Y el Señor les respondió, ‘Todo lo que hicieron a mis hermanos necesitados, a mi me lo hicieron...’” - Mateo 25: 40

“Ningún Acto de Caridad es Ajeno a la Sociedad de San Vicente de Paul”
- Beato Federico Ozanam, fundador de La Sociedad – 1833

La Sociedad de San Vicente de Paul
Celebración de Centenario

¡Ayuda a tu Vecino! ¡Campaña de Cuaresma!
Centennial Calendar of Events*

Saturday, Jan. 25th – SVdP Council Mass at Georgetown Food Bank w/ Celebrant Father Brad Hagelin and a blessing of Centennial Candles. Followed by Centennial Kick-Off Meeting for Conference Presidents and Spiritual Advisors Gathering

Sunday, Jan. 26th – Centennial Kick-Off Mass at St. Benedict 5 PM (all are welcome!); Centennial Hearts Ablaze Torch** blessed and lit

Monday, Jan. 27th – Friday, Jan. 31st Centennial Kick-Off Events for SVdP Employees
- Kenmore Store, Jan. 27th 2PM – 4PM
- Aurora/North Seattle Store, Jan. 28th 2PM – 4PM
- Renton Store, Jan. 29th 2PM – 4PM
- Burien Store, Jan. 30th 2PM – 4PM
- Kent Store, Jan. 31st 2PM – 4PM

Friday, February 7th – Feast Day of Blessed Rosalie Rendu

February 26th – April 9th (Lent)
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors Social Media Campaign #svdphelpingneighbors

Sunday, March 8th – Centennial Vincentian Appreciation Dinner w/ Keynote Sr. Kieran Kneaves

Sunday, April 26th – Ozanam Sunday, Third Sunday of Easter

Wednesday, April 29th – Centennial Blue Dress Breakfast Event at Seattle University

Saturday, May 2nd – Centennial Saturday Celebration at Kenmore Thrift Store

Saturday, May 9th – Feast Day of St. Louise de Marillac

Saturday, May 30th – Centennial Saturday Celebration at Aurora Thrift Store

Saturday, June 27th – Centennial Saturday Celebration at Renton Thrift Store

Saturday, July 18th – Centennial Saturday Celebration at Burien Thrift Store

Saturday, August 22nd – Centennial Saturday Celebration at Kent Thrift Store

Friday, June 19th – Feast of the Sacred Heart

Wednesday, September 9th – Feast Day of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

Saturday, September 26th – Walk of Solidarity

Sunday, September 27th – Centennial Concluding Mass w/ Celebrant Archbishop Paul Etienne; Feast Day of St. Vincent de Paul

**See “Hearts Ablaze” memo for more information and relevant dates.
Centennial Activity Suggestions for Conferences

Narthex Displays & Literature
Our Council has many resources available for Conferences to help explain our work to parishioners. We have displays, fact sheets, Get Help Here Cards, and other materials to share the good news of how SVdP accompanies neighbors in the community. Just contact us (below) to request materials.

St. Vincent de Paul History & Information Night
Host a special SVdP History and Information gathering to invite people in your community to learn more about SVdP, our work and history in Western Washington, and how the Society can help Catholics live out our baptismal call to love our neighbor. Contact us (below) for support in setting up such an event.

Host a Panel Discussion
Host a panel discussion about poverty, local and global. Invite representatives from community organizations in your area, as well as other parishioners who volunteer or work with those living in poverty. Contact us (below) for support in setting up such an event.

Organize an Invitation to Serve
Designate a member of your Conference or invite an SVdP staff member or other guest speaker to share with your fellow parishioners about the meaningful work of SVdP and your Conference in the community. Make arrangements with your pastor to speak for a few minutes either at the end of Mass or after the homily, with his permission. Invite other parishioners to put their faith in action by joining and/or supporting the ministry financially. Table after Mass to share materials, answer questions and sign up new members. Contact us (below) for any support or materials you may need.

Share Stories of Hope & Help
Post neighbor stories in the parish bulletin and on the parish website and social media pages throughout the year, especially to celebrate significant feast days (see dates on reverse). Write your own, or borrow from the blog at www.svdpseattle.org/centennial.

Centennial Prayer Cards
Distribute the Centennial bilingual prayer cards to help individuals and families pray about how God is calling them to respond to love their neighbors. Contact us (below) to request these for your community.

CONTACT US!
For support in celebrating the Centennial as a Conference at your parish:
CENTENNIAL COMMITMENT CEREMONY
A Vincentian Promise and Prayer of Renewal

Impelled by a deeply incarnational love of Christ, members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul are encouraged to grow in spirituality and to be inspired and motivated by faith. Use this ceremony to bless and commission the Vincentians in your parish as part of your community’s Centennial Celebration. Consider incorporating this ceremony in one of the Vincentian feast day Masses (below), with your parish feast day, or perhaps in connection with your parish ministry fair weekend.

Friday, February 7, 2020: Feast Day of Blessed Rosalie Rendu
Sunday, March 15, 2020: Feast Day of St. Louise de Marillac Third Sunday of Lent
Sunday, April 26, 2020: Ozanam Sunday Third Sunday of Easter
Friday, June 19, 2020: Feast of the Sacred Heart
Wednesday, September 9, 2020: Feast Day of Blessed Frederic Ozanam

Opening Song
Begin with an appropriate song, such as Christ, Be Our Light (Sé Nuestra Luz), Bernadette Farrell (OCP) or In the Arms of Saint Vincent (En Los Brazos De San Vicente), Ray Sickinger, for example.

Priest/Spiritual Advisor: Let us ask the Holy Spirit to be with us as we renew our Vincentian Commitment to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in this Centennial Year.

Vincentians: Spirit of the living God, Come and breathe your life anew.

Priest/Spiritual Advisor: Send forth your spirit and new life will be created.

Vincentians: And the whole face of the earth will be renewed.

Priest/Spiritual Advisor: Passionate fire of God’s love, Ignite the talents and gifts of everyone present here, and enkindle our hearts with the fire of your love.

In this Centennial Year, let us reflect on what we are about and to commit ourselves once again to faithfulness in carrying out our mission as Vincentians.

You laborers who work in the Society give expression to your baptismal call to bring the love of Christ to others and to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to those who are poor and suffering. Let us ask our Gracious God to keep our hearts on fire with enthusiasm, our spirits determined with perseverance and our bodies strengthened with energy to do God’s will in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, Blessed Frederic Ozanam and Blessed Rosalie Rendu.

Priest/Spiritual Advisor: Do you commit yourself to spiritual growth, so that you may bear witness to the love of God and to see the face of Christ in the faces of those you serve?

Vincentians: I do, and I ask for the grace to grow in holiness of life and to share in a longing for spiritual growth and enrichment.
Priest/Spiritual Advisor: Do you commit yourself to promote a community of faith and friendship among all members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul?

Vincentians: I do, and I ask for the grace to grow in humility and simplicity so that true friendship may grow in my heart.

Priest/Spiritual Advisor: Do you promise to be generous with your time, your possessions and yourself in your mission of charity?

Vincentians: I do, and I ask for the grace to always serve in justice and charity so that I can be an advocate and a voice for the poor.

Priest/Spiritual Advisor: BLESSING of VINCENTIANS (Sprinkling with Holy Water)

May the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, Blessed Frederic Ozanam and Blessed Rosalie Rendu, strengthen you in the ways of justice and charity, and may you bring hope and healing into the hearts of all those who are poor and suffering.

May the passionate fire of God’s love nourish you for the work that lies ahead and renew you in your commitment to service.

Priest/Spiritual Advisor: Let us pray together our CENTENNIAL PRAYER

ALL: Almighty and ever-living God, through the example of your servant St. Vincent de Paul, you continue to call us to an encounter with your son Jesus in our suffering neighbors.

Today, we recall those who have gone before us, who have responded to the Vincentian call with zeal, compassion, dedication, simplicity, mercy and love. We pray that you inspire us to find new ways to receive You into our hearts and to minister effectively to those in need. May our awareness of Your continuous presence in our hearts lead us to acknowledge that whatever we do to the least we do to You.

Almighty and ever-living God, may we be graced to detect your presence in everyone and everything that lives, moves and shares in your being, including in ourselves. We ask this through Jesus, Our Lord. AMEN

Closing Song: Conclude with an appropriate song, such as The Summons, John L. Bell (Gia Publications) or We Are Called, David Haas (Gia Publications), for example.
CENTENNIAL PRAYER
St. Vincent de Paul

Almighty and ever-living God, through the example of your servant St. Vincent de Paul, you continue to call us to an encounter with your son Jesus in our suffering neighbors.

Inflamed by your love, members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul give of themselves and their talents, their time and their treasure, to help those in need, one person at a time, especially by visiting people in their own homes. In this Centennial Jubilee Year of the mission of St. Vincent de Paul in the Archdiocese of Seattle, we ask that you bless the work of Vincentians, the thousands they serve every year, and the generous supporters who give financially to sustain this work of mercy.

Today, we recall those who have gone before us, who have responded to the Vincentian call with zeal, compassion, dedication, simplicity, mercy and love. Especially for Charlie Albert whose tireless efforts lead to the formation of the first St. Vincent de Paul conference at St. Benedict’s in Seattle in 1920. We also turn to you to ask for help, that we may become more conscious of the changes that have taken place in our geographical area in the last 100 years. We pray that you will inspire us to find new ways to receive You into our hearts and to minister effectively to those in need, while staying true to the charisms of our founders and patrons.

May our awareness of Your continuous presence in our hearts lead us to acknowledge that whatever we do to the least we do to Yourself, because You are everywhere, in all people and in all things.

Almighty and ever-living God, may we be graced to detect your presence, in everyone and everything that lives, moves and shares in your being, including ourselves. We ask this through Jesus, Our Lord. AMEN

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL
R/ Possible Responses:
• Lord, hear our prayer.
• In your mercy, hear us Lord.
• In your compassion, answer us God.

For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, our Archbishop Paul, and all church leaders, that they will continue to proclaim Christ’s love and compassion for our sisters and brothers living in poverty, and that the Church will continue to adapt and teach the need to work for justice in our changing world. Let us pray to the Lord. R/

For all who work to address poverty in this country, especially Vincentians, and for our parish community, that all may follow Christ’s example of love and solidarity with our neighbors in need. Let us pray to the Lord. R/

For the people of God, especially the laity, that we will open our hearts and souls to Christ’s love for the poor so that we might listen, engage, and build relationships that assist and advocate for individuals and families who are poor in this country and throughout the world. Let us pray to the Lord. R/

In gratitude for the 100 years of service and solidarity of Vincentian volunteers in Western Washington who, guided by the Holy Spirit, follow Christ by bearing witness to His compassionate and liberating love through person-to-person encounter. Let us pray to the Lord. R/
ORACION CENTENARIA
St. Vincent de Paul

Dios todopoderoso y eterno, a través del ejemplo de tu siervo San Vicente de Paúl, continuas llamándonos a un encuentro con Tu hijo Jesucristo en nuestros vecinos que sufren.

Inflamados de Tu amor, los miembros de la Sociedad de San Vicente de Paúl se dan a sí mismos y sus talentos, su tiempo y su tesoro, para ayudar a los necesitados, una persona a la vez, especialmente visitando a personas en sus propios hogares. En este Año del Jubileo Centenario de la misión de San Vicente de Paúl en la Arquidiócesis de Seattle, te pedimos que bendigas el trabajo de los Vicentinos, los miles que sirven cada año y los generosos benefactores que contribuyen económicamente al sostenimiento de este trabajo de misericordia.

Hoy recordamos a los que nos precedieron, los que respondieron al llamado vicenciano con celo, compasión, dedicación, sencillez, misericordia y amor; especialmente a Charlie Albert, cuyos incansables esfuerzos llevaron a la formación de la primera conferencia de San Vicente de Paúl en la iglesia San Benito (St. Benedict’s) en Seattle en 1920. También recurrimos a Ti pidiendo ayuda para que podamos ser más conscientes de los cambios que han tenido lugar en nuestra área geográfica en los últimos 100 años. Oramos para que nos inspires a encontrar nuevas formas de recibirte en nuestros corazones y de servir eficazmente a los necesitados, mientras nos mantenemos fieles a los carismas de nuestros fundadores y patronos vicentinos.

Que nuestra concientización de Tu presencia constante en nuestros corazones, nos lleve a reconocer que cualquier cosa que hagamos a los más pequeños Te lo hacemos a Ti, porque estás en todas partes, en todas las personas y en todas las cosas.

Dios todopoderoso y eterno, concédenos la gracia de saber reconocer Tu presencia en todos y en todo lo que vive, se mueve y comparte en Tu ser, incluyéndonos a nosotros. Te lo pedimos por Nuestro Señor Jesucristo. AMÉN

ORACIONES DE LOS FIELES
R/ Posibles respuestas:
• Señor, escucha nuestra oración.
• En tu misericordia, escúchanos Señor.
• En tu compasión, responde al Señor.

Por nuestro Santo Padre, el Papa Francisco, nuestro Arzobispo Pablo y todos los líderes de la iglesia, que continúen proclamando el amor y la compasión de Cristo por nuestros hermanos y hermanas que viven en la pobreza, y que la Iglesia siga adaptándose y enseñando la necesidad de trabajar por la justicia en nuestro mundo cambiante. Oremos al Señor. R/

Por todos los que trabajan para erradicar la pobreza en este país, especialmente los vicentinos, y para nuestras comunidades parroquiales. Que todos puedan seguir el ejemplo de amor y solidaridad de Cristo con nuestros hermanos en necesidad. Oremos al Señor. R/

Por el pueblo de Dios, especialmente los laicos, para que abramos nuestros corazones y nuestras almas al amor de Cristo con los pobres; que podamos escuchar, participar y construir relaciones que ayuden y aboguen por las personas y familias pobres y necesitadas en este país y alrededor del mundo. Oremos al Señor. R/

En agradecimiento por los 100 años de servicio y solidaridad de los voluntarios vicentinos en el estado de Washington que, guiados por el Espíritu Santo, sigan a Cristo dando testimonio de su amor compasivo y liberador a través del encuentro de persona a persona. Oremos al Señor. R/.
Hearts Ablaze
#SVdPHearsAblaze

“It is our vocation to set people’s hearts ablaze, to do what the Son of God did, who came to light a fire on earth in order to set it ablaze with His love.”

- St. Vincent de Paul

As part of our Centennial Celebration, we invite our Conferences to join in continued renewal, keeping our collective hearts ablaze with the Centennial Hearts Ablaze Torch. This physical symbol of our spiritual zeal for the Society’s mission of love and charity will be blessed and set aflame at our Centennial Kick-Off Mass at St. Benedict’s on Sunday, January 26th, at 5:00 p.m. From there, the torch will pass from Precinct to Precinct, and whenever possible, Conference by Conference – each Conference will receive its own Centennial Candle, to be lit by the torch (these candles will be blessed by Fr. Brad Hagelin, Vicar for Charities) and distributed at the January 25th King County Council meeting.

On September 27th, the torch will arrive at our concluding Mass at St. James Cathedral, with Archbishop Etienne presiding. Following the Centennial Celebrations, the Hearts Ablaze Torch will remain at our main office in Georgetown as a symbolic reminder of the mission of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul alive in the Archdiocese of Seattle. May this Centennial Year reignite the fire in every heart with the love of Christ for our neighbors.

May we all be transformed by His love!

Precinct hand-offs
1. NW Seattle: (Start) January 26th - March 8th
2. NE Seattle: March 8th - April 12th
3. NE King: April 12th - May 24th
4. East King: May 24th - July 5th
5. South King: July 5th - August 16th
6. South Seattle: August 16th - September 27th
7. Central Seattle: September 27th (End)

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<td>Sunday, September 27th</td>
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<td>Central Seattle Precinct - St. James Cathedral</td>
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This Centennial Year offers us a special opportunity to reflect on our shared Vincentian life and ministry, while rooting ourselves more deeply in the spirituality of the Society’s founders, patrons and holy ones. We invite you to use these monthly reflections as a resource for individual reflection and journaling, as well as for reflection in community at your Conference meetings.

Prayer and action go hand in hand in a healthy Vincentian spirituality. May this resource enrich your understanding and experience of Vincentian spirituality.

Thank you to Fr. Kevin Moran for his continued support and spiritual guidance as the Archdiocesan Council Spiritual Advisor and for his input in preparing these reflections.

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The Centennial Year is a graced opportunity for us to step back a little from “business as usual” in order to enhance our Vincentian Spirituality, so that it might find a deeper home in our hearts, that itself brings to us a greater joy in our ministry.

In order to increase the possibility of achieving such a goal it is important that our focus be not so much on learning new things, as to allow what we already know to become part and parcel of our Vincentian identity. In this way, our very presence becomes an agency of evangelization as the people we serve ask, “Where did these people get all this?” Such a question arising from people's hearts is sufficient to allow God to “work His magic,” because seeking Him always leads to finding Him. “Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

If you like, to use Catholic terminology, we are called to “incarnate God”, just like Jesus did. Or, if you prefer, we are called to be “sacraments of God,” outward signs of an inward grace.

The Gospel is spread by first, finding a home in our hearts, so that we naturally reflect it to others by living it and not by “pushing the name Jesus down people's throats.”

More than a regular spiritual reflection

Throughout this year, each Vincentian is invited to take the opportunity of this kairos time to enhance our Vincentian Spirituality. There are myriad ways to do this! You might use as an individual the reflection materials and journal about them. You might be impelled by this Centennial Year to discover the effect being a Vincentian has in other areas of your life. You might use this opportunity to connect to the patrons and founders of the Society as well as to scripture and the extensive lived history of our faith.

For Vincentian Spirituality to become a cornerstone in our lives, there is suggested more than a once or twice monthly spiritual reflection at the Conference meeting. For us Vincentians to make Vincentian Spirituality a priority in our lives, consider committing to the following for this Centennial Year:

1. Purchase an exercise book/journal to use throughout the year to write down your own reflections, meditations and activities as a Vincentian.
2. Use the front of the journal for reflections on the monthly themes, and the back of the journal for reflections on Vincentian ministry as well as Council and Conference meetings.
3. Engage in these monthly reflections as an individual, with your Conference, and imagine ways you might bring Vincentian Spirituality into all aspects of your life.
Reflection for JANUARY
January 26th – Centennial Kick-Off Mass at St. Benedict Parish, Seattle

The spiritual reflection for January is this introduction to the Centennial Year of reflections. We are invited to familiarize ourselves with it and write up our thoughts and reflections on using the grace of this Centennial Year’s theme, Helping Neighbors, Healing Hearts, to enter more deeply into our Vincentian Spirituality. Maybe, after the home visit, we might evaluate our presence to the folks we visited, writing up what went well, what we learned, where our hearts were throughout the encounter. Consider ...

1. To what degree were we present to our own hearts?
2. To what degree were our hearts present to the hearts of those we visited?
3. In what areas might we improve on our next home visit?
4. What can we bring to our Conference meeting about the inward dispositions of our hearts well as the external factors about the visit?
Reflection for FEBRUARY

February 7th – Feast Day of Blessed Rosalie Rendu
February 26th – Ash Wednesday, Lent begins

Read through the brief biography of Vincentian founder Blessed Rosalie Rendu, whose feast day we celebrate this month (February 7th). Then, select two or three of the quotes below, allowing them to find a deep home in your heart. Use your imagination to put yourself in her shoes and to allow to surface a greater appreciation of this holy woman and how God was using her to continue the work of Jesus, of bringing the Kingdom of God to our world. Journal on the parts of her story and words that strike you, resonate with you, challenge you, and inspire you. Be prepared to share your reflections at the Conference meeting.

BLESSING ROSALIE RENDU (1786-1856)

She was the oldest child of affluent parents, who helped various priests on the run from civil society, having refused to take the oath of supporting the government. Brought up in such a strong faith family, it was not surprising that she joined the Daughters of Charity. That was in 1802.

After her novitiate she was sent to the poorest area of Paris to serve the poor and she remained there for 45 years, becoming deeply involved in her ministry to those in need.

Emmanuel Bailly sent Frédéric Ozanam and his companions to Sr. Rosalie for guidance in their new found ministry.

She awakened the consciences of the rich and powerful. Also, she saw the importance of not just providing handouts that will not last long, but to provide more lasting benefits like education and jobs.

In the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, she picked up the wounded of both sides. She even climbed the barricades to yell out: “Stop this shooting. Haven’t I now got enough widows and orphans to care for!”

In 1852 she was presented with the Legion of Honor, where she was named “Mother of the poor.” She died in 1856 – 50,000 people attended her funeral. Her headstone reads: “To our good mother Rosalie from her grateful friends, the poor and the rich.” She was beatified in 2003.
Words of Blessed Rosalie

- Never have I prayed as well as in the streets.
- There is something that is choking me and holding back my appetite – the thought of so many people lacking bread.
- If we had to live through the hardship those in need had to meet – if our childhood had been one of constant want – perhaps we too would have given in to envy and hatred as, I must admit, have many of the poor in this quarter. Be kind and loving, for love is the first gift you give to the poor. They will appreciate your kindness and love more than all else you can bring them.
- I serve God. It is from God that I await my recompense.
- Let us accept all that comes our way. God will send us enough money and enough goods, provided we use them well.
- All have the right to lay their burden upon us without our having the right to complain about it.
- All of us are working for the glory of God.
- Let us support one another on the way of the Cross and let us walk in the footsteps of our Divine Master. Following His example, let us carry our Cross with courage and confidence in His infinite Mercy.
Reflection for MARCH

In the course of this month, examine the following texts (one per week), using the method described below. Write down what touched your heart and whatever insights surface. Be prepared to share in small group reflection at your Conference meeting.

Week 1: Mark 9:14-29
Week 2: Luke 1:39-56
Week 3: Luke 8:22-25
Week 4: Luke 10:29-37

One Way of Reflecting on Scripture

Begin by trusting that God meets us where we are and takes us where we need to go as we examine the text. God is alive and is in everything. In a word, He is “everywhere.” He is in nature, in people in situations; but we need a certain dimension of contemplation in our lives in order to perceive his presence. He is more explicitly present in Scriptures, in the Church and of course in Jesus, but we still need a contemplative dimension to appreciate that presence.

God is present in our lives and – through a personal reading of Scripture – meets us where we are and takes us where we need to go.

Method: Take the text and read it slowly. Choose a character you want to interact with. Let your imagination roll. Have a conversation. Write down what transpired.

After writing down what transpired, move to the next piece (on the following page).
Afterwards, reflect …
- What was this like?
- Why did you choose this character?
- Did anything in the conversation surprise you?
- Did anything in the conversation move you?
- Did you experience any inner blocks, any resistance, during the exercise?
- Did you feel God’s presence or guidance?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- How easy or how difficult was it for you to have this conversation?
- Did you learn anything from the conversation?
- Share out with your Conference.
Reflection for APRIL
April 12th – Easter Sunday
April 26th – Ozanam Sunday (Third Sunday of Easter)

Ozanam Sunday: Frédéric Ozanam was born on April 23, 1813 in Milan, Italy. On April 23, 1833 Frédéric and six companions founded the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Also, St. Vincent de Paul was born on April 24, 1581. To commemorate these events the Society in the United States celebrates the last Sunday of April as Ozanam Sunday.

Read through the brief biography of Vincentian founder Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, who we celebrate this month on Ozanam Sunday (April 26th). Then, select two or three of the quotes below, allowing them to find a deep home in your heart. Use your imagination to put yourself in his shoes and to allow to surface a greater appreciation of this holy man and how God was using him to continue the work of Jesus, of bringing the Kingdom of God to our world. Journal on the parts of his story and words that strike you, resonate with you, challenge you, and inspire you. Also this month, review what you have written in your journal over the past few months, noting what you have learned and what has touched your heart. Be prepared to share your reflections at the Conference meeting.

BLESSED FRÉDÉRIC OZANAM (1813-1853)

His study of philosophy filled him with uncertainty. He promised that if God took away this darkness, he would give his life to the service of truth. Instantly his doubts against faith ended. He studied law in Paris at the Sorbonne and became downcast at the coldness and corruption of the place. He met M ampere who helped him to see the place in a different light. Fredrick became convinced that Christianity was the only remedy to cure the evils - its truth needed to be demonstrated, a subject to which he had already given considerable thought.

He gathered around homes if a number of students and confronted the faculty who were anti-belief. He successfully lobbied the Archbishop of Paris to allow Henri Lacordaire to give a series of conferences at Notre Dame, so that the faith of the students might be nourished.

He had a sensitivity about poor people. He spoke out against slavery and against the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Emmanuel Bailly had started a literary circle 'society of good studies ' which Frédéric and his companions joined. They talked about putting the world to right according to Christian principles. But they only talked till they were challenged to do something to alleviate the needs of poor people.

In 1833 Frédéric and his companions met with Bailly and started the 'Conference of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul'. They contacted Sister Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity, already working among poor people in Paris, of names and addresses of families in need. She went further and taught them how to treat poor people with love and respect. They would bring friendship to those in need and not just food.
Frédéric excelled at his studies, was called to the bar, received a doctorate in literature and in 1844 became professor of foreign literature at the Sorbonne.

In 1841, he married Amelie and their daughter was born in 1845. Frédéric was a writer and teacher and still able to do prodigious work with the Society for the poor. He spent his life 'working in the service of truth'.

He made contact with workers and the sufferings of the working classes. He was an intellectual as well as a man of action.

He wore himself our and died in 1853 at just 40 years of age. He was beatified in 1997. His feast day is 8th September.

**Words of Blessed Frédéric**

- Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the traveler who has been attacked. Justice is aimed at preventing the attack.
- The Society is based on 2 virtues -justice and charity. Yet, justice presupposes a lot of love already, for we need to love a man a great deal in order to respect his rights, which limit our rights, and his liberty which limits our liberty. Justice has its limits whereas charity knows none.
- The earth has become a chilly place. It is up to us Catholics to rekindle the flame of human warmth which is going out.
- The poor suffer less from a lack of generosity than from a lack of organization.
- Do not be afraid of new beginnings. Be creative. Be inventive. Organize new works of love in the service of those in poverty. You who have energy, who have enthusiasm, who want to do something of value for the Creator, be inventive, launch out, do not wait.
- No work of charity is foreign to the Society.
- You must not be content with tidying those in poverty over their crisis. You must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty, with the aim of long term improvement.
- The very essence of our society is visiting the poor in their homes; we must see them in rags, and amid all the disorder and distress of their misery, improvidence and discouragement. Such a sight is both a lesson to us and a motive of devotedness to God.
- The knowledge of social wellbeing and reform is to be learned not from books, nor from the public platform, but by climbing the stairs to a poor man's garret, sitting by his bedside, feeling the same cold that pierces him, learning the secret of his lonely and troubled mind.
Reflection for MAY

May 9th – Feast Day of St. Louise de Marillac
May 31st – Pentecost Sunday

Read through the brief biography of Vincentian patron St. Louise de Marillac, whose feast day we celebrate this month (May 9th). Then, select two or three of the quotes below, allowing them to find a deep home in your heart. Use your imagination to put yourself in her shoes and to allow to surface a greater appreciation of this holy woman and how God was using her to continue the work of Jesus, of bringing the Kingdom of God to our world. Journal on the parts of her story and words that strike you, resonate with you, challenge you, and inspire you. Be prepared to share your reflections at the Conference meeting.

ST. LOUISE DE MARILLAC (1591-1660)

She was born out of wedlock, sent away for a solid education. Her father died when she was 12. At 20 she wanted to join a cloistered community, only to be informed by the superior that God had other plans for her. In 1613 she married the secretary to the Queen. She gave birth to a child, but soon after her husband became ill both physically and psychologically. Louise herself became distressed. This led to her conversion experience, a vision that left her full of peace. In the vision she heard that she would take vows, be in a religious community and serve the poor.

In 1625 her husband died. Vincent became her spiritual director. They eventually became friends and he shared with her that poor people are Jesus Christ and that in serving them one would do so with the qualities one would use in service to Christ himself.

The Ladies of Charity would often their servants to see to the needs of poor people. Louise began to give her energies in this direction and she discovered here calling to be with the poor. Some young women were attracted to her and with her they formed a community in 1633 and so 'The Daughters of Charity ' came into existence, and with it, ministry in hospitals, prisons, orphanages, schools and in homes for the elderly. Louise died in 1660 and was canonized in 1934.
Reflection for MAY (continued)

Words of St. Louise

- Let us spare no efforts to observe the commandments He gave us to love Him.
- How fortunate you are to have so many to serve. How evident it is that God loves you with so many opportunities to serve Him.
- Cultivate a love of poverty in imitation of Jesus.
- A deep love for God in this life is shown by practicing His goodness, gentleness and charity to neighbor.
- The person who does not love God does not know God for God is love.
- You must preserve very carefully the gentleness and charity when dealing with your masters, the poor.
- The practice of charity is so powerful that it gives us the knowledge of God. By penetrating deeply into the mystery of God we participate in His light that inflames us with the fire of love.
- We must respect and honor all. The poor because they are our masters. The rich so that they will provide us with the means to do good for the poor.
- If we leave a spiritual exercise for the service of the poor, we are leaving God for God.
- Practice great gentleness towards all- this will be easy if you maintain great esteem for your neighbor- the rich because they are above you -the poor because they are your masters.
- You serve the poor but it is their money you are using.
- Do as much good to the poor as you can, especially as regards the spiritual service you owe them.
Reflection for JUNE

June 19th – Feast of the Sacred Heart (Second Sunday after Pentecost)

Feast of the Sacred Heart: The Society of St. Vincent de Paul has been solemnly consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus since February 5, 1872. An Act of Consecration was drawn up at the request of the Society in 1872, and this act of consecration is renewed annually by all units of the Society.

Select a few of the Scripture Quotes on Poverty in the Bible (below), and reflect on them during the month, particularly those that resonate with your heart, where God resides. Read your selections daily so they might enter a deeper part of ourselves. In your journal, make note of whatever emerge in you. Be prepared to share your reflections at the Conference meeting.

INTRODUCTION

For the Hebrew people, the central event was the Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. Every year Jewish people gather to celebrate this and they recite aloud Deuteronomy 26, part of which has the following:

The Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us and imposed hard labor on us. Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and wonders; and he brought us to ...this land flowing with milk and honey.

They experienced such poverty in the way they had been treated for hundreds of years and there was nothing they could do to change matters by their own strength. All they could do was turn to the Lord in faith and cry out with desperation for his help. And He responded.

For Christians, the central event was Jesus Christ. In Philippians 2:5-11 we read from Paul reflecting on his experience of Jesus Christ:

Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped. Rather he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness. He humbled himself becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name that is above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In this text there is expressed the self-emptying (kenosis) of the Son of God, who continued his self-emptying throughout his life on earth to the Cross. That is poverty freely chosen in order to be one who those whose poverty is enforced on them.

Reflection for JUNE (continued)
Jesus expresses his mission in Luke 4:16-21:

*He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he appointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.' This is Jesus' mission statement, which we, his followers, continue to live by.*

Jesus' mission, his teaching and his actions had all to do with the poor. He helped the poor and then became totally poor himself, saying on the Cross, “Into your hands O God I commit my spirit.” Only in the recognition of our own poverty and embracing it, realizing we can do nothing about it, are we at the point of crying out to God for help. This is the point we are called to arrive at, so that we surrender our independence and become dependent, emptying ourselves as we say, “O God, come to my assistance; O Lord make haste to help me.”

Contact with people experiencing poverty helps us to be in touch with reality, which lies mainly outside our own skin. They lead us to the truth as we begin to break out of our comfort zone in order to help them and get to know them with a mutuality of respect.

**Scripture Quotes on Poverty in the Bible**

Commands of the Lord concerning those experiencing poverty

Blessings on those who serve their neighbor
- Deuteronomy 15:10; Proverbs 19:17; Jeremiah 7:5-7; Isaiah 58:10; Matthew 19:20; Luke 14:12-14; Luke 12:44;

Consequences of not being in solidarity with those on the margins

Faithful posture towards those experiencing poverty

God's Identification with the Poor
- Matthew 25:31-46
Reflection for JULY

July 4th – Feast Day of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

Read through the brief biography of Vincentian Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, whose feast day we celebrate this month (July 4th). Use your imagination to put yourself in his shoes and to allow to surface a greater appreciation of this holy man and how God was using him to continue the work of Jesus, of bringing the Kingdom of God to our world. Journal on the parts of his story and words that strike you, resonate with you, challenge you, and inspire you. Also this month, review what you have written in your journal over the past few months, noting what you have learned and what has touched your heart. Be prepared to share your reflections at the Conference meeting.

BLESSED PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI (1901-1925)

Pier Giorgio was born in Turin, Italy on April 6, 1901. His father, Alfredo, founded the famous Piedmont newspaper, La Stampa, and played a role in Italian politics, serving in the senate and as ambassador to Berlin in 1920. His many commitments prevented him from taking an active part in his children’s upbringing. This fell to their mother, Adela, who made quite a name for herself as an artist.

Adela taught Pier Giorgio and his sister Luciana verses from the Gospels. Pier Giorgio was deeply moved by them. Although his father was not a believer and his mother was not overly religious, Pier Giorgio developed an exceptional relationship with God.

At 17, he joined the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and committed himself to serving the poor, proclaiming, “Jesus visits me every morning in Holy Communion. I repay him with my poor means, visiting the poor.” When asked how he could stand the bad odors and unclean conditions of their homes, he answered, “Don’t forget that even if the house you visit is very dirty, there you may find Jesus.” Pier Giorgio did not love the poor in general; he loved the poor individual.

In home visits, he displayed great virtue, believing that he was “poor as any poor Man.” People sensed this in his demeanor and conversation. With respect, tact, and patience in listening to them, and care and simplicity in addressing their needs, he communicated his sense of equality with the poor.

In 1919, he joined the Catholic Student Federation and the Popular Party, a political organization which promoted the Catholic Church’s teachings. He even entertained the idea of merging the Catholic Student Federation with the Catholic Workers’ Organization. "Charity is not enough: we need social reform," he used to say, as he worked for both. He also gave his time to help establish a Catholic daily newspaper Momento which was based on the principles of Pope St. Leo XIII’s encyclical on social and economic matters, Rerum Novarum. He wrote:

Reflection for JULY (continued)
In this trying time that our country is going through we Catholics and especially we students, have a serious duty to fulfill: our self-formation. We, who by the grace of God are Catholics... must steel ourselves for the battle we shall certainly have to fight to fulfill our program and give our country, in the not too distant future, happier days and a morally healthy society, but to achieve this we need constant prayer to obtain from God that grace without which all our prayers are useless; organization and discipline to be ready for action at the right time; and finally, the sacrifice of our passion and of ourselves, because without that we cannot achieve our aim.

Pier Giorgio also felt a strong, mysterious urge to be near the Blessed Sacrament. During nocturnal adoration, he would spend all night on his knees in profound prayer. He influenced other students to make the annual university retreat given by the Jesuits. He loved the rosary, a family practice, and prayed it three times daily after becoming a Dominican tertiary.

Pier Giorgio valued friendships. Frequently he asked friends for their prayers and he humbly accepted help, advice, and encouragement from them. He was especially close to his sister, Luciana. While Pier Giorgio focused on the poor, she concentrated on her father’s world of diplomacy. The difference drew them closer as young adults. Only Luciana truly understood her brother’s heart. Other family members might disapprove of his activities, but not Luciana. He often sought her advice. She knew her brother’s best friends: young women and men who stood by each other and were full of fun and faith. Two of the young men became priests. With one of the girls, Laura, Pier Giorgio fell in love.

The last months of his life were filled with suffering. His parents’ relationship was strained. Pier Giorgio and Luciana struggled to keep them together. Fearing that his growing love for Laura, who was not of the same social standing as the Frassatis, might exacerbate conflict in the family, he decided to give her up. Pier Giorgio contacted poliomyelitis and became paralyzed. His family, preoccupied with caring for a dying grandmother, at first did not recognize the seriousness of his illness. Pier Giorgio asked for nothing and did not complain. On Friday, the day he usually visited the poor, he did not forget, but with his paralytic hand wrote them a message.

Pier Giorgio died peacefully on July 4, 1925 at the age of 24. When his death became known in Turin, hundreds came to view his body, out of love for this good and generous young man who’d offered everyone a kind word and a smile. Most of the mourners knew neither his name nor his social position. The Frassati family was stunned by their number and status. Luciana published several books containing the memories and words of her brother, and her reflections on him.

Pope John Paul II beatified Pier Giorgio on May 20, 1990. He is an outstanding example for all Vincentians, but especially for young people who are looking for a role model. They will find someone to identify with in this vibrant young outdoorsman who combined a deep love for Christ, a desire to serve the needy, and a mission to imbue society and politics with Christian ideals.

Read the following guide on the Society’s commitment to **Systemic Change**. Journal on the parts of the reading that strike you, resonate with you, challenge you, and inspire you. Journal on the reflection questions following the reading. Be prepared to share your reflections at the Conference meeting.

“You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis; you must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty with the aim of a long term improvement.” – **Blessed Frédéric Ozanam**

Our lives as Christians cannot be separated from politics. Love for others is not efficient if we don’t intend to modify the causes of the situations in which they find themselves.

Though systemic change is a contemporary idea, unknown in St. Vincent’s time, we can find seeds of the idea in his life and works. We see his ability to hold the individual person in his heart at the same time as challenging the authorities of his day, following the example of his Lord, Jesus Christ.

On many occasions, St Vincent had to intervene in political issues in order to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. He became a public figure with great influence. During his life he was in contact with kings, queens, ministers, public authorities, noblemen, members of the highest church hierarchy, but also national and international figures. He called upon the powerful in order to be able to help the poorest. He knew that decisions made by the great affect the small. He took advantage of circumstances which enabled him to belong to the Council of Conscience of the Regent Queen Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV.

Moved by the misery he witnessed, he decided to act upon decision makers, because, just like today, political decisions cause hunger, wars and calamities.

On the tracks of St Vincent, the Vincentian Christian must meet the individual needs of the poor, our brothers in Jesus Christ, and at the same time, in the light of gospel principles, he must try to reform social structures that are unjust, so as not to perpetuate or hide the causes of poverty. This means we must have “a charitable heart together with a social conscience” (P. Corera, C.M.)

In St. Vincent’s eyes, Jesus embodies the virtue of simplicity. He speaks the truth. He says things as they are. His intentions are pure, referring all things in life to God. He is not afraid to speak out, and in Luke’s Gospel starts his ministry in this way. Quoting the Old Testament, and signaling the Good News to the poor, Jesus proclaimed the pattern for his ministry. Many times in the Gospels he challenges the civil authorities and the Church authorities, inviting them to reflect on the truth. (Luke 12: 1 ff)

**Reflection for AUGUST (continued)**
Today, just as in St. Vincent’s time, simplicity means genuineness and transparency. It remains very attractive to the modern men and women whom we are called to serve. It means:

- speaking the truth (a difficult discipline, especially when our own convenience is at stake or when the truth is embarrassing);
- witnessing to the truth (or the personal authenticity that makes a person’s life match his words);
- searching for the truth as a wayfarer rather than possessing it as an “owner;”
- striving for purity of intention;
- practicing the truth through works of justice and charity;
- living modestly and sharing what we have, and
- using clear, transparent language, especially in teaching or preaching.

Prophecy means challenging people to a fresh vision. It is often uncomfortable.

Vincent turned the church upside down. He put the poor on top, with the rest of us in service and support, being evangelized by them and evangelizing them. Constant attention to seeking a just society necessitates solidarity, and solidarity is in the center of all Vincentian values.

1. In your experience as a Vincentian, why are people hungry, homeless, undereducated, underemployed or unemployed?
2. How would you express in your own words the meaning of solidarity?
3. What action might this reflection call forth from your Conference?

Sources: Systemic Change Vincentian Study Guide found online at famving.org; Serving in Hope Module IV.
Reflection for SEPTEMBER

September 9th – Feast Day of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam
September 27th – Centennial Concluding Mass at St. James Cathedral
w/ Celebrant Archbishop Paul Etienne; Feast Day of St. Vincent de Paul

Read through the brief biography of the Society’s patron, St. Vincent de Paul, whose feast day we celebrate this month (September 27th). Use your imagination to put yourself in his shoes and to allow to surface a greater appreciation of this holy man and how God was using him to continue the work of Jesus, of bringing the Kingdom of God to our world. Journal on the parts of his story and words that strike you, resonate with you, challenge you, and inspire you. Be prepared to share your reflections at the Conference meeting.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL (1581-1660)

Ordained at the age of 19. Mixed with the rich as he sought out a materially prosperous life. Something happened that lead to his conversion and he devoted his life to the service of poor people.

He was a parish priest for 12 years before becoming tutor of the son of one of the most prestigious families in Europe, the Gondis. The Madame of the house invited Vincent to accompany her on trips around the estate visiting the workers. He focused on hearing confessions, especially on need to make a general confession of one’s life.

In 1617, back to parish work, where he gathered together well-healed women and created 'The Ladies of Charity ' to serve the sick and the poor. He also became spiritual director to Visitation nuns as well as galley slaves and prison inmates. The Gondis gave him money galore so he was able to set up his community, the Congregation of the Mission that was approved by Archbishop of Paris in 1526 and Rome in 1533.

In 1525 he became spiritual director of Louise de Marillac, a widow with a 13 year old son. She organized the Ladies of Charity. In 1533 she housed a few women and formed a community called 'Daughters of Charity.' Their spirituality was to find Jesus in the poor and the poor in Jesus.

In 1638, Vincent set up homes in Paris for neglected street children with the Daughters of Charity serving them. Vincent became famous and used his celebrity to plead for the poor. He was consulted by the King on priest candidates that would make good Bishops. His ministry kept growing. His dream was not to die in bed but in his ministry. In 1660 he went to his rest. He was canonized in 1737.
Words of St. Vincent

- Love is inventive to infinity.
- It is His good pleasure that we always remain in the joy of His love.
- With convicts, when I praised them for their resignation and sympathized with them in their suffering, when I told them they were fortunate to have their purgatory in this world, when I kissed their chains, shared compassion for their distress and expressed sorrow for their misfortune, it was then that they listened to me and opened themselves to salvation.
- If you give only very little to the poor out of your helplessness, you give a great deal to God out of love, since you offer Him your own comfort, your heavy labors and your life.
- God habitually makes the poorest instruments do great things.
- I must not judge a poor man or woman by their appearance. By the light of faith, you will see that the Son of God who willed to be poor is represented to us by poor people.
- Regardless of how charitable a person is, if he is not humble, he has not charity. Without charity, even if he had faith to move mountains, or give all he has to the poor, all that would be useless to him.
- My idea is that those who have been called to continue Christ's mission should see things from His point of view and want what He wanted. They should have the same Spirit He had and follow in His footsteps.
- God's affairs are accomplished gradually and almost imperceptibly, and His Spirit is neither violent nor tempestuous.
- It is a ruse of the devil by which he deceives good people to induce them to do more than they are able, so that they end up not being able to do anything. The Spirit of God urges us gently to do the good that can be done reasonably so that it may be done over a long time.
- Good works are often spoiled by moving too quickly. The good God desires is accomplished almost by itself, without our even thinking about it.
Almighty and ever-living God, through the example of your servant St. Vincent de Paul, you continue to call us to an encounter with your son Jesus in our suffering neighbors.

Today, we recall those who have gone before us, who have responded to the Vincentian call with zeal, compassion, dedication, simplicity, mercy and love. We pray that you inspire us to find new ways to receive You into our hearts and to minister effectively to those in need. May our awareness of Your continuous presence in our hearts lead us to acknowledge that whatever we do to the least we do to Yourself.

Almighty and everliving God, may we be graced to detect your presence, in everyone and everything that lives, moves and shares in your being, including ourselves. We ask this through Jesus, Our Lord. AMEN

St. Vincent de Paul
Dios todopoderoso y eterno, a través del ejemplo de tu siervo San Vicente de Paúl, continúas llamándonos a un encuentro con Tu hijo Jesús en nuestros vecinos que sufren.

Hoy recordamos a los que nos precedieron, los que respondieron al llamado vicenciano con celo, compasión, dedicación, sencillez, misericordia y amor. Oramos para que nos inspires a encontrar nuevas formas de recibirte en nuestros corazones y de servir eficazmente a los necesitados. Que nuestra concientización de Tu presencia constante en nuestros corazones, nos lleve a reconocer que cualquier cosa que hagamos a los más pequeños Te lo hacemos a Ti.

Dios todopoderoso y eterno, concédenos la gracia de saber reconocer Tu presencia en todos y en todo lo que vive, se mueve y comparte en Tu ser, incluyéndonos a nosotros. Te lo pedimos por Jesucristo, nuestro Señor. AMÉN

San Vicente de Paul