

Getting on the Right Side of Jesus

Stephen Sundborg, S.J.

It is a privilege for us that St. Vincent de Paul has chosen to hold its Blue Dress Breakfast here on Seattle University's campus. This is my favorite event, the most fun, the most hopeful, and with the best and most generous people. I'm back in the saddle for a few months as the Interim President and feel right at home in that. In these last years that I have been back, the only organization for which I've done fundraising has been St. Vincent de Paul. I believe it's the most effective way to reach out to people in need, to honor their dignity, to help them where they are, to prevent the deterioration of their lives, and to counsel them to exercise their own agency to care for themselves. Nothing else does and does as well what St. Vincent de Paul does every day. That's why I support it, beside the fact that I cannot say "no" to Mirya!

I'd like now to offer an invocation which I would entitle "Getting on the Right Side of Jesus." Here's how it goes:

Jesus, you tell us in scripture that at the time of the judgment you will place the sheep on your right and the goats on your left. (We want to get on your right side.) You tell us you will say to those on the right, "Come you who are blessed by my father. Inherit the kingdom . . . for I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me; ill and you cared for me; in prison and you visited me; whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me . . . Come . . . inherit the kingdom."

Jesus, today you come among us as we gather and you say to us in an updated version of what you said 2,000 years ago: "Come, you sheep who support the St. Vincent de Paul Society and minister to my people through them; come to be on my right."

For I, the father of a toddler, had cancer and was trying to find work, and you came to me and helped me get on my feet.

For I, a single mother had my work hours cut and could not afford the rising cost of day care, and you showed me how I could better face my challenges.

For I had a flooded apartment that increased the serious emotional issues of one of my children and you came to help me clean up and repair the flooding.

For I, an immigrant and not a citizen, have been living in fear, afraid to renew my work permit, and you protected me and are accompanying me.

For I was escaping domestic violence and had no child support because I was afraid my abusive partner would find us, and you tided me over for two months till I could be more safe.

For you helped me as a mother with a young son to bring down a \$12,000 rent debt so I would not be evicted and could now find stable employment.

Blue Dress Breakfast 2026

May 12, 2026

(All of these are true stories from just one parish where St. Vincent de Paul volunteers reach out to people in need.)

Jesus, you continue:

"Whenever through the St. Vincent de Paul volunteers you went to and helped these least – and thousands of others hungry, unvisited, afraid, not knowing where to turn"— Jesus, you say, "you came to me and in your care you did it for me. Come, be on my right side, inherit the kingdom."

We pray in this Blue Dress Breakfast that Jesus will place us all on his right side and will bless our breakfast with joy, with generosity, and with fun. Indeed, let's all get on the right side of Jesus today.

Amen