

ORDINARY VINCENTIANS in ORDINARY TIME

As you read this we are in that time between Thanksgiving and Advent, in what the Church calls 'Ordinary Time', the time between and outside of the seasons of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter. Ordinary refers to the numbered weeks; it doesn't mean that nothing special is happening. On the contrary, as I write this the world is still spinning with COVID-19, threats of war, climate change, poverty in many forms, and more.

Change is happening more rapidly than in any time in human history and we Vincentians are a part of all of it. Almost before we can adapt to the current news, something else is breaking. It can be overwhelming. What should we do? What can we do? We can try to open ourselves to our loving God in prayer and meditation.

Looking to scripture and to Pope Francis helps me. As I was asking myself "Why?" again one day, I came across a quote from one of Pope Francis' homilies in 2018 during a visit to Azerbaijan:

***"We are not called to serve merely in order to receive a reward,
but rather to imitate God, who made himself a servant for our love.
Nor are we called to serve only now and then, but to live in serving.
Service is thus a way of life; indeed it recapitulates the entire Christian way of life:
serving God in adoration and prayer;
being open and available;
loving our neighbour with practical deeds;
passionately working for the common good."
Pope Francis – 2018***

The Holy Father's words seem to be directed so pointedly to us as ordinary members of SSVF.

- The primary purpose of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is the salvation of its members but we don't serve just for ourselves; we serve to imitate our Lord.
- We don't serve just when we feel like it; ours is a vocation to be lived as a way of life.
- Vincentians serve in prayer and adoration; we are open and available.
- Practical deeds are our way of bringing Christ's love and ours to anyone and everyone.
- Like Blessed Frédéric, we work always for social justice and the common good.

Vincentians are just ordinary people, called by the grace of God to do extraordinary things. May God grant us the graces necessary to serve Christ in his poor.

*Denise Bondy
Ontario Region Spirituality Chair*