



Reflection - Visiting in pairs

Canadian statutes – 3.17

Home visitation is a fundamental activity of the Society, and has been carried out in pairs since the beginning of the Society in the 1830's. This traditional activity shall continue to be carried out by two members, preferably a man and a woman.

The Society has a moral and legal responsibility to exercise due care and diligence for the protection of the visitors and those being served. Visiting in pairs constitutes a reasonable and necessary obligation. That kind of visit gives the two Vincentians the opportunity to see different aspects of a problem and other possibilities of solving it. It also helps foster friendship between members which is of importance to the Society and follows the example of Our Lord who sent out his disciples in pairs for mutual support and inspiration.

The Gospel of Mark, Chapter 6:7-13 is the biblical reason for our tradition. "Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits".

Why did Jesus send the disciples in pairs rather than individually? Part of the answer lies in the Jewish tradition of "two witnesses". Deuteronomy 19:15 stipulated that at least two witnesses were needed to convict someone of a crime.

Our tradition of visiting in pairs was mostly to do with requests for material assistance and largely was connected to financial matters. A notebook was carried to make notes after leaving the place of visitation of material help promised and/or offered, such as vouchers from the Thrift store run by Vincentians or monetary vouchers to spend in a grocery store.

With the advent of the outbreak of COVID, all home visits and personal contact with the needy were reduced to the minimum. Now five years later, we are ready to resume home visits and perhaps begin by visiting elderly Vincentians and parishioners who request a home visit. This could be social and spiritual but also therapeutic for those suffering from isolation and loneliness.

A Prayer before a visit: "Lord, bless us to do good in your name, since on our own we can do nothing. Put prudence on our lips, truth and thoughtfulness in our words, sensitivity in our conversations, patience in our work; may your grace enlighten our brothers and sisters in need when we speak to them of you. Bless our efforts since we know that although we can do nothing without you, nothing is impossible if you help us. Amen."

A prayer for members of the Vincentian family: "We pray for all who work for the poor, especially members of the Vincentian family. Bless us Lord, so that following Christ we may be faithful to his commandment of evangelisation and bear witness to his love."

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