



## APRIL 2025 REFLECTIONS

### Hearing Our Neighbour's Cry during Lent ...

*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also love one another. (1 John 4:11)*

By the time this Newsletter hits the newsstand, the 40-day period of prayer, fasting and alms-giving is almost over, and we're about to exalt in our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, completing the Paschal mystery – His Passion, death, Resurrection and Ascension - which is at the heart of our faith.

Lent is a time of reflection, renewal, reconciliation and thanksgiving. Our community of faith for most part reflects its reverence for Jesus Christ's suffering and laying down His life for our salvation. Not only we relive Christ's Passion and are reminded of the meaning of His death, we also during this season grow in reflection of our caring service to those who in the midst of their sufferings the Lord dwells.

For us Vincentians, serving those in need is very much in undercurrent of all we do and all that we are. However, has God transformed us through our Lenten experience to be more docile and attentive to the cry of those in need? Has He directed us to do more for others?

I read, "God's meeting our needs is directly related to the way we meet the needs of others".

We might then ask, "Do we listen to the deepest longings of their hearts?" Beyond bringing hampers and grocery vouchers, do we hear their other, perhaps deeper needs? Have we set our hearts on being God's source of hope, courage and solace to those struggling? In how all other ways can we share the many blessings we have with those who have little?

Have we moved on from mere delivery of material goods – a protocol made necessary by then pandemic – and fully returned to home visits, once again nurturing relationship and engaging those we serve in meaningful conversations?

Perhaps at next year's Lent, a gaze at the cross His pierced body is nailed ... each time we genuflect before each of 14 stations of the cross and pray, "Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world" ... or in a moment by ourselves in a Lenten retreat, we will hear and most discern the cry of our neighbours in need, with whom we share Christ's sufferings and love in this passing world.

### Reflection Questions

1. What has God summoned for you during this Lent? What is single thing you can offer to God in next year's Lent?
2. In whom do you need to recognize God's presence more consistently?

**Let us pray...** Heavenly Father, may we, trusting Your kindness and compassion, make the examples and teachings of Christ truly profound to those around us, especially those in need. May You light our way towards seeking and protecting the good of those who feel powerless and broken.

*Jose I. Torres, National Spirituality Committee Chair*

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### ... Living the Risen Christ in Our Work

*On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb...When Simon Peter went into the tomb and he saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his*



head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead. (John 20:1-9)

*This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)*

The great 50 days of Easter have been called, “the radiant center of the liturgical year.” We keep celebrating so that we might continue to derive meaning from the Resurrection and deepen the way it touches and enriches our daily lives. We can hardly grasp the utter joy of Easter Sunday! Jesus rose gloriously from the tomb and in doing so He has given us, who believe in Him, hope that we too will rise to new life.

Theologian M. Shawn Copeland writes, “Even as resurrection characterizes the destiny of Jesus, it is not a private destiny intended for him alone; it is the beginning of the absolute transformation of all creation.” Easter is a time that encourages us to pay attention to the bounty of God’s goodness.

Renewal and joy are abundant all around if we take the time to be attentive and observant. Flowers are appearing, birds are chirping, the grass is turning green, and leaves are beginning to appear on the trees. There are signs of new life all around us. Since the day Jesus Christ rose from the dead, the first signs of an “eternal springtime” began to appear.

As we pray and reflect on the Risen Christ throughout the beautiful Easter Season, we can pay attention to the many large and small ways we are being called to transformation in our own lives. In our Vincentian roles, we can think about how our own personal transformation translates to the good of others and those we serve. The kindness, love and hope we extend to our neighbours in need as fellow travellers in life could just be the encounter that makes a real difference in their lives. As St. Vincent de Paul said, “I will always welcome joyfully any opportunity that comes my way to be of service to you.” This Easter Season, like the disciples on Easter morning, may we find compassion and hope in the least likely of places. As the joyful hope of Easter resonates within us, may we become loving witnesses of the Risen Christ to those we serve.

We are called to be transformed by the joy of Easter. In Jesus’ Resurrection, we see how good triumphs and all creation is made new. The newness of creation is the beacon of light that shines through our lives. In recognizing the light shining within us, let us bring an attitude of celebration to all the good that occurs in our Vincentian lives and the good work we accomplish.

### Reflection Questions

In your Vincentian life, how can you carry on the story of the Resurrection to others?

1. How can Jesus’ Resurrection be for you today a source of hope and strength?
2. Where can you find new life this Easter Season?

**Let us pray...** Loving God, we rejoice in the glory of Your Resurrection. May we share with others the gifts of joy and hope and offer the opportunity to begin anew. Help us to make the connection between our Vincentian work and the wonder of the very first Easter. As pilgrims of hope, walk with us in this Easter Season as we faithfully build your kingdom. Amen.

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For those interested in contributing spiritual reflections, please email [jose.torres@rogers.com](mailto:jose.torres@rogers.com). Also, for reflections that may be used in your group meeting’s spirituality segment, please check out: [Monthly Reflections - Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada](#)