



Where is Jesus Leading Us as Vincentians?

Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' (Mathew 17:4)

In the month of August we have the opportunity to celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord (August 6). In this Gospel story, Jesus is revealed to Peter, James and John directly as the Son of God "the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" (Mathew 17: 5). This revelation brings with it a beautiful, if not overwhelmed — and who could blame him?— response from Peter: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make dwellings here..." (Mathew 17:4). This response is something we can relate to as Vincentians. Peter, in response to the glory he is witnessing, wants to stay in this moment. His offering is to build shelters, to stay in this place. However, this is not God's plan for them. This is not what Jesus wants. After the revelation to His followers, His closest Apostles, Jesus leads the men down the mountain and back into the world, and the work.

As Vincentians, there is a temptation to stick to what is safe and known when it comes to the work we do and the way we engage in our call to service. There is a temptation to set down roots in our routines and ways of serving, but is this what we are being called to in the fullness of our service? Have we asked recently, "*Lord, where are You calling me to? What are You calling me to? Who are You calling me to?*" Or, *have we decided for ourselves this is where our dwelling will be?* Pushing beyond our comfort zones goes hand in hand with being in service to Jesus in the poor. Our routines and comforts can limit our potential. The trap of "well, this is how we do things in our conference" could be the very orientation that limits our membership or the fresh ideas that could take us beyond anything we have considered. *Are we open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, who breathes new life into everything we do?*

Peter's desire in this moment is a natural desire. Let's root ourselves in that which feels good and safe and holy. But Jesus is calling us to go beyond these desires and into the work... the uncomfortable, messy work of love. Right after this story, Jesus is confronted by a man pleading for his son to be cured from a demon that had possessed him (Mathew 17: 14-17) and that the disciples themselves could not accomplish alone. Immediately, the disciples are confronted with the messiness of demonic possession and failure! Yet, He is with them and the work is accomplished. Let us take hope from this example. Even when things seem too hard for us, we can accomplish all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13)!

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Empathy through Deep Relationship

Jesus said: 'Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls'. (Matthew 11:28-29)

The Society's Rule 1.9 on Empathy underscores Vincentians endeavour to establish relationships with our neighbours-in-need based on trust and friendship. In our personal encounters with them, we seek to understand them as we would a brother or sister.

A deep relationship nurtured with our neighbours-in-need opens up to us to see things from their point of view. They open their houses with welcoming smile yet they suffer in body, mind and spirit; some face isolation, others are driven to rejection and exclusion. We look beyond appearances with

eyes and mind of the heart that are able to feel their burdens, and understand them in their goodness...in their life challenges, perhaps look for the silver lining in their plight. We lend them a hand, an ear, a voice; our caring and attentiveness more than lighten their burden but help them to be hopeful and allow us to embrace their lives. Truly we experience the Holy Spirit is at work in and through us, helping them come into the fullness of the Lord's compassion and love.

Reflection Questions

1. What are ways that can lead you deeper into relationship with your neighbours-in-need?
2. What might God be asking you right now with respect to your friendship with those in need?

Let us pray... Loving God, may we grow in strength, wisdom and understanding of our neighbours-in-need as we fully discern the signs of Your presence in us and in them.

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For those interested in contributing spiritual reflections, please email 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](#)