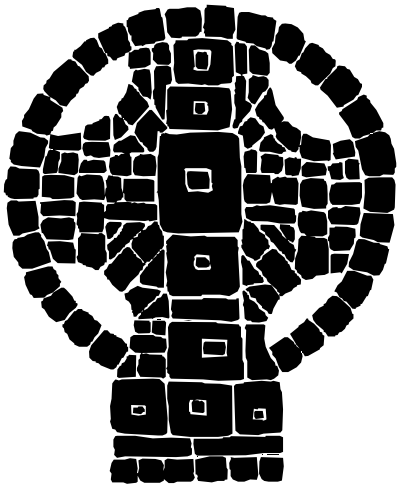
VINCENTIAN REFLECTIONS
Third Quarter 2026



Seek refuge in the name of the Lord.

Zep 3:12

Liturgical Year: A

(July – August - September)

Available on SSVPUSA.org

HOW TO LEAD THE VINCENTIAN REFLECTIONS IN A CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTION:

Leader describes to the group the process which is going to take place:

- Provide a copy for each member of your Conference for their personal reflection
- Stress that sharing is not compulsory and mention the need for confidentiality
- Ask, or assign, different members to read the different sections:
  - -Gospel reading
  - -Reflection
  - -Vincentian Meditation

OPENING PRAYER/QUIETING DOWN PERIOD

Leader invites group to:

- Become relaxed and aware of God's presence with us
- "Let Go" of distractions and quietly pray to the Holy Spirit

READING OF THE VINCENTIAN WEEKLY REFLECTION

- Each section is read aloud, slowly and prayerfully, by the different members
- Hearing different voices will allow different emphasis on words/phrases

QUIET PERIOD

Leader invites everyone:

- To quietly reflect on the readings and notice if anything strikes them
- Introduces the Discussion Question suggested in the Reflection
- Allows 2-3 minutes of quiet – don't hurry this. God speaks to us in the silence.

SHARING

Leader invites members who wish to share on the Discussion Question, or on how the one of the readings struck them. Possibly not everyone will share, but time should be allowed for each person who wishes to share his/her thoughts. It is important that you resist the urge either to prod members to share, or to try to "fill the silence" with your own thoughts.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader closes the Prayer Reflection by beginning the Closing Prayer, and all answer the response (in bold).

(This entire process should take about 10-15 minutes)

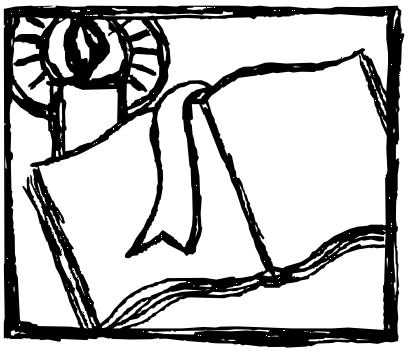
INTRODUCTION

St. Vincent de Paul never wrote a book about his spiritual teachings. But we find the living voice of the saint in his letters and conferences in which he trained his followers for the mission of service to the poor.

The two fundamental sources of his teaching are the GOSPEL and LIFE. He wanted his followers to put the whole of the Gospel into the whole of their lives, and he never wearied of deepening both with all the faith that God had put into his heart. That is why all that Vincent says to us has the simplicity of our everyday life and the penetrating strength of the Word of God.

The Vincentian Weekly Reflections are therefore offered to all who strive to serve the poor in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul. The prayer and reflections are based on the Sunday Gospel of the Liturgical Calendar, together with the feast days of some of the saints of our Vincentian Family. Each reflection offers a time for prayer, silence and discussion so that our everyday life, like Vincent, can become penetrated with the strength of the Word of God.

You may want to run copies for each member of your Conference so that they may take them home for personal reflection during the week.



LITURGICAL YEAR A
Third Quarter - 2026

JULY

July 4	***Feast of Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati***
July 5	**Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time**
July 12	**Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time**
July 19	**Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time**
July 26	**Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time**

AUGUST

August 2	**Eighteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time**
August 6	***Feast of the Transfiguration***
August 9	**Nineteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time**
August 15	***Feast of the Assumption of Mary***
August 16	**Twentieth Sunday of Ordinary Time**
August 23	**Twenty-first Sunday of Ordinary Time**
August 30	**Twenty-second Sunday of Ordinary Time**

SEPTEMBER

September 6	**Twenty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time**
September 8	***Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary***
September 9	***Feast of Blessed Frederic Ozanam***
September 13	**Twenty-fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time**
September 20	**Twenty-fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time**
September 27	***Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul***

FEAST OF SAINT PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI

July 4

Gospel: (Matthew 11: 25-30)

Jesus exclaimed: "*I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. …Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves.*

Reflection:

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was born in 1901 in Italy, and his mother taught him verses from the Gospels. Pier Giorgio was deeply moved by them, and developed an exceptional relationship with God. Indeed God reveals his love to "little ones." From the time he was twelve until his death at twenty-four Pier Giorgio received Holy Communion daily. At 17, he joined the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and committed himself to serving the poor. Pier Giorgio said: "Jesus visits me every morning in Holy Communion. I repay him with my poor means, visiting the poor." When asked how he could stand the bad odors and dirt of the poor, he answered: "Don't forget that even if the house you visit is very dirty, there you may find Jesus." The last months of his life were filled with suffering, he contracted poliomyelitis and became paralyzed. When he died hundreds came to view his body and there was a line of unknown faces who loved this good and generous young man that always had a good smile for everyone. Pier Giorgio was beatified by Pope John Paul II on May 20, 1990. (Manual for the Society, p.192)

Vincentian Meditation:

"Help then becomes honorable, because it may become mutual, because every man who gives a kind word, a good advice, a consolation today, may tomorrow stand himself in need of a kind word, an advice, or a consolation; because the hand that you clasp clasps yours in return; because that indigent family whom you love loves you in return, and will have largely acquitted themselves towards you when the old man, the mother, the little children shall have prayed for you."-Bl.Frederic Ozanam- (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p. 93)

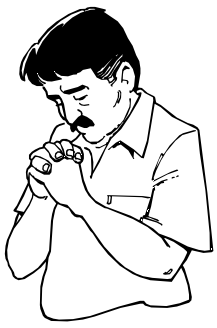
Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.)

How have you found your service "honorable because it was mutual?" Give thanks for all of the "unknown faces" who pray for you.

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, inspired by Frederic and Pier Giorgio, we know that:
When we encounter the brokenness of the poor,
-Jesus will be our strength.
When the burdens of ministry overwhelm us,
-Jesus will be our strength.
When we proclaim the Gospel to the abandoned,
-Jesus will be our strength.
Amen

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
Mt 5:3



FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 5, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 11:25-30)

Jesus exclaimed: *"I give you praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him. "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."*

Reflection:

The love Jesus speaks of is a self-sacrificing love that knows no bounds when the good of the other is at stake. No bound, not even ones' life. Jesus' command of love requires of us no less than dying to ourselves. We must let go of all our own pretensions, become meek and humble like Jesus and serve others. In everyday terms this means that we always seek God's will in our lives. This isn't always easy, because our natural human tendency is to seek our own good. Just as Jesus came to do God's will and brought salvation and peace, so when we do God's will we extend salvation and know peace. This is knowing God! (Living Liturgy, p.192)

Vincentian Meditation:

Not only will we find rest and refreshment in Christ as we move along the road of life, but He would have us learn from Him meekness and humility of heart. Gentleness and humility of heart contribute much to our peace and rest on our journey to heaven. St.Vincent would wish us to be sacraments of the gentleness of Christ. Not only must we bring strength and help to the poor, but we must put them in contact with the meekness of Jesus. That is why it is important that we should not be angry people. If there is anger in our hearts, it will be difficult for us to help the poor effectively because we will not bring to them the gentleness of Jesus. (9McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.573)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.)

Who are the Vincentians that have shown you how to be "sacraments of the gentleness of Christ" ?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, make us gentle servants,
-with eyes to see the poor.
Lord, make us humble servants,
-with ears to hear the cries of the poor.
Lord, we come to you with our labors and burdens,
-may we know your rest.
Amen

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 12, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 13: 1-23)

Jesus said: *"A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came up and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and chocked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear."*

Reflection:

If we see ourselves as the sower, the parable takes us in the direction of learning to know God and having union with God. We ourselves are the ones who spread the word of good news. If we see ourselves as the seed, it reminds us that we sow God's word wherever we are, by word and example. If we see ourselves as the soil, we are directed to examine the cares and distractions of our lives to see if they stand in the way of open eyes, open ears and open hearts. This is our call to discipleship! God is extravagant with the seed, and he is doing everything to prepare the soil so that the word can take root. All we need to do is "see with our eyes, hear with our ears and understand with our hearts" (Living Liturgy, p.196)

Vincentian Meditation:

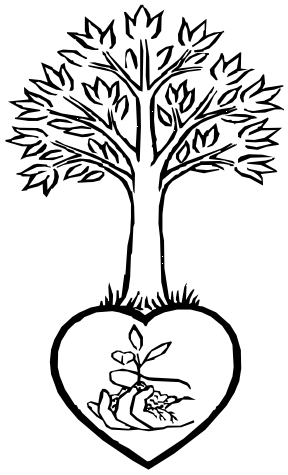
A fellow student challenged Frederic by saying: "Today Christianity is dead. Indeed, you people who boast about being Catholics, what are you doing? Where are the works which demonstrate your Faith…?" The Holy Spirit inspired Frederic with these words that touched the heart and mind of each person in the room: "We must do what is most agreeable to God. Therefore, we must do what our Lord Jesus Christ did when preaching the Gospel. **Let us go to the poor."** (Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p.86)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.)

As disciples who are "Sower, Seed and Soil", how do we have hearts that love, eyes that see and ears that hear the cries of the poor?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, make us sowers, who spread the good news,
-with eyes to see the poor.
Lord, make us your seed in our words and example,
-with ears to hear the cries of the poor.
Lord, make us your rich soil ,
-**with hearts filled with love and mercy.**
Amen



SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 19, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 13: 24-30)

Jesus proposed another parable: "*The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well."* …His disciples said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field. He replied, "*He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil.…at the end of the age the Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace …Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear."*

Reflection:

To be sure, in our daily living there will be times when we fall short of the gospel and we feel that we are only weeds that should be burned. But the paschal mystery reminds us that dying always leads to rising, and invites us to look beyond the immediate moment, see the possibilities for repentance in our lives, trust in God's mercy, and be open to God's loving kindness. The weeds will grow. But God is patient, knowing our love and good deeds, He will mercifully gather us into his kingdom. (Living Liturgy, p.200)

Vincentian Meditation:

"We ought to have confidence in God that he will look after us since we know for certain that as long as we are grounded in that sort of love and trust we will be always under the protection of God in heaven, we will remain unaffected by evil and never lack what we need even when everything we possess seems headed for disaster."-St.Vincent de Paul (*McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.47*)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.)

Who are some members of your Conference that have lived with such confidence in God, and were grounded in such love and trust, that you know they are among the "righteous who shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father."

Closing Prayer:

We thank you, Lord, for loving life into us, and now we pray,
-we turn to you, O Lord.
That we may seek forgiveness for our sins and failings,
-we turn to you, O Lord.
Hope of sinners, give us hearts that are humble and contrite,
-we turn to you, O Lord.
That our lives be grounded in love and trust,
-we place our confidence in your protection, O Lord.
Amen

The righteous will shine like the sun.

Mt 13:43

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 26, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 13: 44-52)

Jesus said to his disciples: "*The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all he has and buys it…"*

Reflection:

The demand of daily Christian living is to spend our life primarily searching for the kingdom of God. In the Gospel, first the person who finds the buried treasure in a field comes upon it by happenstance; the find just happens without effort; it is pure gift. The role of discipleship is to become aware of the treasure when it is found. Second, the merchant knows his or her business and recognizes the prized pearl when it is found. The role of discipleship here is to be diligent in the search, not become discouraged and give up, seek until the "pearl of great price" is found. *(Living Liturgy, p. 204)*

Vincentian Meditation:

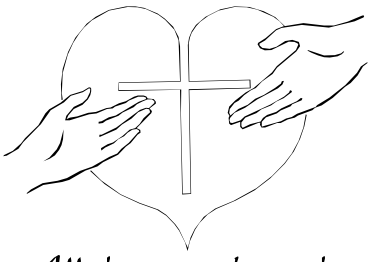
"To be servants of the poor…O Mon Dieu! What a lovely title and what a beautiful description! **Servants of the poor,** that is just the same as to say **Servants of Jesus Christ**, for He regards as done to Himself what is done to them, and they are His members. And what did He do whilst on earth, but serve the poor?"–St. Vincent de Paul *(McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.42*)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence.)*

To hear the call to serve the poor is like finding the "treasure in the field" or "the pearl of great price". How did you join the Society-by searching or did someone invite you?

Closing Prayer:

Loving God, thank you for grace of finding the "pearl of great price, in the poor,
-may we serve you in the most destitute.
In every age you call new disciples to follow Christ,
-lead men and women to serve the poor within the Society.
Give us strength to stand in solidarity with those who suffer,
-may our hearts be filled with compassion and love.
Give us the grace to be true "Servants of the Poor",
-**Servants of Jesus Christ.**
Amen



All things work together for good.

Rom 8:28

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 2, 2020

Gospel: (Matthew 14: 13-21)

When Jesus saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them…When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said: *"There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.* But they said, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." Then he said, "*Bring them here to me,"* …Taking the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied…when they picked up the fragments left over they had twelve baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand…

Reflection:

This gospel helps us move all the talk about God's kingdom out of the scripture and into our daily lives. We can't make the kingdom present by ourselves. At first, Jesus tells the disciples to "give them some food yourselves." They can't; human resources are not sufficient to make present what God's kingdom promises. Jesus then takes the meager human resources- "five loaves and two fish"- and **blesses** them and gives them to disciples to distribute to the crowds. What the disciples cannot do alone they can do with Jesus' blessing. (Living Liturgy, p.208)

Vincentian Meditation:

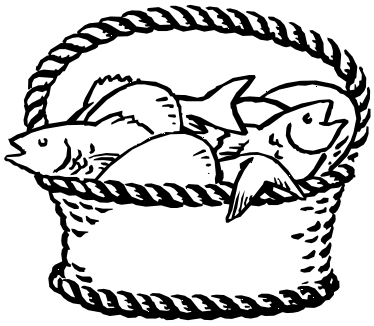
"We must pass, …from affective love to effective love. And that is a love which takes flesh in works of charity, service of the poor which is undertaken with joy, constancy and tender love."- St. Vincent de Paul- (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 64)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

How have you witnessed in your service to the poor that your "loaves and fishes" were multiplied by the blessing of Jesus?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you bless those who seek to serve the poor,
-move our hearts from affective to effective love.
Open our eyes,
-that we may see your presence in our midst.
Open our ears,
-that we may hear the cries of the poor.
Open our hearts,
-that we may serve with joy, constancy and tender love.
Open our hands,
-that our "loaves and fishes" may receive your blessing.
Amen.



FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

August 6

Gospel: (Matthew 17: 1-9)

Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother, John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

Reflection:

In the Gospel we read: “This is my beloved Son…Listen to him.” “Prayer is one of the privileged ways of listening. But it must always be validated by life. One who listens to ‘what God is telling me’ in prayer, but pays little heed to what others are saying in daily life is surely suspect. Prayer must be in continual contact with people and events, since God speaks not only in the silence of our hearts, but also (and often first of all) in the people around us. It is only when what is heard is pondered, that its full meaning is revealed. Listening includes seeing, hearing, sensing, feeling, and perceiving. Indeed, attentiveness is one of the most important signs of respect for others. It is indispensable foundation of Vincentian spirituality.” *(Maloney, He Hears the Cry of the Poor, p.24, 26)*

Vincentian Meditation:

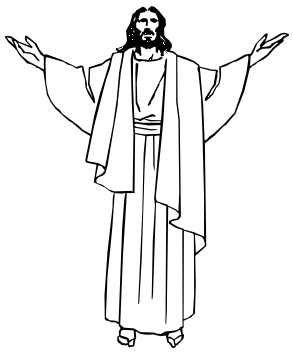
Conference meetings can be a time of grace or a time when sin threatens grace. “Meetings are a time of grace only through a communal quest to listen to God and communal attentiveness to the words of others. When there is listening, there is a climate of freedom for discussion and discernment. When there is no listening, meetings create strife and division. They disrupt rather than unify. When listening wanes, meetings degenerate rapidly. Among the signs that sin is at work in meetings is fighting, strife, bad feelings, disillusionment, and bitterness. *(Maloney, He Hears the Cry of the Poor, p.28)*

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Are our Conference Meetings a time of grace or a time of division?

Closing Prayer:

O God, give us the grace to listen to you in prayer,
-and to each other in our Conference meetings.
Amen.



NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 9, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 14:22-33)

When Jesus fed the people, he made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and the cried out in fear. At once Jesus spoke to them, "*Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."* Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, *"Come."* Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Reflection:

This gospel does show Jesus as having authority over the waters: he walks on the sea and at his will the wind dies down. Nevertheless, this gospel is less about Jesus manifesting power in great events that it is an invitation to respond to Jesus, to come to him. We follow Jesus not because he is a great miracle worker but because he is the "Son of God." It is far easier to come to Jesus in the obvious things; for example, faithful attendance at Mass. It is far more difficult to see God in the little things; for example, being pleasant when the poor are demanding, or giving back to a cashier too much change, or giving extra time to be present to children or spouse. (Living Liturgy, p.212)

Vincentian Meditation:

When the disciples were terrified, Jesus immediately responded to them: "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Jesus is interested always in trying to lighten our fears. When he comes to us in Holy Communion, he assures us that he is giving us everlasting life. That is a great assurance because the greatest natural fear which we have is the fear of death. Jesus can take care of that greatest natural fear, namely death, and he will also take care of those many other smaller fears which are hidden in our hearts. Some of these fears are known to us, others are not. To us, however, as to the frightened disciples, Jesus keeps saying: "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid. (McCullen, Deep Down Things, p. 735)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

When have you heard Jesus say to you: "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, in our fears and anxieties, may we always hear you say,

"Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

Amen.

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

August 15

Gospel: (Luke 1: 39-56)

Then Mary said: "My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit finds joy in God my savior, for he has looked upon his servant in her lowliness; all ages to come shall call me blessed. God who is mighty has done great things for me, holy is his name…He has deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places. The hungry he has given every good thing, while the rich he has sent empty away…

Reflection:

Blessed Ceferino Gimenez Malla was born in Spain in 1861. Ceferino Malla was beatified in 1997, and is a wonderful example for all Vincentians… He exemplifies charity to the poor and devotion to the Blessed Mother. Ceferino had a deep conversion experience. He became an active member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, where he was ever ready to give generously to the poor. Though illiterate, the poor, uneducated and politically powerful came to him for advice and counsel. He was revered as a pious Catholic, a daily communicant. He took part in "Eucharistic Thursdays," and night adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In July 1936, during the Spanish Civil War, he was imprisoned for protesting the arrest of a priest. While in prison, Ceferino recited the rosary; and this angered his guards. He was offered his freedom if he would give up his rosary; he refused. He considered devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary a matter of great honor; he would not-could not-deny the Mother of God. He was killed by a firing squad on August 2, 1936, clutching his rosary…it was three weeks before his seventy-fifth birthday. *(Manual of the Society of SVDP, p.93)*

Vincentian Meditation:

On the feast of the Assumption, Frederic, three weeks away from death's door, insisted on walking to church. There he attended Mass and received Holy Communion. "It may be my last walk in this world, and I desire that it shall be to pay a visit to my God and His Blessed Mother." Bl. Frédéric Ozanam *(Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p. 70)*

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Devotion to Mary is a fundamental root of our Vincentian vocation. What place does devotion to Our Lady hold in your life?

Closing Prayer:

O God, you chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus,
- may she always be our hope in time of need.
Mary lived the mystery of Jesus and followed him to Calvary,
-give us the faith to follow her example.
Mary responded with joyful faith and radical witness to your call,
-open our hearts to your will.
Amen

TWENTIETH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

August 16, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 15: 21-28)

A Canaanite woman called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon."…Jesus said, "*I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* But the woman came and did Jesus homage, saying, "Lord, help me." He said, "*It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs."* She said, "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters." Then Jesus said to her in reply, "*O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."* And the woman's daughter was healed from that hour.

Reflection:

What is the deeper significance of these apparently harsh words of Jesus? The answer lies in Jesus' clear understanding of his mission, to the house of Israel. This woman was not a Jew, and she is thus challenging Jesus to extend his mission beyond Israel to include all people. This foreign woman gives us a model response to Jesus in her confident prayer and great faith. Thus the Gospel announces that the kingdom and salvation are for all people. It is our persistent calling out to Jesus and our faith that count for Jesus always responds. *(Living Liturgy, p. 220)*

Vincentian Meditation:

Vincent reminded the women in one of his charitable organizations, that it is Divine Providence that calls Christians to be creative in forming communities of service. He told them, "It has been 800 years now since women have had any public role in the Church. In early times there were deaconesses…but this custom stopped and your sex was deprived of providing all these kinds of services. In our day, however, this same Providence prompted you to take up the crucial work of caring for the poor…God has given you as mothers to the abandon children…and call upon you to dispense many alms. By the grace of God, these good women have responded to these needs with great warmth and steadiness." *(McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 103-4)*

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

How have women been a grace to the Society? What gifts and services have they brought to your Conference?

Closing Prayer:

O God, as you call us to serve the poor may we
-also be evangelized by those we serve.
Grant us the grace to be open to the gifts of women in the Church,
-may our words and actions bear witness to Jesus.
Give us the faith and courage of the Canaanite woman,
-so that we may be true servants of the gospel.
Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

August 23, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 16: 13-20)

Jesus asked his disciples, "*Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"* They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "*But who do you say that I am?"* Simon Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him, "*Bless are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church… I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

Reflection:

Jesus revealed himself to Peter through his experience where, in spite of his doubt, fear, and sinking, he was saved from the raging seas. Peter had a gripping and personal experience of the saving power of Jesus, and so answers from a faith stance that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God. Peter had paid attention to his experience, and so the "heavenly Father" could reveal to him the knowledge that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. When we open our eyes to see and ears to hear and our hearts to experience Jesus' presence and power in our daily lives, God's revelation comes to us. We only need to have faith. *(Living Liturgy, p.224)*

Vincentian Meditation:

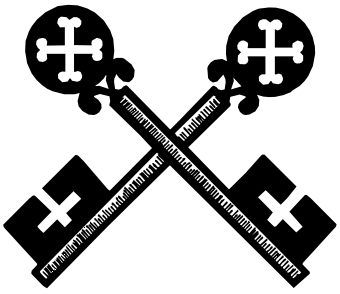
A friend wrote about Frederic: "He has the sacred fire. There is such an air of interior conviction in this man, that without the appearance of doing so, he convinces and moves you." Frederic's sacred fire was faith. Faith for Frederic Ozanam was indeed a living reality that permeated his entire being; it was his "second sight." Yet it was a hard-won gift. Frederic attributes the foundation of his faith to his parents. "In the midst of an age of skepticism, God gave me the grace to be born in the true faith. As a child I listened at the feet of a Christian father and a saintly mother*" (Ramson, Praying for Frederic, p.49*)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

How or to whom do you attribute your faith?

Closing Prayer:

O Father, you reveal to us that Jesus is you Son,
-deepen our faith to see you in the events of our lives.
We pray for all parents,
-may they guide their children in the ways of faith.
Give us the sacred fire of Frederic,
-that our faith will have his interior conviction.
When Jesus asks us, "Who do you say that I am?"
-may we answer with Peter, "You are indeed the Christ."
Amen



TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

August 30, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 16:21-27)

Jesus said to his disciples: "*Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct."*

Reflection:

Lose life and find life. Cross and glory. This is the paschal mystery in a nutshell. Sometimes our response to living the paschal mystery is enthusiastic because things are going well and we don't realize the demands. Then, when the going gets rough, we bog down. The challenge is to let go so *God* can lead us. We need to surrender ourselves. The paschal mystery isn't just a concept; it is a turning of the heart toward God's love working in us, but not without its demands. Even sharing in Jesus' divine glory means that we must share in his sufferings and death. (*Living Liturgy, p. 228*)

Vincentian Meditation:

"Service to God's people demands a price. Christians must put aside their own prejudices, comfortable circumstances, and favorite ideas in order to do the will of God. This sort of discipline calls Christians to die to themselves in order to follow Christ. St. Vincent called this discipline *mortification.* Mortification, or dying to self, has sometimes become confused with self-hate, repression…or co-dependency. However, dying to self is a core value in the Christian Testament. St. Vincent believed that mortification had to be a conscious choice. With the grace of God, people could be willing to make the hard sacrifices that love demands. With God's help, they could detach themselves from—or die—to all that was not Christ so that they could put on Jesus Christ. (*McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.83, 85*)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

In what ways have you been called to *mortification* - "to deny yourself, and take up your cross"?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, give us the grace to deny ourselves,
-so that we can lose our life in order to find it.
Lord Jesus, give us the grace to carry our cross,
-so that we can learn *mortification* in the spirit of St. Vincent.
Amen

TWENTY-THIRD WEEK OF ORDINARY TIME

September 6, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 18:15-20)

Jesus said to his disciples: "*If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector….Amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

Reflection:

Giving and receiving corrections is one of the hardest things we can do. Some strong motivation usually has to be present in order for corrections to be given or received and true reconciliation take place. There may be many motivations: to save face personally, to pleases another, to get another to change behavior that simply annoys us, etc. The last line of the gospel gives us a clue as to what underlying motivation is really the strongest: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." Our strongest motivation urging us to charitable correction is the fact that we share a common identity of being the body of Christ. We ourselves aren't the reconcilers; it is the power of Christ action through his body. (*Living Liturgy, p. 232*)

Vincentian Meditation:

People had often reproved Vincent for his harsh, almost driven streak, and commented about his steep mood swings. Defensive, Vincent would argue that he was the way he was and could not change. But during one intense period of prayer, Vincent threw himself on God's mercy, recognizing at last that only God's power could calm his harshness and ease his sharp mood swings. Many years later, Vincent recounted this crucial moment: "I turned to God and earnestly begged him to convert this irritable and forbidding trait of mine. I also asked for a kind and amiable spirit. And with the grace of Our Lord, by giving a little attention to checking the hot-blooded impulses of my personality, I have been at least partly cured of my gloomy disposition." (*McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.68-69*.)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Do we need to confront some unchristian behaviors in our Conference?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, where two or three are gathered in your name, be in our midst,
- and give us the grace to give and receive corrections.
Lord, give us the grace to pray for our own conversion,
- so that we will have the kind and amiable spirit of Vincent.
Amen

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

September 8

Gospel: (Matthew 1: 18-32)

Suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream and said: "Joseph, son of David, have no fear about taking Mary as your wife. It is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son and you are to name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins." All this happened to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin shall be with child and give birth to a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel."

Reflection:

Frederic Ozanam died on the feast of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, September 8, 1853. It seems fitting for this man to die on the feast of a woman to whom he had been greatly devoted all his life. Devotion to Mary, the mother of God, was part of Frederic Ozanam's life from childhood to death. He sought her intercession often. Kneeling at her altar, he prayed, "I place my intentions under the auspices of our Divine Mother…" Frederic believed in the power of Mary, the Mother of God. He often prayed to her for himself and for others. He believed in the power of Mary's intercession with her divine offspring. Devotion to her was woven into the various stages of Frederic's life and especially prominent in the poetic devotion of youth, the moral challenges of young adulthood, the transformation of becoming a parent, and the acceptance of suffering and death. Frederic invites us to consider our own devotion to Mary and our trust in her intercession. (*Ramson, Praying with Frederic, p.68;71*)

Vincentian Meditation:

"I am entirely yours, most Holy Virgin, that I may more perfectly belong to God. Teach me, therefore, to imitate your holy life by fulfilling the designs of God in my life. I very humbly beg you to assist me."-St. Louise de Marillac *(Gibson and Kneaves, Praying with Louise, p. 91)*

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Have you ever felt the power of Mary, the mother of God, in your life? Do you need to ask her intercession for a significant situation now?

Closing Prayer:

O God, as we celebrate the birth of Mary,
-we ask for the grace to trust in her intercession.
Through Mary, source of our joy,
-we ask for the grace of healing the brokenhearted.
Through Mary, seat of wisdom,
-we ask for the grace of guidance in our lives.
Through Mary, mother of God,
-we ask for the grace to recognize Jesus in the poor.
Amen

FEAST OF BLESSED FRÉDÉRIC OZANAM

September 9

Gospel: (Luke 10: 25-37)

"And who is my neighbor? Jesus replied: "*There was a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who fell in with robbers. They stripped him, beat him, and then went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road; he saw him but continued on. Likewise there was a Levite who came the same way; he saw him and went on. But a Samaritan who was journeying along came on him and was moved to pity at the sight. He approached him and dressed his wounds, pouring in oil and wine as a means to heal. He then hoisted him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, where he cared for him. The next day he took out two silver pieces and gave them to the innkeeper with the request: "Look after him, and if there is any further expense I will repay you on my way back." Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the man who fell in with the robbers?"* The answer came, *"*The one who treated him with compassion." Jesus said to him, *"Then go and do the same."*

Vincentian Meditation:

"Even though Frédéric Ozanam held with great distinction a professorial chair in the Sorbonne University of Paris, he still found time to climb the stairs of high tenements to visit, talk with and assist the poor families who eked out their existence in them. And so, Frédéric Ozanam would remind us that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is rooted and founded in the experience of visiting the poor in person. In person—yes, what has characterized the Society from its beginnings, and must continue to do so, is its determination to be more than an agency of relief. Its members are called to be not only dispensers of food and fuel and clothing to the poor—but dispensers, too, of the love and compassion of Christ, which has been poured into their own hearts by the Spirit of God." (*McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.148*)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)

How are we, in our Conference, living the spirit of Frédéric?

Closing Prayer:

A Litany in Honor of Blessed Frederic Ozanam
Frédéric Ozanam, defender of faith, **pray for us.**
Frédéric Ozanam, promoter of hope, **pray for us.**
Frédéric Ozanam, apostle of charity, **pray for us.**
Frédéric Ozanam, exemplary husband and father, **pray for us.**
Frédéric Ozanam, lover of poverty and the poor, **pray for us.**
Frédéric Ozanam, advocate of the dignity of the human person, **pray for us.**
Frédéric Ozanam, servant of the truth, **pray for us.**
Frédéric Ozanam, model for Catholic teachers and professors, **pray for us.**
Frédéric Ozanam, disciple of St. Vincent De Paul, **pray for us.**
Frédéric Ozanam, faithful son of the Church, **pray for us.**
Frédéric Ozanam, our intercessor at the throne of God, **pray for us.**
Amen

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

September 13, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 18:21-35)

Peter approached Jesus and asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, *"I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants... a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount…Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan. When the servant left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount…he had the fellow servant put in prison until he paid back the debt. His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?'* Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers…*So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother or sister from your heart."*

Reflection:

Forgiving another-not focusing on our hurt or the other's transgression but on the lovableness of the other-is so difficult! The challenge of this gospel is to forget how others have behaved toward us and look to God's way of loving and forgiving us. Our focus must be on God. Without God's example we probably couldn't forgive very well. The challenge is to forget about ourselves so we can reach out to the other. (*Living Liturgy, p. 236*)

Vincentian Meditation:

"Because Jesus took our misery upon Himself, it is only reasonable that we should follow and imitate His holy, human life….Filled with consolation and happiness at the thought of being accepted by Him to live my entire life as His follower, I resolved that in everything, particularly in uncertain or questionable circumstances, I would consider what Jesus would have done…All the actions and the entire life of the Son of God are only for our example and instruction…"- St. Louise de Marillac (*Gibson and Kneaves, Praying with Louise, p. 55*)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

Jesus told us that we must forgive others "from our heart." Who needs your forgiveness?

Closing Prayer:

Come, Lord of Healing and Unity, we are in need of Your divine help,
-help us to find a way to peace and understanding.
Let our hearts be ready to see Your way of loving and forgiving.
-may we be servants of pardon and make us as or giving as You.
Amen

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

September 20, 2026

Gospel: (Matthew 20:1-16)

Jesus told his disciples this parable: "*The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard….When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' When those who had started about five o'clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and heat.' He said to them, 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?*

…What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?' Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Reflection:

We all put off to the eleventh hour some piece of work that we have to do with respect to God or each other: prayer, forgiveness, charity, justice, etc.) If this parable teaches us something about how great God is and how generous, then we are called to this same greatness and generosity. Wouldn't nations be different if debts could be forgiven and those who have were generous to those who have not? Wouldn't families be different if hurtful behavior ceased and was forgiven generously? Wouldn't individuals be different if we measured another only by his or her goodness? The landowner says to his grumbling laborers, "Are you envious because I am generous?" God's generosity with us goes far beyond any measurement by human standards. (Living Liturgy, p. 240)

Vincentian Meditation:

St. Vincent knew himself to be sustained by God's motherly and fatherly love. He could not conceive of a harsh and dreadful God. From his boyhood, he had prayed to the all-merciful, warm, and loving Father of Jesus, an **Abba** (Daddy) who called all of his children beloved. Vincent rested and warmed himself in God's parental care and protection. Compassion, in Vincent's view, was God's name. Vincent once wrote: "God will take the place of father and mother for you. He will be your consolation, your virtue, and in the end the recompense of your love.(McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p.30-31.)

Discussion: *(Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

How have you experienced the "motherly and fatherly love" of God?

Closing Prayer:

God, our father, give us generous hearts,
-help us to find a way to peace and forgiveness.
God, our mother, give us compassionate hearts,
-help us to be merciful and loving. Amen

FEAST OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL

September 27

Gospel: (Luke 4:16-19)

Jesus came to Nazareth where he had been reared, and entering the synagogue on the sabbath as he was in the habit of doing, he stood up to do the reading. When the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed him, he unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: *"The spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore, he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good tidings of joy to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord."* Rolling up the scroll he gave it back to the assistant and sat down. All in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him. Then he began by saying to them, *"Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."*

Reflection:

"Vincent makes a clear explicit choice: 'All aim at loving him, but they love him in different ways: Carthusians by solitude; Capuchins by poverty; others, again, by singing his praises. But we are bound to show it by leading the people to love God and their neighbor.' The vision Vincent offers is not one of Christ as teacher, nor as healer, nor as "perfect adorer of the Father"(the vision of Berulle), nor "perfect image of the divinity" (the vision of Francis de Sales), but of *Evangelizer of the poor.* Vincent's disciples are called to enter into the following of Christ in the very terms with which, in Luke's gospel, Jesus opens his public ministry: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad tidings of joy to the poor…' In Luke's perspective, a new age is dawning. Jesus announces the good news of the kingdom to all, but especially to the poor, the weak, the lowly, the out casts of the world." *(Maloney, The Way of St. Vincent de Paul, p.22-23)*

Vincentian Meditation:

"St. Vincent's spirituality flows from his contemplation of *this Christ.* The driving force that generates both the incredible activity and the gentle contemplation of this great saint is his vision of the *Evangelizer of the Poor*. He encourages his followers to contemplate this Christ again and again. "O how happy they will be who can repeat at the hour of their death those beautiful words of Our Lord: 'He sent me to bring good news to the poor.'"
(Maloney, The Way of St. Vincent de Paul, p.23-24)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)*

In what ways do you "bring good news to the poor?"

Closing Prayer:

Gentle God, renew in us the spirit of our patron St. Vincent de Paul,
kindle is us the fire of your love.
Tender God, show us how to weep with those who weep,
fill our hearts with compassion and love.
Creator God, you call women and men to be Vincentians,
give us eyes to see Christ in the broken and the poor.
Amen

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> **Father Robert Maloney was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. He was the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity, and of the Vincentian Family from 1992-2004*.

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> ***** Father Richard McCullen from Ireland, was the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity, and of the Vincentian Family from 1980-1992.***

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