

FEATURE:

The Five Vincentian Virtues Today

Presentation

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Saint Vincent de Paul invited the first missionaries and continues inviting us, Vincentian missionaries of the XXI Century to clothe ourselves anew in the person of Christ: to have the same feelings and affects, motivations and options, and commitment to the most poor, the disenfranchised, those who linger on the margins of society, the faceless and voiceless.

We need to recover this *missionary fire* of the first years of the Congregation. What impelled the first missionaries and so many others throughout the history of our community to seriously commit themselves to those who were abandoned and marginalized? How must we live in order to be authentic and faithful followers of the missionary Christ, Christ the evangelizer of the poor?

Saint Vincent proposed to us the five virtues of the missionary Christ: simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification and zeal for the salvation of souls. These are the spiritual means that ought to enable us to commit ourselves to following Christ, the evangelizer of the poor.

In this edition we offer you a reflection on the Vincentian virtues. The articles have been prepared by confreres in distinct geographical areas and with different missionary experiences.

In the first article, *St. Vincent de Paul and the Five Fundamental Virtues*, Jean-Pierre Renouard, C.M., offers us a general presentation of the Vincentian virtues and places them within the broad context of Vincentian spirituality.

The following articles are reflections on the Vincentian virtues from a very real and actual perspective.

Bernard J. Quinn, C.M., in his article *The Virtue of Humility* share his personal and pastoral reflections. He begins with some references to Saint Vincent's life and then presents the Biblical foundation of this virtue. He continues with a discussion of the practice of the virtue and concludes by offering some hints with regard to a spirituality of *imperfection*.

My Gospel... Let then Simplicity Live... is the title that Richard McCullen, C.M., gives to his article. He begins with references about Saint Vincent and simplicity. He presents various Vincentian texts with regard to this *gospel pearl*. This was the virtue that Saint Vincent loved most and recommended this virtue to the Daughters of Charity as well as the Vincentian missionaries. He concludes by reminding us of the ways in which this virtue is united to prudence, the truth, charity and the authenticity of life.

Michael Ngoka, C.M., shares with us his thoughts on *The Virtue of Mortification*. He begins by speaking about the prevalence of a consumerist mentality in our society. From this perspective he invites us to live the virtue of mortification in an intense way. This virtue has spiritual and pastoral implications.

Meekness is the title of Noel Mojica García's, C.M., reflection. He describes the actual situation and presents Saint Vincent's vision on this virtue. He studies Jesus' meekness and from this perspective and with the assistance of a Brazilian author, he shares some key moment in Jesus' life. All of this is done in order to help us in our human, personal following of Jesus Christ who continues teaching us how to live meekness in a concrete way.

Francisco Ruíz Barbacil, C.M., is the author of the article *Zeal for the Salvation of Souls*. He describes the three enemies of this virtue in the life of the Vincentian missionary. He explains the general meaning of this world and presents Saint Thomas Aquinas' definition. He then presents Saint Vincent de Paul thoughts on this virtue and the vices that are contrary to zeal — vices that Vincent invites the missionaries to be attentive to and avoid. He concludes by describing some implications and consequences in the apostolic and spiritual life of the missionary.

Every Christian and every Vincentian who grows in living out these virtues also grows in the grace of God. As Vincentians we are

called to grow in the human, Christian and Vincentian virtues: joy, goodness, chastity, gentleness, enthusiasm, fidelity, generosity, honesty, modesty, patience, silence, sincerity and others. The virtues are spiritual means that help us know how to respond in a better way to our vocation and our service of the poor as an expression of our following of Christ, the evangelizer of the poor.

Enjoy your reading!

(CHARLES T. PLOCK, C.M., translator)