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Happiness is Service in the Spirit of Vincent de Paul and Frederic Ozanam a Youth Ministry Catechesis for Service Learning Formation

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HAPPINESS IS SERVICE
IN THE SPIRIT OF VINCENT DE PAUL AND FREDERIC OZANAM
A YOUTH MINISTRY CATECHESIS FOR SERVICE LEARNING FORMATION

A Pastoral Project
Presented to the Pastoral Institute,
University of the Incarnate Word, in partial
Fulfillment of the requirements for
The degree of Master of Arts in
Religious Studies

By

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Approved by:

Dr. Elisha Ryan, M.A., Th.D. Date: *May 1, 2006*
Faculty Advisor

Happiness Is . . . Service

05/01/2006

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***SUMMARY &
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“Then the King Will Say . . .
Inherit the Kingdom”

A Personal Theology of Church and Ministry
Based on the Gospel of Matthew – Chapter 25: 31–46 and the
Teachings of St. Vincent De Paul and Blessed Frederic Ozanam

W

hen the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'¹

Matthew (25: 31 – 40)

¹ From: "The New American Bible", Saint Joseph Edition. Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD). Catholic Book Publishing Company, Washington, D. C.

With sadness in his heart and tears welling up in his eyes, the young boy sat on the floor in his room, at the house of his parents, and thought; silently, reflectively. Distraught by the events of his day at the local high school, he searched for rhyme or reason, for a how and a why some people can be so cruel to others. What did he do to deserve the rejection which he was experiencing from the “in-crowd”; his peers, his classmates, his *friends*? Why was he so unsuccessful at his attempts to be popular; when others who seemed to have less to offer had no problem being counted as a member of the “in - crowd”? He was at one of the lowest points of his young life, and so he sat and thought of Jesus; drawing in the sand over the question of wrongdoing², and he scribbled on a piece of paper . . .

*Do Not Mock Me
For I Am Not An Animal
Though Do Not Praise Me
For I Am Not A god
Only Love Me
For I Am A Human Being!*³

Since he was a child, the boy had found a particular attraction to his church; a serene, comforting, welcoming attraction. He often went there, to that building, without being coerced, bribed or otherwise forced, and he did not seem to mind if the service became “too long”. He was active in the ministry of altar serving until he became of age and then he passionately practiced the service of Sacristan, always prepared to assist during the Mass. He regularly attended his religion classes (CCD) and was constantly seeking a group of individuals that shared his values. He looked forward to attending “All-night Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament”, held

² Scriptural References John 8:6 – “They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger.” and Jeremiah 17:13 (RSV): “Those who turn away from thee shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the fountain of living water”

³ From the personal writings of: Timothy M. Kelly – not published

once a month, at his parish church. This nocturnal time of reflection provided the boy with one of the greatest gifts of his childhood. It was during these monthly opportunities that the boy could spend both quality time and quiet time with the two greatest influences of his young life. It was here that he could spend time with his earthly father and his heavenly Father; at the same time and at the one place where he truly loved to be . . . a place that offered balance and peace.

His earthly father was a great influence to this boy in his early formative years. He developed fond memories of walking to church and had an outstanding recollection of some of his father's favorite hymns: "FAITH OF OUR FATHERS", "HAIL, HOLY QUEEN ENTHRONED ABOVE", and "HOLY GOD, WE PRAISE THY NAME". The songs still reverberate through the vast area of the sacred, linear space; pew after pew of kneelers to pray and reflect. It was here that the young boy once shared these memorable songs of praise, hand in hand, with his father. Things "religious" were not a bother or a bore, but a grace bestowed onto him from some other realm, most likely he reflected, a realm of awe, glory, wonder⁴. And unbeknownst to him at the time, these fond memories were to be the beginnings of a very solid foundation for his own personal theology of church and ministry.

The young boy grew in age and wisdom. In high school he was no longer called a boy. Now he had evolved into a young man, a young adult. He ventured out of his hometown. He found and was immediately adopted by a new set of friends who referred to themselves as a "youth group". This "youth group" was centered on faith, the Catholic faith, the same faith with which the young man had been born, raised and with which he still had a burning passion for, still to this day. These new friends were open to the newcomer; warm and welcoming. They liked him for who he was; he liked them for their willingness to accept the unique individual he was becoming. They were involved in acts of kindness and service to others. He liked that also.

⁴ Scriptural References Mat 25:31 – "When the Son of Man comes in his glory . . ."

His new friends and he became involved in acting on their faith, on a parish level, an archdiocesan level, a state and national level, and even on an international level with the establishment of Pope John Paul II's World Youth Day gatherings. He learned to share of his time, talent and treasure, and to accept the responsibility for volunteering: in his own parish, in the parish of his new-founded friends, and in serving the Archdiocese of San Antonio as a member of the Archdiocesan Youth Ministry Resource Team. He learned lifelong lessons through liturgical song written by those musicians in the field of Youth Ministry. He felt a strong bond and a deep understanding with songs by the titles of: "I BELIEVE IN THE SUN", "BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED", and "PASS IT ON".

The young man grew in age and wisdom . . . and a measure of discontent. He graduated from high school as a member of the National Honor Society and attended a university for a short time to study business. He quickly found that he was not suited for the societal structure of college life. He apprenticed himself in the age old and time honored discipline of the Culinary Arts and Gastronomy. With this skill in hand he began gallivanting around the globe in search of understanding, a purpose and/or meaning to life. Though he traveled thousands of miles to many foreign lands and met many interesting people, he never strayed far from his faith and the call to serve. He often sought out the closest Catholic congregation and sometimes walked several miles to attend Sunday Mass. Whatever the reason for his journeys abroad, the prodigal son soon returned home.

For a brief period, he contemplated the possibility of a full time life of ministry. It seemed to him that he may have been called to live as a priest, deacon or brother, but he was uncertain and confused by the fear of being bound by commitment. Deciding not to decide at the time, but still desiring to grow stronger in his faith life, he enrolled in the Rite of Catholic

Initiation for Adults (RCIA), at his local parish. He thought that the worst that could happen is that he would gain a renewed perspective of what it may feel like to become Catholic, once again; a refresher course. This became a time of reflection and renewal for the young adult.

During this time he experienced a particular interest, even excitement, about the Sacrament of Confirmation. He reflected back on his own reception of the sacrament some years earlier. He recalled only a small portion about being taught how to “accept the faith as your own”. But now, for the first time in a long time, he was experiencing a spark – a spark of passion – a spiritual type of passion about sharing a new and developing understanding about the Sacrament of Confirmation. He felt certain that he could relate to the young people of his parish. He had a strong desire to share the fire that he had burning inside. He wanted to ignite the local confirmation candidates and their catechesis sharing with them, a desire to serve: service to their community, service to their parish, service to the individuals . . . one at a time . . . one by one.

He began his newly accepted ministry by mentoring pre-Confirmation students. It was during this time that the Pastoral Associate and the young mentor made the decision to change the format of the final year of preparation for these confirmation students. Their final year in the two-year developmental program would be spent outside of the classroom as “A Year of Service – An Opportunity to Put Your ‘Faith in Action’.” Instead of another year of scripture study from a catechetical text or guide, this final year would be one of living scripture in the real world. These experiences would be designed to last a lifetime in the hearts and minds of the students. And although unbeknownst to the catechists, these experiences would receive rave reviews from parents and parish community alike. Most importantly, though these experiences would serve to instill Gospel values into these students and give them a strong desire to continue serving for years into the future. *“Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine. . .”*

The experiences of the following year energized the young man. Though familiar with the Gospels, it was not until the young man became a member of the retreat team for the annual “Confirmation Weekend” that he began to focus on the teachings of Jesus through the writings of Saint Matthew. During this time of preparation, he became increasingly aware of his own personal theology of church and ministry. It became clear to him now . . . why . . . after all of this time, he felt constantly compelled to serve, again and again. It was at this time that he felt close to understanding the rewards that Jesus promised to His faithful. And for the young adult, Saint Matthew became one of his favorite authors and theologians.

THE BEATTITUDES

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are they, who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely)
because of me.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

Matthew 5:3 – 12

The young adult continued to grow in age and wisdom. The point of no return came when he realized that he was no longer of an age to be referred to as a member of the “young adult” grouping. He noticed subtle and constant reminders that his students were becoming younger and younger; not necessarily in age but in immaturity of vision and with that, an inability to focus on the “bigger picture”. Contemplating on these differences became a line of demarcation between the “young adult” that he had been yesterday and the “young adults” he

mentored to today. He was now a man, a young man, albeit most people haphazardly (or intentionally) dropped the adjective part of speech, forgetting the “young”; he was now – pretty much – just a man!

Neither age nor maturity . . . neither wisdom nor contemplation, would discourage the man. Quiet the opposite would prove true; the developmental processes of adulthood had a sort of enlightening effect on him. He realized how much he had to offer and the time was right . . . now . . . since he had already realized that he was not getting any younger. He was nominated and elected to serve a two-year term on the Board of Religious Education for his parish. He accepted and served with pride. He continued working with the youth of his parish and the youthful population of the archdiocese. He enjoyed this immensely and was driven to attempt a reinstatement of a high school level, religious conversation class for those graduating seniors (12th graders) who were preparing to “go out into the real world”. He was constantly being reminded of other populations in his community who were not being ministered to; whose needs were not being met. This troubled the young man greatly. The thought that there were people in his own community who had needs that were being overlooked, simply reaffirmed the young mans awareness to a singular focus for achieving happiness – a singular focus on service.

It was a Wednesday evening, after a board meeting, standing in the parking lot of the church’s community center, when the next step of the man’s “theology of church and ministry” came into being. He was in conversation with the former president of the board. The gentleman had completed his term as president that very evening, and both men were contemplating the next step in their individual ministerial journeys. The two colleague’s echoed sentiments as they shared a feeling that there was an unmet need in their parish; right in their own backyard. However, neither of the men could put their finger on the nagging feeling. The elder spoke of

his involvement with the parish men's society, but explained that he was seeking an environment that was somewhat less social and more charitable than what that organization had to offer. And then, like a thunderbolt, sent as a message from above, the answer came to the men almost simultaneously!

This parking lot meeting was the beginning of the St. Louis Catholic Church Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The two men who had a shared vision of an unmet need in their community became two of the Society's five founding members. The message received that evening was especially clear to the man, who had spent several years now, mentoring Confirmation students. For the most part, those pupils had learned their lessons well and were now planning and executing service learning projects of their own and on a semi – regular basis.

The young man instantly received affirmation that he and his peer lay ministers were on the right track, the moment that he read the *Mission Statement* printed at the beginning of the

UNITED STATES MANUAL OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

Inspired by Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization, leads women and men to join together to grow spiritually by offering person to person service to the needy and suffering in the tradition of its founder, Venerable Frederic Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul.

As a reflection of the whole family of God, members, who are known as Vincentians, are drawn from every ethnic and cultural background, age group, and economic level. Vincentians are united in an international society of charity by their spirit of poverty, humility and sharing, which is nourished by prayer and reflection, mutually supportive gathering and adherence to a basic Rule.

Organized locally, Vincentians witness God's love by embracing all works of charity and justice. The society collaborates with other people of good will in relieving need and addressing its causes, making no distinction in those served, because in them Vincentians see the face of Christ⁵

⁵ From: "The United States Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, 150th National Anniversary, Commemorative Issue, page 1.

The first year of the newly formed St. Louis Conference proved to be a bit rocky and sometimes turbulent for the man and his new ministerial duties. Most of the original founding members dropped from sight, which was not altogether unheard of in small town, rural parishes. Some became dissatisfied with the politics involved in the formation of a new ministry within the sometimes rigid parish hierarchy. Some grew weary of the type of ministry in which they chose to partake in, a ministry which is all about giving of oneself, unconditionally.

Though the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is truly a lay organization, many conferences still rely on the generosity of their parish community for building space in which to house its ministerial activities and more importantly, for its financial support. The man would not be denied his vision as he struggled with the fledgling conference. His passion and his theology of church and ministry throughout this part of his life became strengthened through a desire to serve. The reaffirmation again came by way of Christ's words, through the Gospel writings attributed to St. Matthew . . .

Then the king will say . . .

. . . to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father.

Inherit the kingdom . . .

. . . prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'⁶

Matthew 25: 34 – 36, 38 – 40

⁶ From: "The New American Bible", Saint Joseph Edition. Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD). Catholic Book Publishing Company, Washington, D. C.

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Description of Capstone Project

The Capstone Project and subsequent writings incorporated in this portfolio, referred to as Phase II, is a cumulative and collaborative effort between two colleagues from The Pastoral Institute of The University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas. The first phase was successfully completed to fulfill requirements for a Master of Arts in Religious Studies. Phase I was intended to: plan, implement and evaluate a catechesis pilot program for a senior high school CCD class. This pilot was to have its foundation in the Gospel readings of the liturgical calendar. More importantly, this program was designed to afford youth and young adults enrolled in this catechesis curriculum, an opportunity to put their “faith in action” through active participation in service learning projects. A mini-session (encompassing a three to four week period of time) approach is utilized in the structuring of this catechesis plan. The cycle consisted of: Week I – Gospel readings; interpretation, open discussion on content, modern practical example of message; Week II – Service Learning Project; based on the message of the Gospel readings, and Week III – Evaluation; both oral and written, which serves to examine the practicality of the mini-session as well as the success and/or failure of the service learning project. This first phase has been completed and was proven successful, as a pilot program.

The second phase of the total Capstone Project is to: plan, implement and evaluate results utilizing this same catechesis curriculum on an individual or small group setting. This CCD curriculum has proven successful with an entire class of students within a CCD setting. Now the test is to attempt utilization of this same program on an individual and/or family basis. The original work will continue to be edited and modified as deemed necessary in order to adapt for individual or small group design. The completion of this portion, Phase II, of this Capstone Project is also submitted to fulfill degree requirements for a Master of Arts in Religious Studies.

Focus Group Members

Armstrong, Mary (Peggy): Director of Conference Development

- Society of St. Vincent De Paul, Central Council for the Archdiocese of San Antonio

Barrett, Beverley: Graduate of University of the Incarnate Word, Pastoral Institute

- Collaborating Colleague on Youth Ministry Models and Catechesis Curriculum

Ruiz, Deborah: Director of Religious Education

- St. Louis Catholic Church, Castroville, TX

Remote Focus Group Members

SVDP National Office Consultants

(Consultation via telephone / e-mail communications)

Hutchinson, Leigh Anne: South Central Regional Chair for Youth Ministry

- Society of St. Vincent De Paul, National Council for the United States of America

Kneaves, Sr. Kieran DC: National Formation Director

- Society of St. Vincent De Paul, National Council Office, United States of America

Ramson, Fr. Ronald CM: Author of *Praying with Frederic Ozanam*, Saint Mary's Press

- Society of St. Vincent De Paul, National Council and Congregation of the Mission
- Reassigned to Missionary Tour in Africa

Proposal for Capstone Project

1. PASTORAL SETTING

Phase I of this project was intended to plan, implement and evaluate a catechesis pilot program for a senior high school CCD class, preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The focus of this particular project is to prepare a catechesis that is firmly based on the spirituality and teachings of St. Vincent de Paul and Blessed Frederic Ozanam. The first phase of this project was successfully completed at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church – LaCoste, Texas.

Phase II is intended to utilize the same catechism concept for individual or small group study. The trial of this portion of the project will be piloted during the 2005 – 2006 school year at St. Louis Catholic Church – Castroville, Texas.

The participants in this portion of the trial will be a small group of youth and young adults preparing for reception into the Catholic Church. They have been deemed too young to enter the adult RCIA Program, yet too mature to be placed with the children preparing for other Initiation Sacraments. These particular individuals are deemed appropriate candidates for entry into this program of Gospel study, action and reflection. It is because of their request for reception into the Catholic Church that they have been recommended. Each candidate has proven a working knowledge of the Gospel. All participants have displayed a desire to participate in a service learning and social justice ministry.

Foreseen challenges to the continuance of this project, from commencement to the Easter Vigil, are scheduling and the availability of all participants, in the same place, at the same time. Challenges will be met in two ways – through commitment and with flexibility. Primarily, each candidate will be asked to make a pledge of commitment to the completion of his/her formation program. The pledge will stipulate that the commitment should be executed in a timely fashion,

so as to celebrate with other catechumens during the Easter Vigil Mass. Secondly, the focus team has agreed that flexibility with scheduling is a key factor in attaining success when working in the field of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

2. ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Service learning outings and social justice awareness practices are not innovative to the preparation of young adults for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. For years, *Confirmandi* have been required to complete a set amount of “Service Hours” prior to receiving this Rite of Initiation into the Catholic Church. The approach to catechesis that I am proposing is not new; rather it is singularly focused – the focus being to gain personal awareness and a sense of appreciation for the less fortunate through active participation in living out the Gospel message.

It becomes abundantly clear to most all who spend time ministering to the youth and young adults of today’s society, that there is a strong yearning to do good – “to do the right things right.” Young people desire to be involved in making their world a better place to live. They enjoy participating in the betterment of peoples lives. Personal witness to this phenomenon is the reason for, and the foundation of this catechesis project.

3. FOCUS GROUP

Members of the focus group have been chosen due to their strong ties to either youth/young adult ministry and/or with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The first person selected to serve as a key member of this group was Executive Director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for the Archdiocesan Central Council of San Antonio, Texas. Mary “Peggy” Armstrong was also well-deserving of the title “Boss”, since I then held a part-time position as

Director of Youth Ministry for the area council of the Society of St. Vincent De Paul.

Requested for their vast knowledge, worldly experience and life-long commitment to Vincentian Spirituality, two members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society's National Office, have served as remote consultants: Father Ronald Ramson, C. M. and Sister Kieran Kneaves, D. C. Leigh Anne Hutchinson offers a youthful perspective to the compilation of this project. She was asked to participate because of her years of experience working with the Society. Her adamant resolve to form a great number of Young Vincentian Conferences is an inspiration to many society members, young and old alike.

The final two members of the focus group were chosen because of their experience with the subject matter and/or because of their locality – in reference to, vicinity of this project pilot program. These two members provided a constant sounding board for advice during the creation and trial run of this catechesis project. Deborah Ruiz, Director of Religious Education at St. Louis Catholic Church, agreed to participate in the evaluation and continuation of the project at St. Louis. St. Louis Catholic Church, Castroville, Texas is my home parish and the location chosen for the second part of this pilot program. Beverley Barrett was a partner in the initial writing of Phase I and was instrumental in the completion of Phase I pilot at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, LaCoste, Texas.

4. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To the best of my knowledge, there was not a specific type of formalized needs assessment used in the decision to create this project. An interest in the concept for the development of a Vincentian catechesis was created through a two-fold realization. First, was a personal awareness to the level of commitment and the amount of attentiveness of teenagers involved in "Service Learning" projects. As part of their final year of training in preparation for

the Sacrament of Confirmation, these young people participated in a variety of tasks that allowed them to put their “faith into action”. Secondly, members of the National Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul issued a challenge to Archdiocesan Councils to focus their efforts on certain areas of the 5-year strategic plan. Among the focal points on the short list at this time was a mandate to; “Increase the number of youth and young adults involved in the work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul through increased development of Young Vincentian Conferences.”

5. FOCUS GROUP INTERACTION

Interaction with two members of the focus group was an almost daily occasion. Part-time employment by the Society allowed the opportunity of access to several members of the team on a regular basis. During the initial formation of this project members of the team would often meet at the Archdiocesan Central Office, downtown San Antonio. On several other occasions, members of the team agreed to meet at the University of The Incarnate Word and a variety of coffee shops and/or restaurants, according to their work, school, and family schedules.

Remote consultants to the focus group offered vital insight into the formation of the catechesis via e-mail and telephone communication. Congregation of the Mission priest, Father Ron Ramson, as well as Daughter of Charity, Sister Kieran Kneaves were instrumental in the Vincentian Spiritual Formation and Reflection that are an integral part of this catechesis project.

On a handful of occasions, I had the opportunity to participate in face-to-face interview style sessions. At the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Mid-Year Conference, regularly held in St. Louis, Missouri and again during Annual National Meetings, in Philadelphia one year, and Atlanta the next. Time was well spent collecting personal advice and wisdom from these sage members of our team and incorporating their counsel into the compilation.

6. PROJECT GOALS

The goals for this project are borrowed directly from: Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, which was prepared and published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. These goals are intertwined throughout the catechesis and are as important a part of the preparation as are the Gospels and a series of reflective prayer essays named simply, Vincentian Reflections. These weekly reflections, which teach the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul and Blessed Frederic Ozanam, were prepared by Focus Team Member, Sister Kieran Kneaves, D. C. These goals are as follows: “Goal 1 – To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today”, “Goal 2 – To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community and live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today”, and “Goal 3 – To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.” (RNV, pp 9-15)

These goals served as regular reminders of the project’s focus on service learning. They were used as criteria when formulating a community service project and were also introduced to the students in the reflective portion of the mini-session. Two members of the focus team completed the coursework requirements for their nationally recognized Certificate of Youth Ministry Studies offered through The Center for Ministry Development, Naugatuck, Connecticut. The timeline was not a specific point in time, but a constant reminder during the evaluation stage of each step of the mini-session and at the completion of each mini-session.

7. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this project are not so much written, as they are experienced; by the mentor and most especially, by the student. A first objective may be allowing youth and young adults to experience the rewards of helping others, that helping others is a good thing to do often,

and that to experience this often may create a lifelong mind-set of serving others. Another objective may be to allow a teenager to experience, through their actions, that the spirit of the Gospel is alive and well in their world, today. A third objective may be to foster an appreciation of one's faith among those we serve by affording them the opportunity to act on the demands of their baptism. By offering this to them, we may generate a continuing spirit of service among our community. These objectives directly reflect the goals listed above and were the source of evaluative measurement for during the whole of the projects pilot program.

If the above objectives are acceptable, a timeline to measure the completion of the goals is unnecessary, even unimportant. A summative evaluation of objectives is too finite. An evaluation of the completion of an objective suggests an end to the program, a cessation of service, a cause or reason for the program to stop. If, on the other hand, we speak of an ongoing evaluation of the goals and objectives, then we may discuss continuing success of the program.

Parent evaluation will be evident, as it was in the first pilot program, by the applauding of our mentoring efforts, allowing their children these service experiences. Present student evaluation will be in the form of their willingness to continue serving even after they have received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Future student evaluation will appear through the willingness of the next class of students to utilize this same project proposal. This will be evident in the student who looks forward to entering into his/her final year of preparation for the sacrament, and the experiences of putting their faith into action. The personal evaluation, as well as the community's evaluation will become evident through the generation of a profound spirit of service that will continue among the congregation. The overall objective may be that the feeling of service towards others will become contagious, especially in parish settings that already enjoy a strong Vincentian influence.

8. KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENT

The knowledge and skill attained to accomplish this project has been a lifelong learning process. The wisdom and insight gained through years of “field work” in youth ministry proved to be a most valuable asset. This knowledge and skill was greatly enhanced by graduate studies completed at the Pastoral Institute at the University of The Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas. This educational journey was vigilantly guided by the careful direction and scrupulous wisdom offered by Sister Eilish Ryan, CCVI and members of the Pastoral Institute’s adjunct professors.

The amount of knowledge added to this information pool by the people of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was truly immeasurable. Generous people at both the Archdiocesan Office in San Antonio and at the National Office in St. Louis were not only helpful, but inspirational. Information was also received from the Center for Ministry Development, Connecticut and the Office of Youth Ministry Development at the Archdiocese of San Antonio Chancery Offices.

9. SKILL REQUIREMENT

The list of skills required for ministering to youth and young adult in any setting, is a lengthy one. Whether working in the field of Youth Ministry or employed as a teacher in the public or private school system, the skills required to work with youth and young adults vary by only small measures. Among the most important skills are those of flexibility and patience.

Flexibility is required when student (or parents) arrive late, on the wrong day or not at all. Flexibility is required in organizing and planning service learning projects. These may need to be changed at a moments notice, often due to conditions beyond our control. Flexibility is required when an authority figure, especially those to whom we are subordinates, decide that a particular project, which has been planned for a month, is not “in the best interest of our students.”

Patience is another important skill requirement. Ministering to youth and young adults can be a deeply rewarding experience but only when an abundant supply of patience is utilized in the process. Empowerment, allowing youth to take ownership of their project, is a powerful tool.

10. ATTITUDE

Is “faith” an *attitude*? Is one’s religious “belief” based on *attitude*? Is *attitude* a requirement for “service”? One might argue that some type of attitude is required to practice one’s “faith” or to base your “beliefs” in this or that religious foundation, or even that a positive attitude is required to be in “service” to others. However, rather than speak of *attitude*, it might prove more important for the reader of this paper to know that the proposed project is more than an *attitude* – what is proposed however, is more like a way of life!

The project proposal discussed in these pages is to be practiced in the hope that youth and young adults may be able to carry out the responsibility accepted for them, by their Godparents, at the time of their Baptism into the Catholic Church. Certainly the attitude of the Instructor is important. Of course the student/catechumen must possess an attitude of willingness to serve. More importantly is the desire, of the teacher and the student, to be able to display their beliefs by putting their “faith into action”. Therefore, *attitude* may be too light of a term and *passion* may be too weighty of a term. Christian responsibility – through long term and constantly practiced action – rings quite nicely in the realm of this proposed project.

11. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership development is composed of several different layers which will be constantly changing and developing through the duration of the project. One may inquire as to the formation of leadership development; of the students, of the instructor/mentor, of the focus group

and/or of the religious education staff of the parish where the project is utilized. It is through the development of leadership that this project will bloom, grow and flourish. In the beginning, the leadership may be localized as the project is adopted and refined. It is hoped that the continuance will spread from the local area to the state and national sphere through its use as part of a more focused religious education curriculum, especially in parishes that have an existing Vincentian presence.

For the spread and the longevity of this project to be realized, the two most important areas of leadership are that of the catechist and the student. The catechist leadership development may be a likely occurrence in a parish setting with a strong Vincentian presence. Leadership development of the students will be instilled through their empowerment during every step of the developmental process that makes up the project mini – series: from studying the Gospel message, to planning a service learning action, to reflecting/evaluating their community service outing. The meaning and value of what they have practiced and witnessed is the key to empowerment, and the key to developing leadership for the continuation of the project.

12. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GOALS

Personal learning goals are mentioned and expounded upon throughout the collective writings that are the framework for the summation of this project. The most important personal learning goal is to continue practicing and refining the use of empowerment through constantly promoting its use in Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Professional learning goals are still in play as this project is submitted for acceptance, “in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies.” It is the opinion of the writer that professional learning goals (and to some degree personal learning

goals) may never be completely or fully realized, since the ability to learn and the level of those learning remains immeasurable. Professional aspirations, on the other hand, is that this work may be practiced, refined, proven, published, distributed and widely used to promote one of the most important responsibilities of our faith . . . the baptismal responsibility of service to others.

13. SHARED EXPERTISE

Service learning and social justice awareness are not new issues however; they are constantly altered issues in our ever changing society and in our wavering world of choices and decisions. How do we go about organizing service learning projects that are meaningful to the learner? Do we just take a stab in the dark and hope that what we intend to happen, happens? Do we do our best in hopes of planning an outing that will leave a lasting impression on the hearts and souls of our young people and then simply pray it works? That the events that we have planned, leave a mark on the heart and soul or do we simply leave it to the Holy Spirit? This is the type of shared expertise that one might desire from a resource person. The expertise of personal experience in what they have witnessed through their planning and implementation of different concepts and programs.

Other pertinent shared expertise may be in the form of gathered information. To openly discuss and examine ideas on how to keep the project alive and how to adapt, adopt and refine it for use in a variety of settings among diverse populations; rural and urban, high income, middle income and low income economic levels, medium to large Christian community projects and the exploration of dynamics involved in ministering to a small or singular group.

Finally, evaluation analysis is shared expertise that is a welcome contribution; to adapt, adopt, and refine this project so that it may be utilized in a variety of religious education institutions and in diverse, even remote settings. This may be the most important expertise that

is shared by the resource person since, in the longevity of the project, true success is discovered. If given the opportunity to witness the young church in the continuation of service to others aside from the normal class boundaries – in the event that we might visit a former participant of this project and find them in the act of service towards another . . . that would be considered success!

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks
Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

OUTLINE OF WINTER SESSION: LITURGICAL YEAR B, CYCLE II – 13-WEEK PERIOD

I. Schematic / Flow Chart: Proposal of the mini-session concept for a 13-week Winter Session

▪ ***This mini-session catechesis concept consists of three formative elements:***

1. Catechesis: Understanding the Gospel Message

- **Based on Gospel Readings for the 4-week liturgical period encompassing this mini-session**

2. Service Learning Project: Living the Gospel Message

- **Based on or adapted from Gospel Readings and Catechesis covered during this mini-session**

3. The Reflection: Learning from the Gospel Message – Vincentian Reflection

- **Based on Gospel Readings, Catechesis, and Service Learning Project for this mini-session**
- **This process may take place through a variety of formats including but not limited to: personal/silent reflection, written analysis/journaling, one-on-one sharing, and/or small/large group dynamic discussions and interpretational dialoguing and/or role playing.**

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

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II. Breakdown of mini-session into four, 3-week lesson plans including a Gospel related theme

▪ *Each box consists of the following parts:*

1. **Week number and dates encompassing a particular mini-session**

- **The week number and corresponding dates of the Sundays within the mini-session time frame**

2. **Calendar Observances (Religious and Secular)**

- **This offers a partial list of religious and/or secular observances that appear on the calendar during this time frame. These may be possible topics for discussion and may well offer an opportunity to tie the “Service Project” theme to both a religious and secular observances within that same time period.**

3. **Catechesis**

- **Reading of Gospel accounts; Teaching on and Discussion of Content and Meaning; and planning and preparing a related Service Learning Project to be executed the following week.**

4. **Service Project**

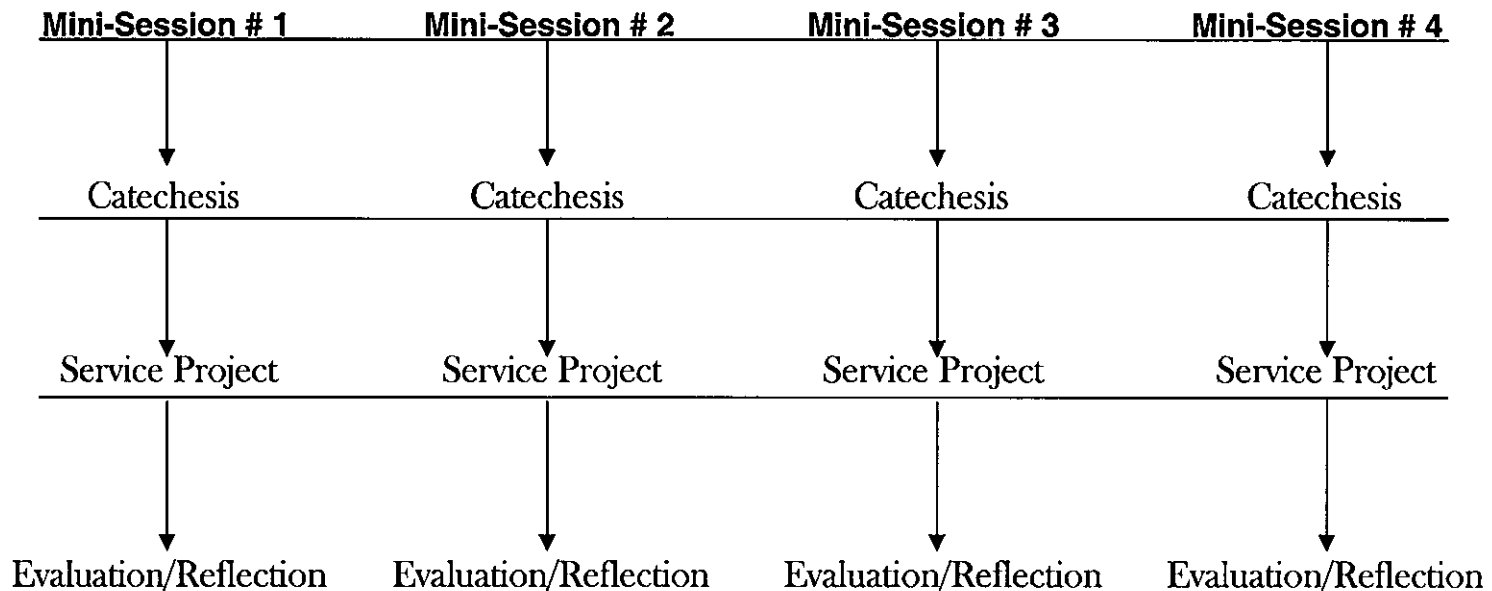
- **This area provides one or more possible ideas of relational Service Learning Projects.**

5. **Evaluation / Reflection – Vincentian Reflection**

- **This process may take place through a variety of formats including but not limited to: personal/silent reflection, written analysis/journaling, one-on-one sharing, and/or small/large group dynamic discussions and interpretational dialoguing and/or role playing.**

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks
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III. Schematic / Flow Chart: Proposal of the mini-session concept for a 13-week Winter Session



NOTES:

Catechesis: Is based on the Scripture readings for the 3-week liturgical period encompassing the time frame for this mini-session

Service Project: May be based on or adapted from Scripture & Catechesis covered during Week I of the mini-session.

Evaluation/Reflection: Based on the Gospel passages, Catechesis, and Service Learning for this mini-session. This process may take place through a variety of formats including but not limited to: silent reflection, written analysis or journaling, one - on - one sharing, and/or small group discussions and interpretational dialoguing. Use of - Vincentian Reflection

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks
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Mini - Session #1 = Three Sundays: November 27, December 04, and 11, 2005

Inclusion: Explanation/Discussion of Advent & Immaculate Conception + Jewish Traditions of Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur, The American Celebration of Thanksgiving and Native American/Mexican American traditions of Las Mañanitas and the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Catechesis - Gospel Basis: Mark 13:33-37, Mark 1:1-8, John 1:6-8, 19-28

Service Project Theme: Preparedness - Prepare and serve a Thanksgiving Meal for some of the less fortunate OR assist in the preparations for Las Mañanitas or another Guadalupana Celebration

Evaluation/Reflection: Based on the Gospel passages, Catechesis, and Service Learning for this mini-session. This process may take place through a variety of formats including but not limited to: silent reflection, written analysis or journaling, one - on - one sharing, and/or small group discussions and interpretational dialoguing. **Vincentian Reflection**

Mini - Session #1 = First Sunday: November 27, 2005

Mark Chapter 13: 33 - 37

- 33 Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.
- 34 It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch.
- 35 Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning.
- 36 May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.
- 37 What I say to you, I say to all: "Watch!"

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Mini - Session #1 = Second Sunday: December 04, 2005

Mark Chapter 1:1-8

- 1 ^{1,2} The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ (the Son of God).
2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: ³ "Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way.
3 A voice of one crying out in the desert: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'"
4 John (the) Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
5 People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.
6 John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. ⁴ He fed on locusts and wild honey.
7 And this is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals.
8 ⁵ I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Footnotes

- ¹ [1-13] The prologue of the Gospel according to Mark begins with the title (Mark 1:1) followed by three events preparatory to Jesus' preaching: (1) the appearance in the Judean wilderness of John, baptizer, preacher of repentance, and precursor of Jesus (Mark 1:2-8); (2) the baptism of Jesus, at which a voice from heaven acknowledges Jesus to be God's Son, and the holy Spirit descends on him (Mark 1:9-11); (3) the temptation of Jesus by Satan (Mark 1:12-13).
- ² [1] The gospel of Jesus Christ [the Son of God]: the "good news" of salvation in and through Jesus, crucified and risen, acknowledged by the Christian community as Messiah (Mark 8:29; 14:61-62) and Son of God (Mark 1:11; 9:7; 15:39), although some important manuscripts here omit the Son of God.
- ³ [2-3] Although Mark attributes the prophecy to Isaiah, the text is a combination of Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3; Exodus 23:20; cf Matthew 11:10; Luke 7:27. John's ministry is seen as God's prelude to the saving mission of his Son. The way of the Lord: this prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah concerning the end of the Babylonian exile is here applied to the coming of Jesus; John the Baptist is to prepare the way for him.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks
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⁴ [6] Clothed in camel's hair . . . waist: the Baptist's garb recalls that of Elijah in 2 Kings 1:8. Jesus speaks of the Baptist as Elijah who has already come (Mark 9:11-13; Matthew 17:10-12; cf Malachi 3:23-24; Luke 1:17).

⁵ [8-9] Through the life-giving baptism with the holy Spirit (Mark 1:8), Jesus will create a new people of God. But first he identifies himself with the people of Israel in submitting to John's baptism of repentance and in bearing on their behalf the burden of God's decisive judgment (Mark 1:9; cf Mark 1:4). As in the desert of Sinai, so here in the wilderness of Judea, Israel's sonship with God is to be renewed.

Mini - Session #1 = Third Sunday: December 11, 2005

John Chapter 1: 6-8, 19-28

- 6 ¹ A man named John was sent from God.
7 He came for testimony, ² to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.
8 He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.
19 ³ ⁴ And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites (to him) to ask him, "Who are you?"
20 ⁵ he admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Messiah."
21 So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" ⁶ And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."
22 So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?"
23 He said: "I am 'the voice of one crying out in the desert, "Make straight the way of the Lord,"' ⁷ as Isaiah the prophet said."
24 Some Pharisees ⁸ were also sent.
25 They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet?"
26 John answered them, "I baptize with water; ⁹ but there is one among you whom you do not recognize,
27 the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."
28 This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, ¹⁰ where John was baptizing.

Footnotes

¹ [6] John was sent just as Jesus was "sent" (John 4:34) in divine mission. Other references to John the Baptist in this gospel emphasize the differences between them and John's subordinate role.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

- ² [7] Testimony: the testimony theme of John is introduced, which portrays Jesus as if on trial throughout his ministry. All testify to Jesus: John the Baptist, the Samaritan woman, scripture, his works, the crowds, the Spirit, and his disciples.
- ³ [19-51] The testimony of John the Baptist about the Messiah and Jesus' self-revelation to the first disciples. This section constitutes the introduction to the gospel proper and is connected with the prose inserts in the prologue. It develops the major theme of testimony in four scenes: John's negative testimony about himself; his positive testimony about Jesus; the revelation of Jesus to Andrew and Peter; the revelation of Jesus to Philip and Nathanael.
- ⁴ [19] The Jews: throughout most of the gospel, the "Jews" does not refer to the Jewish people as such but to the hostile authorities, both Pharisees and Sadducees, particularly in Jerusalem, who refuse to believe in Jesus. The usage reflects the atmosphere, at the end of the first century, of polemics between church and synagogue, or possibly it refers to Jews as representative of a hostile world (John 1:10-11).
- ⁵ [20] Messiah: the anointed agent of Yahweh, usually considered to be of Davidic descent. See further the note on John 1:41.
- ⁶ [21] Elijah: the Baptist did not claim to be Elijah returned to earth (cf Malachi 3:23; Matthew 11:14). The Prophet: probably the prophet like Moses (Deut 18:15; cf Acts 3:22).
- ⁷ [23] This is a repunctuation and reinterpretation (as in the synoptic gospels and Septuagint) of the Hebrew text of Isaiah 40:3 which reads, "A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the Lord."
- ⁸ [24] Some Pharisees: other translations, such as "Now they had been sent from the Pharisees," misunderstand the grammatical construction. This is a different group from that in John 1:19; the priests and Levites would have been Sadducees, not Pharisees.
- ⁹ [26] I baptize with water: the synoptics add "but he will baptize you with the holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8) or ". . . holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16). John's emphasis is on purification and preparation for a better baptism.
- ¹⁰ [28] Bethany across the Jordan: site unknown. Another reading is "Bethabara."

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Mini - Session #2 = Three Sundays: December 18 and 25, 2005 and January 01, 2006

Inclusion: Explanation / Discussion on Christmas, the Feast of the Holy Family and The Holy Innocents and the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Catechesis - Gospel Basis: Luke 1:26-38, Luke 2:15-20, Luke 2:16-21

Service Project Theme: Charity - Take part in more than one community Christmas assistance program.

Evaluation/Reflection: Based on the Gospel passages, Catechesis, and Service Learning for this mini-session. This process may take place through a variety of formats including but not limited to: silent reflection, written analysis or journaling, one - on - one sharing, and/or small group discussions and interpretational dialoguing. Vincentian Reflection

Mini - Session #2 = First Sunday: December 18, 2005

Luke Chapter 1: 26-37

- 26 ¹ In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,
27 to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.
28 And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."
29 But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.
30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.
31 Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.
32 He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, ² and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,
33 and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."
34 But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" ³
35 And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.
36 And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived ⁴ a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was
called barren;
37 for nothing will be impossible for God."

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Footnotes

- ¹ [26-38] The announcement to Mary of the birth of Jesus is parallel to the announcement to Zechariah of the birth of John. In both the angel Gabriel appears to the parent who is troubled by the vision (Luke 1:11-12, 26-29) and then told by the angel not to fear (Luke 1:13, 30). After the announcement is made (Luke 1:14-17, 31-33) the parent objects (Luke 1:18, 34) and a sign is given to confirm the announcement (Luke 1:20, 36). The particular focus of the announcement of the birth of Jesus is on his identity as Son of David (Luke 1:32-33) and Son of God (Luke 1:32, 35).
- ² [32] Son of the Most High: cf Luke 1:76 where John is described as "prophet of the Most High." "Most High" is a title for God commonly used by Luke (Luke 1:35, 76; 6:35; 8:28; Acts 7:48; 16:17).
- ³ [34] Mary's questioning response is a denial of sexual relations and is used by Luke to lead to the angel's declaration about the Spirit's role in the conception of this child (Luke 1:35). According to Luke, the virginal conception of Jesus takes place through the holy Spirit, the power of God, and therefore Jesus has a unique relationship to Yahweh: he is Son of God.
- ⁴ [36-37] The sign given to Mary in confirmation of the angel's announcement to her is the pregnancy of her aged relative Elizabeth. If a woman past the childbearing age could become pregnant, why, the angel implies, should there be doubt about Mary's pregnancy, for nothing will be impossible for God.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks
Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Mini - Session #2 = Second Sunday: December 25, 2005
John Chapter 1: 1-18

- 1 ^{1 2} In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 He was in the beginning with God.
3 ³ All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be
4 through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race;
5 ⁴ the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
6 ⁵ A man named John was sent from God.
7 He came for testimony, ⁶ to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.
8 He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.
9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.
10 He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him.
11 He came to what was his own, but his own people ⁷ did not accept him.
12 But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name,
13 ⁸ who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God.
14 And the Word became flesh ⁹ and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son,
full of grace and truth.
15 ¹⁰ John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me
because he existed before me.'"
16 From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, ¹¹
17 because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
18 No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, ¹² who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Footnotes

- ¹ [1-18] The prologue states the main themes of the gospel: life, light, truth, the world, testimony, and the preexistence of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Logos, who reveals God the Father. In origin, it was probably an early Christian hymn. Its closest parallel is in other christological hymns, Col 1:15-20 and Philippians 2:6-11. Its core (John 1:1-5, 10-11, 14) is poetic in structure, with short phrases linked by "staircase parallelism," in which the last word of one phrase becomes the first word of the next. Prose inserts (at least John 1:6-8, 15) deal with John the Baptist.
- ² [1] In the beginning: also the first words of the Old Testament (Genesis 1:1). Was: this verb is used three times with different meanings in this verse: existence, relationship, and predication. The Word (Greek logos): this term combines God's dynamic, creative word (Genesis), personified preexistent Wisdom as the instrument of God's creative activity (Proverbs), and the ultimate intelligibility of reality (Hellenistic philosophy). With God: the Greek preposition here connotes communication with another. Was God: lack of a definite article with "God" in Greek signifies predication rather than identification.
- ³ [1] What came to be: while the oldest manuscripts have no punctuation here, the corrector of Bodmer Papyrus P75, some manuscripts, and the Ante-Nicene Fathers take this phrase with what follows, as staircase parallelism. Connection with John 1:3 reflects fourth-century anti-Arianism.
- ⁴ [5] The ethical dualism of light and darkness is paralleled in intertestamental literature and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Overcome: "comprehend" is another possible translation, but cf John 12:35; Wisdom 7:29-30.
- ⁵ [6] John was sent just as Jesus was "sent" (John 4:34) in divine mission. Other references to John the Baptist in this gospel emphasize the differences between them and John's subordinate role.
- ⁶ [7] Testimony: the testimony theme of John is introduced, which portrays Jesus as if on trial throughout his ministry. All testify to Jesus: John the Baptist, the Samaritan woman, scripture, his works, the crowds, the Spirit, and his disciples.
- ⁷ [11] What was his own . . . his own people: first a neuter, literally, "his own property/possession" (probably = Israel), then a masculine, "his own people" (the Israelites).

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks
Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

- ⁸ [13] Believers in Jesus become children of God not through any of the three natural causes mentioned but through God who is the immediate cause of the new spiritual life. Were born: the Greek verb can mean "begotten" (by a male) or "born" (from a female or of parents). The variant "he who was begotten," asserting Jesus' virginal conception, is weakly attested in Old Latin and Syriac versions.
- ⁹ [14] Flesh: the whole person, used probably against docetic tendencies (cf 1 John 4:2; 1:7). Made his dwelling: literally, "pitched his tent/tabernacle." Cf the tabernacle or tent of meeting that was the place of God's presence among his people (Exodus 25:8-9). The incarnate Word is the new mode of God's presence among his people. The Greek verb has the same consonants as the Aramaic word for God's presence (Shekinah). Glory: God's visible manifestation of majesty in power, which once filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34) and the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11, 27), is now centered in Jesus. Only Son: Greek, monogenes, but see the note on John 1:18. Grace and truth: these words may represent two Old Testament terms describing Yahweh in covenant relationship with Israel (cf Exodus 34:6), thus God's "love" and "fidelity." The Word shares Yahweh's covenant qualities.
- ¹⁰ [15] This verse, interrupting John 1:14, 16 seems drawn from John 1:30.
- ¹¹ [16] Grace in place of grace: replacement of the Old Covenant with the New (cf John 1:17). Other possible translations are "grace upon grace" (accumulation) and "grace for grace" (correspondence).
- ¹² [18] The only Son, God: while the vast majority of later textual witnesses have another reading, "the Son, the only one" or "the only Son," the translation above follows the best and earliest manuscripts, monogenes theos, but takes the first term to mean not just "Only One" but to include a filial relationship with the Father, as at Luke 9:38 ("only child") or Hebrews 11:17 ("only son") and as translated at John 1:14. The Logos is thus "only Son" and God but not Father/God.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks
Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Mini - Session #2 = Third Sunday: January 01, 2006
Luke Chapter 2: 16-21

- 16 So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.
17 When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child.
18 All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds.
19 and Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.
20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.
21 When eight days were completed for his circumcision, ¹ he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Footnotes

- ¹ [21] Just as John before him had been incorporated into the people of Israel through his circumcision, so too this child (see the note on Luke 1:57-66).

Mini - Session #3 = Three Sundays: January 08, 15 and 22, 2006

Inclusion: Explanation / Discussion on the Epiphany, the Baptism of the Lord, Ordinary Time and Secular Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Catechesis - Gospel Basis: Mark 1:7-11, John 1:35-42, Mark 1:14-20

Service Project Theme: Baptism, Repentance and Obedience - Locate a wrong in your community that needs to be righted; an area of town that needs a clean-up or a person or family that is in need of assistance. Go to confession and resolve to be a better you. Witness a Baptism or an Ordination.

Evaluation/Reflection: Based on the Gospel passages, Catechesis, and Service Learning for this mini-session. This process may take place through a variety of formats including but not limited to: silent reflection, written analysis or journaling, one - on - one sharing, and/or small group discussions and interpretational dialoguing. Vincentian Reflection

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Mini - Session #3 = First Sunday: January 08, 2006

Mark Chapter 1: 7-11

- 7 And this is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals.
- 8 ¹ I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the holy Spirit."
- 9 It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John.
- 10 On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. ²
- 11 And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Footnotes

¹ [8-9] Through the life-giving baptism with the holy Spirit (Mark 1:8), Jesus will create a new people of God. But first he identifies himself with the people of Israel in submitting to John's baptism of repentance and in bearing on their behalf the burden of God's decisive judgment (Mark 1:9; cf Mark 1:4). As in the desert of Sinai, so here in the wilderness of Judea, Israel's sonship with God is to be renewed.

² [10-11] He saw the heavens . . . and the Spirit . . . upon him: indicating divine intervention in fulfillment of promise. Here the descent of the Spirit on Jesus is meant, anointing him for his ministry; cf Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; 63:9. A voice . . . with you I am well pleased: God's acknowledgment of Jesus as his unique Son, the object of his love. His approval of Jesus is the assurance that Jesus will fulfill his messianic mission of salvation.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Mini - Session #3 = Second Sunday: January 15, 2006

John Chapter 1:35-42

- 35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples,
36 and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." ¹
37 The two disciples ² heard what he said and followed Jesus.
38 Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?"
39 He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. ³
40 Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus.
41 He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" ⁴ (which is translated Anointed).
42 Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; ⁵ you will be called Kephas"

Footnotes

- ¹ [36] John the Baptist's testimony makes his disciples' following of Jesus plausible.
- ² [37] The two disciples: Andrew (John 1:40) and, traditionally, John, son of Zebedee (see the note on John 13:23).
- ³ [39] Four in the afternoon: literally, the tenth hour, from sunrise, in the Roman calculation of time. Some suggest that the next day, beginning at sunset, was the Sabbath; they would have stayed with Jesus to avoid travel on it.
- ⁴ [41] Messiah: the Hebrew word masiah, "anointed one" (see the note on Luke 2:11), appears in Greek as the transliterated messias only here and in John 4:25. Elsewhere the Greek translation christos is used.
- ⁵ [42] Simon, the son of John: in Matthew 16:17, Simon is called Bariona, "son of Jonah," a different tradition for the name of Simon's father. Kephas: in Aramaic = the Rock; cf Matthew 16:18. Neither the Greek equivalent Petros nor, with one isolated exception, Kephas is attested as a personal name before Christian times.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks
Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Mini - Session #3 = Third Sunday: January 22, 2006
Mark Chapter 1: 14-20

- 14 After John had been arrested, ¹ Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God:
15 "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."
16 ² As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were
fishermen.
17 Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."
18 Then they abandoned their nets and followed him.
19 He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending
their nets.
20 Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

Footnotes

¹ [14-15] After John had been arrested: in the plan of God, Jesus was not to proclaim the good news of salvation prior to the termination of the Baptist's active mission. Galilee: in the Marcan account, scene of the major part of Jesus' public ministry before his arrest and condemnation. The gospel of God: not only the good news from God but about God at work in Jesus Christ. This is the time of fulfillment: i.e., of God's promises. The kingdom of God . . . repent: see the note on Matthew 3:2.

² [16-20] These verses narrate the call of the first Disciples. See the notes on Matthew 4:18-22 and Matthew 4:20.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Mini - Session #4 = Four Sundays: January 29, February 05, 12, and 19, 2006

Inclusion: Explanation / Discussion on the Presentation of the Lord and Secular Celebration of Valentines Day and Presidents Day

Catechesis - Gospel Basis: Mark 1:21-28, Mark 1:29-39, Mark 1:40-45, Mark 2:1-12

Service Project Theme: Healing, Faith and Forgiveness - Make a visit to the sick: a nursing home, a children's cancer hospital, a hospital or visit some shut-in's in your parish. Your visit may be just the healing that they needed today!

Evaluation/Reflection: Based on the Gospel passages, Catechesis, and Service Learning for this mini-session. This process may take place through a variety of formats including but not limited to: silent reflection, written analysis or journaling, one - on - one sharing, and/or small group discussions and interpretational dialoguing. **Vincentian Reflection**

Mini - Session #4 = First Sunday: January 29, 2006

Mark Chapter 1: 21-28

- 21 ¹ Then they came to Capernaum, and on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught.
22 The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.
23 ² In their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit;
24 ³ he cried out, "What have you to do with us, ⁴ Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God!"
25 Jesus rebuked him and said, "Quiet! Come out of him!"
26 The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him.
27 All were amazed and asked one another, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him."
28 His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Footnotes

- ¹ [21-45] The account of a single day's ministry of Jesus on a sabbath in and outside the synagogue of Capernaum (Mark 1:21-31) combines teaching and miracles of exorcism and healing. Mention is not made of the content of the teaching but of the effect of astonishment and alarm on the people. Jesus' teaching with authority, making an absolute claim on the hearer, was in the best tradition of the ancient prophets, not of the scribes. The narrative continues with events that evening (Mark 1:32-34; see the notes on Matthew 8:14-17) and the next day (Mark 1:35-39). The cleansing in Mark 1:40-45 stands as an isolated story.
- ² [23] An unclean spirit: so called because of the spirit's resistance to the holiness of God. The spirit knows and fears the power of Jesus to destroy his influence; cf Mark 1:32, 34; 3:11; 6:13.
- ³ [24-25] The Holy One of God: not a confession but an attempt to ward off Jesus' power, reflecting the notion that use of the precise name of an opposing spirit would guarantee mastery over him. Jesus silenced the cry of the unclean spirit and drove him out of the man.
- ⁴ [24] What have you to do with us?: see the note on John 2:4.

Mini - Session #4 = Second Sunday: February 05, 2006

Mark Chapter 1: 29-39

- 29 On leaving the synagogue he entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John.
- 30 Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her.
- 31 He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them.
- 32 When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons.
- 33 The whole town was gathered at the door.
- 34 He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him.
- 35 Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

- 36 Simon and those who were with him pursued him
37 and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you."
38 He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come."
39 So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

Mini - Session #4 = Third Sunday: February 12, 2006

Mark Chapter 1: 40-45

- 40 A leper¹ came to him (and kneeling down) begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean."
41 Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean."
42 The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean.
43 Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed him at once.
44 Then he said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them."
45 The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.

Footnotes

¹ [40] A leper: for the various forms of skin disease, see Lev 13:1-50 and the note on Lev 13:2-4. There are only two instances in the Old Testament in which God is shown to have cured a leper (Numbers 12:10-15; 2 Kings 5:1-14). The law of Moses provided for the ritual purification of a leper. In curing the leper, Jesus assumes that the priests will reinstate the cured man into the religious community. See also the note on Luke 5:14.

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks

Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

Mini - Session #4 = Third Sunday: February 19, 2006

Mark Chapter 2: 1-12

- 1 ^{1 2} When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home.
2 Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he preached the word to them.
3 They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.
4 Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying.
5 ³ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven."
6 ⁴ Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves,
7 "Why does this man speak that way? ² He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?"
8 Jesus immediately knew in his mind what they were thinking to themselves, so he said, "Why are you thinking such things in your hearts?
9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, pick up your mat and walk'?"
10 ⁵ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth"--
11 he said to the paralytic, "I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home."
12 He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

Footnotes

- ¹ [1-3:6] This section relates a series of conflicts between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees in which the growing opposition of the latter leads to their plot to put Jesus to death (Mark 3:6).
- ² [1] He was at home: to the crowds that gathered in and outside the house Jesus preached the word, i.e., the gospel concerning the nearness of the kingdom and the necessity of repentance and faith (Mark 1:14).

WINTER SESSION = 13 Weeks
Liturgical Year B, Cycle II

- ³ [5] It was the faith of the paralytic and those who carried him that moved Jesus to heal the sick man. Accounts of other miracles of Jesus reveal more and more his emphasis on faith as the requisite for exercising his healing powers (Mark 5:34; 9:23-24; 10:52).
- ⁴ [6] Scribes: trained in oral interpretation of the written law; in Mark's gospel, adversaries of Jesus, with one exception (Mark 12:28, 34).
- ⁵ [7] He is blaspheming: an accusation made here and repeated during the trial of Jesus (Mark 14:60-64).
- ⁶ [10] But that you may know that the Son of Man . . . on earth: although Mark 2:8-9 are addressed to the scribes, the sudden interruption of thought and structure in Mark 2:10 seems not addressed to them nor to the paralytic. Moreover, the early public use of the designation "Son of Man" to unbelieving scribes is most unlikely. The most probable explanation is that Mark's insertion of Mark 2:10 is a commentary addressed to Christians for whom he recalls this miracle and who already accept in faith that Jesus is Messiah and Son of God.

A Brief Summary of the Capstone Project

If opportunity lent itself to the addition of an alternate or secondary title for this closing section; the final piece of a total and complete catechesis project, this one most certainly would be subtitled, A Theology of Church and Ministry Reaffirmed. This catechesis project has span more than a couple of years of planning, organizing, executing, writing, rewriting, reflecting and evaluating on the processes and outcomes of individual pieces as well as the project as a whole. This journey has been a rewarding endeavor, from the birth and announcement of its inception through to its complete fruition and analysis, that marked the end of its pilot programs; once again marking a new beginning to a completely regenerative cycle of experiences for the next class of students.

In an attempt to avoid repetition, I should like to paraphrase a statement that I used in an earlier portion of the writing of this project. I explained that students in most all Confirmation classes at most all parishes were required to complete a set amount of 'service hours' prior to receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. In some instances, it was told to us like a story that the bishop, before slapping the *Confirmandi* on the check, would inquire as to the type of service an individual student had performed. I went on to explain that this catechesis had more to offer, a center of attention that would be more singularly focused on service to others, especially the less fortunate. This was the heart and soul of the project and everyone involved saw this focal point achieved time and again through the institution of this project. Theology of Church and ministry was witnessed over and over again by many, including the focus group, the students, the parent the community and the author of this project.

The personal affirmation received through preparing the initial project proposal was one of high hopes and great expectations. The proposal of a year-long catechesis program singularly

focused on service through acting on the Gospel message was conceivable, but was it achievable? Certainly this work has been carried out by missionary priests, sisters and brothers, in foreign countries for literally hundreds of years, but to expect youth and young adults in a relatively rural setting to put their faith in action on a regular basis remained unproven on a personal and a professional level. However, it quickly became profusely clear to all involved in the implementation of this project that, not only could the singular focus be achieved, it would become almost contagious in that the feeling of worth would spread to other youth and young adults that had a strong yearning to serve; to do the right things for the right reasons.

The "Theology of Church and Ministry" shared in the writing at the beginning of this project was not only affirmed through the processes involved in seeing this project through to the end, it was strengthened. I am convinced more than ever that the empowerment of youth will lead to young people who will display a strong desire to be involved in making their community and surrounding areas a more peaceful and loving place to grow and prosper. Youth and young adults enjoy participating in the betterment of peoples lives. My personal witness to this occurrence, time and time again is the motivation and foundation for this catechesis project.

Now, with the successful completion of the pilot program for this catechesis project, it will be interesting to see if the success can be duplicated in other settings with different types of student populations such as: Inner City and/or Urban populations, Catholic School populations, All Male and/or All Female populations, Minority populations, etc. It is my opinion that being in service to another human being provides a sense of personal satisfaction that is sought-after even desired by many people, from most any walk of life. The circumstance may change. The service learning projects may change. The reflection/evaluation of the activities involved may change. However, the one thing that will remain constant is the Gospel message of service.

Then the king will say . . .

. . . to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father.

Inherit the kingdom . . .

. . . prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'¹

Matthew 25: 34 – 36, 38 – 40

¹ From: "The New American Bible", Saint Joseph Edition. Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD). Catholic Book Publishing Company, Washington, D. C.

Evaluation of Capstone Project

1. FOCUS GROUP ASSISTANCE

This project could not have been complete without the insight of a variety of people; in this case we label them, "The Focus Group". In an alternate setting these same people may have been endearingly labeled as; friends, colleagues, team members or even a committee. As mentioned in the proposal for this project, the members of this focus group were chosen due to their strong ties to either youth/young adult ministry and/or with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Executive Director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for the Archdiocesan Central Council of San Antonio, Mary "Peggy" Armstrong served not only as the resource person but also as a valuable part of the focus group, with over 20 years of Vincentian experience.

The members of the group referred to as our remote members were vital in adding their "vast knowledge, worldly experience and life-long commitment to Vincentian Spirituality." Father Ronald Ramson, C. M. and Sister Kieran Kneaves, D. C. have chosen a life of service based in the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul, because of this choice, they were instrumental members of the focus group through writings, workshops, retreats, personal conversation and/or other forms of communication.

Leigh Anne Hutchinson has, for years, served as the South Central Regional Chairperson for Youth and Young Adult Activities for the Society of St. Vincent De Paul. She offered a youthful perspective to the compilation of this project. Her participation was almost second nature, since it was through partnering with her in the preparation of workshops, that the idea for this project was born. She has served as a source of information from the Vincentian perspective as well as offering a full range of ideas for the organization and planning service learning projects for the *Confirmandi* participants.

The other two members provided a constant sounding board for advice during the creation and trial run of this catechesis project. Deborah Ruiz and Beverley Barrett were integral members of the focus group in that they assisted in the achievement and the evaluation of the pilot programs. Beverly was influential in the completion of the Phase I pilot at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, LaCoste, Texas. Deborah oversaw the preparation and execution of Phase II at St. Louis in Castroville, Texas.

2. PROJECT GOALS

The goals for this project were not only achieved, but they also served as the framework for the projects flow of events. Borrowed directly from: **Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry**, which was prepared and published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, these goals were intertwined throughout the catechesis and were as important a part of the preparation as are the Gospels and a series of reflective prayer essays named simply, **Vincentian Reflections**. These weekly reflections, which teach the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul and Blessed Frederic Ozanam, were prepared by Focus Team Member, Sister Kieran Kneaves, D. C.

The first goal, “To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today”¹ was met and surpassed through allowing full participation of students in all areas of planning their service learning projects. “Goal 2 – To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community and live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today”² was met in much the same way, through the planning and executing of service learning projects. More importantly than the outing, may have been the reflection/evaluation session that followed each outing when students shared their experiences.

¹ From: “Renewing The Vision – A Framework For Catholic Youth Ministry”, Pages 9 – 15. National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB). Publication No. 5-004, United States Catholic Conference, Washington, D. C.

² Ibid.

The third and final goal has been met through the attendance and participation in this year of catechesis, with the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation and finally when our students decide to continue their participation in the life of their Church. “Goal 3 – To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person”³ has been established and promoted; now it is for the student to continue on their personal faith journey.

3. KNOWLEDGE

The knowledge and skill attained to accomplish this project continues to be a lifelong learning process. The wisdom and insight gained through years of “field work” in youth ministry proved to be a most valuable asset. This knowledge and skill has been greatly enhanced by graduate studies through the Pastoral Institute at the University of The Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas. Knowledge attained through fellow members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was truly immeasurable. Generous people at both the Archdiocesan Office in San Antonio, TX and at the National Office in St. Louis, MO were both helpful and inspirational. Information was also received from the Center for Ministry Development, CT and the Office of Youth Ministry Development at the Archdiocese of San Antonio Chancery Offices.

4. SKILLS

As mentioned in the proposal for this project the most important skills that were required for the completion of this project were flexibility and patience. To these two, I now feel the need to add endurance to the list.

Flexibility was required when student (or parents) arrived late, on the wrong day or not at all. Flexibility was required in the organization, planning and executing each and every service learning project. Changes at a moments notice, were often more common than first anticipated. A great deal of flexibility was required by the instructor/mentor, students, by those responsible

³ Ibid.

for the locations of the outings and flexibility was even required by parents on the occasion or two that we arrived early or were running late.

A great dose of patience was another important skill requirement. Ministering to youth and young adults can be a deeply rewarding experience but only when an abundant supply of patience is utilized in the process. Empowerment, allowing youth to take ownership, may be a powerful instrument in practicing one's faith but may only be achieved through patience and endurance.

5. ATTITUDE

In the proposal portion of this project I asked the following questions: "Is 'faith' an *attitude*? Are one's religious "beliefs' based on *attitude*? Is *attitude* a requirement for 'service'?" In retrospect, insight into at least one of these queries becomes much clearer. Some type of attitude is required to be a participant in a catechesis project as is proposed in this project. The first attitude offered by most of the participants was one interest if not intrigue. Many were interested or even intrigued by the concept of living out their faith in the real, everyday world. Then an attitude of disbelief, and in some cases even disgust, became evident as the students were faced with the reality of life and the dismal existence in which some of "our brothers and sisters" were forced to live.

At the completion of most of the service learning experiences the prevalent attitude was that of accomplishment and joyful satisfaction. One student put it simply but eloquently, "I like feeling like I made a difference in the life of one of God's people." This attitude was echoed throughout each and every reflection/evaluation session attended as the third week of the mini-session. A personal attitude of pride asserted itself as I listened to the reflective processing of the students preparing to serve their faith, their community, their Church.

6. OBSTACLES

Obstacles presented themselves as expected. Scheduling and the availability of participants were indeed the major two obstacles. These challenges, as well as other minor tests, were properly dealt with utilizing the knowledge and skill that were covered in the respective areas above. Even with the “pledge of commitment” made by each candidate entering the formation program, family emergencies, jobs and life in general, often stop good intentions dead in their tracks. With the reassurance of the focus team, all agreed that flexibility with scheduling was the key factor in attaining success in the field of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Flexibility, patience and endurance were all utilized in abundant proportions. The fruits of our labor flourished with successful comments from students, parents and the community.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP

The development of leadership through empowerment of those involved was not only evident but prosperous. Leadership was composed of several different layers which constantly changed and developed throughout the project. The formation of leadership development was multifaceted and included leadership development of; students, instructors/mentors, focus group members, and of the religious education staff of the parish where this project was piloted. It is through the development of leadership that this project was able to bloom, grow and flourish. In the beginning, the leadership was somewhat localized with the core group of participants as the project was adopted and refined. It is proposed that the continuance of this project will spread from the local area to the state, national and possibly even international sphere through its use as part of a more focused religious education curriculum, especially in those parishes that already have a strong existing Vincentian presence.

8. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GOALS

Personal learning goals are mentioned and expounded upon throughout the collective writings that are the framework of this project. The most important personal learning goal is to continue practicing and refining the use of empowerment through constantly promoting its use in Youth and Young Adult Ministry. This goal was successfully utilized in all three portions of each and every mini-session. Empowerment of youth and young adults will remain an important factor in the continuation of this project. If the project truly belongs to them because they planned, organized and executed the specific details, then they will be able to continue with or without the structured framework of the proposed mini-session format.

Professional learning goals are still in play as this project is submitted for acceptance, "in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies." It is the opinion of the writer that professional learning goals (and to some degree personal learning goals) may never be completely or fully realized, since the ability to learn and the level of learning remains immeasurable. Professional aspirations, on the other hand, is that this work will continue to be practiced, refined, proven, published, distributed and widely used to promote one of the fundamental responsibilities of our faith; the baptismal responsibility of service.

9. PROJECT RESOURCE PERSON

Project resource person, Mary "Peggy" Armstrong, performed her role in a most admirable way. As a coach, she was constantly inquiring as to how the project was coming along. As cheerleader, she was always reminding me that the goals were achievable. As a team player, her input at focus group meetings was irreplaceable. As a sage advisor and resource person her insight was appreciated and her knowledge of references was unmatched. She was, overall, an integral part of this project and I am indebted to her many gratuitous hours of effort.

Evaluation of Capstone Project by Focus Group Member

As part of the original focus group for the Capstone Project, I have been anxiously awaiting the completion of this pastoral project. From the very beginning of the project I had faith and knew that it could be developed, refined, and successfully be put into practice. I firmly believe that this project while developing deep appreciation for the Gospel message also cements that message to the heart of the youth and young adult by the face to face experiences of service and social justice.

The process portrayed in the Schematic / Flow Chart for the Winter Session was well done and thorough. Each mini-session contained the key elements of Catechesis, Service Project Theme, and Evaluation/Reflection. Each of these is essential for the growth of the youth or young adult in the process of developing his / her faith life.

Another asset of this project is that it can easily develop into an entire year of spiritual growth of the participants through study, service and reflection. I think that this is an important feature because I think that it appeals to basic human nature of “needing to be needed” and “to be part of something meaningful.” I also feel that this project binds the youth / young adult together in a faith community that they can specifically belong to.

I believe that the development of this program where there is already a Society of St. Vincent de Paul (Society) in place at the parish would enhance the existing Society through having help in their special projects. It would also plant the seeds of the volunteer spirit and hopefully increase membership in the Society at an earlier age.

Mary M. Armstrong, Conference Administrator
Society of St. Vincent de Paul of the Archdiocese of San Antonio



MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization, leads women and men to join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul.

As a reflection of the whole family of God, Members, who are known as Vincentians, are drawn from every ethnic and cultural background, age group, and economic level. Vincentians are united in an international society of charity by their spirit of poverty, humility and sharing, which is nourished by prayer and reflection, mutually supportive gatherings and adherence to a basic Rule.

Organized locally, Vincentians witness God's love by embracing all works of charity and justice. The Society collaborates with other people of good will in relieving need and addressing its causes, making no distinction in those served because, in them, Vincentians see the face of Christ.

CORE VALUES

We believe...

- In the dignity of the human person
- In the identification of Jesus with the poor
- In the preferential option for the poor
- That Jesus is the Evangelizer and Servant of the poor
- That growth in intimacy with Jesus is a lifelong process
- That poverty of spirit is the primary beatitude
- That our primary concern is charity and justice
- That prayer is essential: personal and communal
- In the virtue of humility: personal and corporate
- In the virtue of charity, inside and outside the Society
- In Divine Providence
- In Friendship
- In Community
- In Simplicity

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YOUNG VINCENTIAN

OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO



Young Vincentian Ministry Ideas

I. "Clowning Around" - Clown Ministry

II. "The Quiet Ones" - Mime Ministry

III. "KIDZ Stuff" - Puppet Ministry

- Acting Ministries require creative minds for costuming and planning successful act/skits/shows
- Making people laugh is fun, exciting and has personal rewards
- Acting Ministry can take to the road by performing at:
 - Children's Shelters & Foster Homes
 - Nursing Homes & Retirement Centers
 - Hospice Care & Assisted Living Facilities
 - Parish Festivals & Civic/Community Events
 - Hospital Wards (For - Cancer Patients, AIDS Patients, etc.)
 - Birthday Parties, Youth Gatherings, etc. as a Fund Raising Activity for your Young Vincentian Conference or for your District Council

IV. "The Mean, Green, Grass Eating Machine" - Lawn Service Ministry

V. "The Fixer Uppers" - Home Service Ministry

- Home and Lawn Service Ministries assist Senior Citizens and Handicapped persons with minor yard work and home repairs
- In many cases this type of work is simply more than the homeowner can handle and so this can be a great ministry for those who enjoy helping others and working outdoors at the same time
- This ministry may be free, to those who qualify **OR** there may be a fee assessed to cover costs (gas for lawnmowers, weed eater string, etc.) or to generate funds for other works of a Young Vincentian Conference

VI. "The Study Hall" - Mentoring / Tutoring Ministry

- Helping young people develop good study habits is rewarding
- Mentoring Ministry requires a strong commitment and dedication to children in their: school work, CCD studies & after-school programs
- Free tutoring programs for those they may be having a difficult time in a particular subject area is a service that many people cannot afford

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



YOUNG VINCENTIAN

OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO



VII. "Angels Among Us" - Elder Care Visitation Ministry

- Ministering to the aging and homebound is a very special ministry that is a true example of Christian caring and dignity in action.
- Visiting elders, shut-ins, etc. requires a listening ear, a compassionate heart and a little bit of your spare time
- Many people are lonely and desire something as simple as, someone to listen to them and their needs.

VIII. "Super Supper Service" Team - SVDP Dining Room Ministry

- Service to the homeless and hungry of the greater San Antonio community is the focus of this ministry.
- The Central Council SVDP Society operates their downtown dining room for those temporarily staying at the SAMM Shelter and for those who do not have a place to call home.
- Meals are served 365 days a year, three times a day for anyone who chooses to visit this facility and to take advantage of this free service.
- Dining Room / Service Ministry requires compassion and caring for those "the least of our brothers and sisters".

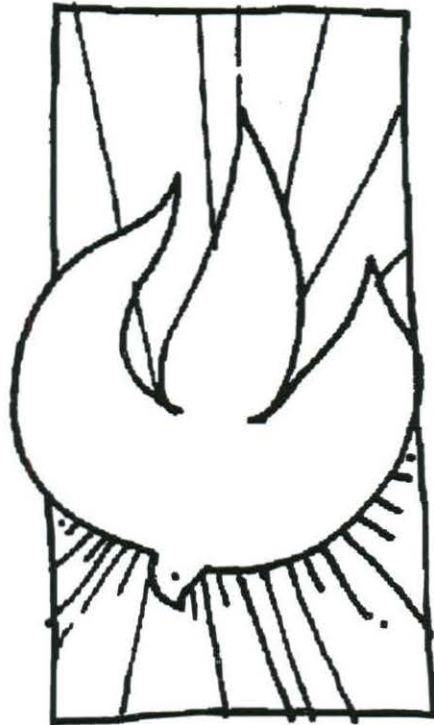
IX. "The Day Watchers" - Child Care Ministry

- Child Care Ministry is a welcome addition to most all parish communities - for parents that are involved in parish life.
- This service may be offered to parents who are active in a variety of parish organizations: the SVDP, Altar Society, Pastoral Council, etc.
- Donations may be accepted or fees may be assessed to cover costs or to fund other works of a Young Vincentian Conference

X. "The Living, Giving Example" - Food & Clothing Distribution Ministry

- Distribution Ministry is a Gospel based ministry that may be best carried out by working with the Adult Society of St. Vincent De Paul
- This service may include: "FEEDING THE HUNGRY, GIVING DRINK TO THE THIRSTY, CLOTHING THE NAKED AND VISITING THOSE THAT ARE IN PRISON . . ."
- Distribution ministry may include raising moneys to help in financial assistance cases. This ministry may also include home visitation.

VINCENTIAN REFLECTIONS



Liturgical Year: Cycle B

*First Quarter 2006
(January—February—March)*

Available on WWW.SVDPUSA.ORG (Spiritual Resources)





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
 - Words of Founders

OPENING PRAYER/QUIETENING 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

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.

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:

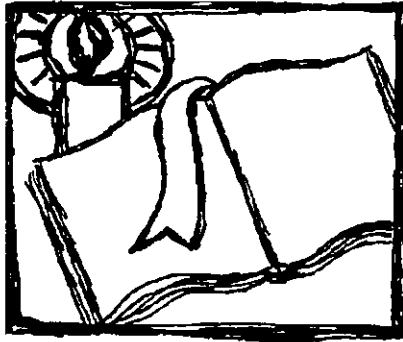


St. Vincent de Paul never wrote a book about his spiritual teachings. But we find the living voice of the saint in his letters and conferences in which he trained his followers for the mission of service to the poor.

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 every day 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 CHURCH YEAR-CYCLE B
2006**

JANUARY

January 1, 2006	Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God
January 6, 2006	Epiphany of the Lord
January 8, 2006	Baptism of the Lord
January 15, 2006	Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 22, 2006	Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 29, 2006	Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time

FEBRUARY

February 5, 2006	Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 7, 2006	Feast of Sister Rosalie Rendu, DC
February 12, 2006	Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 19, 2006	Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 26, 2006	Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

MARCH

March 1, 2006	Ash Wednesday
March 5, 2006	First Sunday of Lent
March 12, 2006	Second Sunday of Lent
March 15, 2006	Feast of St. Louise de Marillac
March 19, 2006	Third Sunday of Lent
March 26, 2006	Fourth Sunday of Lent

SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD
January 1, 2006

Gospel: (Luke 2:16-21)

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them. When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Reflection:

Often New Year's resolutions are about such things as losing weight, trying to stop smoking, cleaning up our language, etc. The readings for this festival honoring Mary might challenge us and our resolution-making in another direction. Perhaps this year we might resolve to take time each day to see and hear what God is revealing to us in the ordinary things of our lives: in the grateful smile of a child, in the gift of a compliment, in the unexpected call or visit of a friend. Also, we might resolve to spend more time, as Mary did, pondering and reflecting in our hearts God's mystery of salvation. We might set aside a special time each day to pray and then stick to it. (Living Liturgy, p.30)

Vincentian Meditation:

Mary is the ideal disciple, the model listener. She hears God's word and acts on it. In Luke's first two chapters Mary is evangelized by Gabriel, by Elizabeth, by the shepherds, by Simeon, by Anna, and by Jesus himself. All of them proclaim the good news of God's presence and sing in praise of God's goodness. Luke tells us that Mary kept all these things in her heart, turning them over and over again. Mary is indeed the "Listening Disciple", and this is the core of New Testament spirituality: all disciples, like Mary, are called to listen to the word of God attentively and act on it. Let us ask from Mary the grace to be a listener, "to listen to the word of God and act on it. (Maloney, Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul, p. 110-111)

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

What New Year's resolution do you want to make this year?

Closing Prayer:

Mary, you who are the Mother of God, we now pray:

-help us to see and hear what God is revealing in our lives.

Mary, wellspring of grace and peace,

-help us to take time to ponder and reflect.

Mary, you who are the "Listening Disciple",

-help us to listen to the word of God and act on it. Amen



THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

January 6, 2006

Gospel: (Matthew 2:1-12)

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ...Herod sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child..." After their audience with the King, they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Reflection:

What happens if we would lead our life as if the star stopped on us? The answer to this question is most startling when we consider the gospel as a whole: what it means and what happens is that the only way to light and life is to die to self so that darkness can be overcome. Life has its sorrows and sufferings. It also has its joys and celebrations: the mystery of salvation has been revealed in Jesus. And in us. (Living Liturgy, p.32)

Vincentian Meditation:

The Magi were searchers. They traveled by night, following a star, moving like pilgrims, struggling through deserts. That is so often the human way. Most of us grope in the darkness most of our lives. The wise men's search revealed to them how closely light and darkness, birth and death, joy and sorrow, belief and unbelief are interlocked. It is crucial for us to recognize ourselves as searchers, as did the Magi. Our life is a journey, in which we often travel by night. In fact, the Lord's star is visible for us only when we acknowledge the darkness. Life holds so many unanswered questions, so many unfulfilled desires. Our hearts find ultimate fulfillment only in God, whom we search for during the entire course of our lives. This is what the Magi proclaim to us very clearly. (Maloney, Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul, p. 81)

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

How has the Lord's star been visible to you in times of questioning and darkness?

Closing Prayer:

O Lord, bring light to the darkness as we search for you,
-**Let your light shine upon us.**
As the star guided the Magi,
-**May we be guided by your light and grace.**
May we, like the Magi, offer you our gifts each day,
-**As we discover you in the midst of our lives. Amen**



THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

January 8, 2006

Gospel: (Mark 1: 7-11)

This is what John the Baptist proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Reflection:

Baptism is not something that happened in the past, an event over and done with. None of us has "been baptized"; we are all **being** baptized. Baptism plunges us into an ongoing way of living whereby our lives are patterned after Christ's. John's baptism was one of repentance, "turning from, turning toward." At his baptism Jesus turned from his private life to his public life and mission. John baptized with water but Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit who is the source of power for his mission. With the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we become adopted sons and daughters of God, God's "beloved," too. By this indwelling, Jesus' mission is our own mission. Jesus' way of living is our own way of living. (Living Liturgy, p.36)

Vincentian Meditation:

Inspired by Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization, leads women and men to join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul. (Mission Statement, par.1:US Manual of the SVDP, p.1)

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

How has the mission of Jesus become our mission, Jesus' way of living our way of living?

Closing Prayer:

The heavens are opened and the Spirit of God comes to rest upon Jesus,
-**Spirit of God, rest upon us**
For all who have been baptized by water and the Holy Spirit,
-**may we join together to grow spiritually**
Christ, the Anointed, you began your public ministry after your baptism,
-**may we offer person-to-person service to the suffering**
Christ, the Beloved, you emptied yourself in love for the human family,
-**open our hearts to the poorest and most abandoned in the**



spirit of St. Vincent and Blessed Frederic.

Amen

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 15, 2006

Gospel: (John 1:35-42)

John was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi"-which means Teacher-"where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

Reflection:

We cannot truly be disciples of Christ unless we, too, wait to hear God's call and respond by transforming our lives, evidenced in the simple willingness to be obedient to God's will. This means more than keeping commandments, it means that our whole lives are directed to waiting and listening for God's self-revelation. Sometimes this revelation comes through others-perhaps in their cry for help. Sometimes the revelation comes through prayer in which we take some time to listen to God. However the revelation or call comes, if we respond we will be transformed. And Jesus will turn and ask us, "What are you looking for?"(Living Liturgy, p.42)

Vincentian Meditation:

As a reflection of the whole family of God, Members, who are known as Vincentians, are drawn from every ethnic and cultural background, age group, and economic level. Vincentians are united in an international society of charity by their spirit of poverty, humility and sharing, which is nourished by prayer and reflection, mutually supportive gatherings and adherence to a basic Rule. (Mission Statement, Par.2: US Manual of the SVDP, p.1)

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

"What were you looking for" when you joined the Society?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, you turned and asked the disciples, "What are you looking for?"

-We heard your call to be a disciple and we followed you.

We thank you for the call to be a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

-May our Conference be a reflection of the whole family of God.

You call us to be united in a spirit of poverty, humility and sharing,

-May we be nourished by prayer and reflection.

You call us to mutually supportive gatherings,

-May we share a deep sense of friendship.

You call us to adherence to our basic Rule,

-May we be faithful to the spirit of St. Vincent de



Paul and Blessed Frederic Ozanam.
Amen

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
January 22, 2006

Gospel: (Mark 1: 14-20)

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: *"This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."* As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, *"Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."* Then they abandoned their nets and followed him.

Reflection:

The transformation that is a necessary consequence of hearing Jesus' call to discipleship takes place through repentance. Jesus calls and the disciples abandon all to follow him. Jesus call was to simple fishermen while they were plying their trade. The starting point for Jesus' call to discipleship isn't with "holy" or "perfect" people; the starting point is with sinful humanity. The good news is that we *can repent* and believe. All we need to do is let go and let our daily lives be characterized by repentance and belief. Jesus gives us a continuing call. Our transformation doesn't come all at once but takes place throughout our lives. We only have to repent and believe in the gospel, for indeed the kingdom of God is at hand. (Living Liturgy, p.46)

Vincentian Meditation:

Organized locally Vincentians witness God's love by embracing all works of charity and justice. The Society collaborates with other people of good will in relieving need and addressing its causes, making no distinction in those served because, in them, **Vincentians see the face of Christ.** (Mission Statement, Par. 3: US Manual of the SVDP, p.1)

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

How have you seen the face of Christ in those you serve?

Closing Prayer:

For the grace to respond to the call of discipleship, quickly and decisively,

-Merciful God, hear us!

For the grace to witness God's love by embracing all works of charity and justice,

-Merciful God, hear us!

For the grace to collaborate with other people of good will in relieving need and addressing its causes,

-Merciful God, hear us!

For the grace to make no distinction in those we serve because, in them, Vincentians see the face of Christ.



-Merciful God, hear us!

Amen

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 29, 2006

Gospel: (Mark 1:21-28)

Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. The people were spellbound by his teaching because he taught with authority and not like the scribes. There appeared in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit that shrieked: "What do you want of us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" Jesus rebuked him sharply: "*Be quiet! Come out of the man!*" At that the unclean spirit convulsed the man violently and with a loud shriek came out of him. All who looked were amazed. They began to ask one another: "What does this mean? A completely new teaching in a spirit of authority! He gives orders to unclean spirits and they obey him!" From that point on his reputation spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Reflection:

It is a mystery how God could love mankind, disfigured by sin and infidelity. Likewise, it is a mystery of God that you, as members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, are able to love people who are disfigured by the effects of poverty and injustice, and who are often so unattractive in their poverty. As you work for and visit the poor, take heart from the thought that you are reflecting into this dark world the light and the love of God, our Father, who gave us his Son, the Light of the World. (McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.68)

Vincentian Meditation:

There are millions who watch pictures of poverty on our television screens and feel generous towards the poor. Their reaction, so often, goes no further than feeling. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, however, imitate God, our Father, in that they are not content to feel generous, but you show your generosity at a particular time and place. The Society share in St. Vincent's vision of the poor when he says: "I should not consider a poor peasant or a poor woman according to their exterior, nor according to what seems to be the extent of their intelligence; for often they do not seem to have either the face or the mind of reasonable persons, so gross and earthly are they. But turn the medal and you will see by the light of faith that the Son of God, who wished to be poor, is represented to us by these poor..."(McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.68-69)

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

How have you been able to "turn the medal" and find Jesus in the poor?

Closing Prayer:



For the grace to love those who are disfigured by poverty and injustice,
-Lord, give us the heart and spirit of Vincent and Frederic.

For the grace to witness God's love and light,

-Lord, give us the heart and spirit of Vincent and Frederic.

For the grace to "turn the medal" and to find Jesus in the poor,

-Lord, give us the heart and spirit of Vincent and Frederic.

Amen

FIFTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

February 5, 2006

Gospel: (Mark 1:29-39)

"Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, 'Everyone is looking for you.' He told them, '*Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also For this purpose I have come.*' So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee."

Reflection:

Jesus rose "very early before dawn" and went out "to a deserted place" to pray, to be in communion with God. He is able to turn his back on the adulation and keep his mission on a steady course because he does not lose sight of why he came—to preach the good news of salvation. He does not lose sight of his mission because he never loses sight of his Father. This is how we reorder ourselves—by praying, being in communion with God so that Jesus' mission is truly our own. (Living Liturgy, p.54)

Vincentian Meditation:

Vincentian ministry is a means of holiness. The ministry of a Vincentian to those and with those who stand in need is the powerful means that affects holiness of life for the Vincentian, because in attending to the needy and suffering, a Vincentian is ministering to Jesus Christ himself. Pope John Paul II used this quote about Vincent: "It was not love of men that led him to sanctity; rather, it was sanctity that made him truly and effectively charitable; it was not the poor that gave him to God, but, on the contrary, God who gave him to the poor." (Core Value "Our Call to Holiness: US Manual of the SSVDP, p.3,11)

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

Share some stories about the "holy" Vincentians you have known.

Closing Prayer:

With all those who await the promise of God with patience, let us pray:

-Lead us to holiness, O God.

Through your coming Christ Jesus, we see the face of God,

-Teach us to see you in the poor.

Through your coming Christ Jesus, we know the way to fullness of life,
-Thank you for the "holy" Vincentians we have known.

Amen



**BE HOLY IN BODY
AND SPIRIT.**

1 COR 7:34

FEAST OF SISTER ROSALIE RENDU, DC
February 7, 2006

Gospel: (John 15: 9-17)

Jesus said to his disciples: *“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Live on in my love. You will live in my love if you keep my commandments, even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and live in his love. All this I tell you that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”*

Reflection:

On April 23, 1833, Frederic Ozanam’s twentieth birthday, six students met in the office of their mentor Emmanuael Bailly, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was born. They resolved to respond to Christ’s call by dedicating themselves to the poor after the example of St. Vincent de Paul. They asked Sister Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity, for the names and addresses of several families in need. Sr. Rosalie was known as “The Mother of the Poor” in the Mouffetard Quarter of Paris. She taught Frederic much about the poor and how to minister to them with love and respect. The first members of the Society were determined not only to bring bread, but, above all, friendship to the poor. (US Manual of the SVDP, p.179)

Vincentian Meditation:

“Always remember, that if our childhood has been one of constant want, perhaps, we too, would have given away to envy and hatred, as I must admit have many of the poor we serve. Be kind and love, for love is your first gift to the poor. They will appreciate your kindness and your love more than all else you can bring to them. If you wish to be loved, you must love, and if you have nothing to give, give yourself.” (Sister Rosalie Rendu, DC)

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

How do Vincentians live the spirit of Frederic and Sr. Rosalie, by bringing love and friendship to the poor?

Closing Prayer:

Holy God, we thank you for the gift to us of Sr. Rosalie Rendu,
-Grant us the grace to be kind and loving.
For the poor we serve,



-Grant us the grace to serve in friendship.
For the Society of St. Vincent de Paul,
**-Grant us the grace to live the spirit of Frederic
and Sr. Rosalie Rendu.**
Amen

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 12, 2006

Gospel: (Mark 1: 40-45)

A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I will do it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. He said to him, "See that you tell no one anything..." But the man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.

Reflection:

Jesus was "moved with pity", and so he chose to heal the leper. And in spite of Jesus' command to "tell no one anything," Jesus knew that the leper would not be able to keep the good news of his healing quiet. And, yes, the leper does "publicize the whole matter." Indeed, the leper proclaims the gospel. Perhaps Jesus healed the leper because he recognized one who would be a disciple and spread the good news. Jesus wished that the leper be made clean, he had the power to heal. But more important, he had the mercy. And Jesus was announced to all by this leper now become a disciple. Jesus' commission to us is to tell everyone the good news-do we tell no one? (Living Liturgy, p.58)

Vincentian Meditation:

It's not for everyone. It's not for anyone. But being a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul-being a Vincentian-is for some. It is a special calling by God. A member of the Society puts his or her faith into action. The Vincentian vocation is the intimate desire to participate personally and directly in helping the needy by person-to-person contact and by the gift of one's heart and friendship, doing so within the communal spirit of a Conference of lay persons each inspired by the same vocation. The Vincentian vocation may be expressed in many ways and with different shades of meaning. Practical translation of faith into action, meditating upon it and adapting it to our changing world is the very life of every Vincentian, the very life of the Society. (US Manual of the SVDP, p.4)

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

How can we spread the "good news" of being a Vincentian and invite others to join?

Closing Prayer:



For the grace to invite others to join the Society of St. Vincent de Paul,
-**Merciful God, hear us!**
Please give us the grace to put our faith into action, to meditate upon it,
-**and to adapt it to our changing world. Amen**

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 19, 2006

Gospel: (Mark 2: 1-12)

When Jesus returned to Capernaum...they came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof and they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "*Child, your sins are forgiven.*" Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he said, "*Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, pick up your mat and walk'?* But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins,-he said to the paralytic, "*I say to you, rise, pick up your mat and go home.*" He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

Reflection:

We hear of families for whom forgiveness is not possible. Family members haven't spoken to each other for years. Alienation has become such a part of the family history that it seems almost impossible to overcome. We humans seem to have a hard time forgiving. Not so with God. God is merciful and forgives us our sins. In the Our Father we pray that God forgive us as we forgive others. More important than "measuring" God's offer of forgiveness by our own, this line of the prayer reminds us that forgiving is a divine act of mercy. When we forgive others we are acting in and by God's power. (Living Liturgy, p.58)

Vincentian Meditation:

Frank cordiality characterizes Vincentians. That cordiality is a natural result of the friendship that united the founders of the Society and has remained traditional in the Councils and Conferences. Members manifest mutual respect and affection. Christian friendship, of which Blessed Frederic was an avid advocate, animates all meetings of Vincentian brothers and sisters. Wherever in the world a Vincentian attends a gathering of the Society, he or she finds a welcoming and family-like atmosphere. (US Manual of the SVDP, p.7)

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

In our Conference do we live our in "Spirit of Cordiality", or are we in the need of forgiveness?



Closing Prayer:

Through Christ, the merciful Servant,
-make us one in mind and heart in a "Spirit of Cordiality".
Through Christ, the Healer,
-grant us the grace of forgiveness.
Through Christ, the Redeemer,
-may we always manifest mutual respect, affection and
Christian friendship. Amen

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 26, 2006

Gospel: (Mark 2:18-22)

The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were accustomed to fast. People came to him and objected, "Why do the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered them, "*Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the day will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.*"

Reflection:

The objection about Jesus' disciples not fasting could be resolved rather quickly if the only criteria for judgment about appropriateness were the law. Fasting would be an absolute because the Jewish law prescribed strict fasting. Instead Jesus challenges this absoluteness and suggests a different criterion for appropriateness when he uses the analogy of the bridegroom. Weddings are clearly a time of feasting not fasting. The cause of our feasting is nothing we bring or do but the profound offer of divine intimacy that God makes through the bridegroom Jesus. This offer of intimacy is both the manifestation of Jesus' divinity and our own share in it. And this surely is "good news."
(Living Liturgy, p.66)

Vincentian Meditation:

Jesus is the driving force in St. Vincent de Paul's life. He calls Jesus the center of his life and ministry. Vincent had a distinctive image of Jesus. For Vincent, Jesus is the one sent by the Father to preach the "good news" to the poor. Vincentians are not the center of things but the ones who center things on the Lord Jesus Christ. For followers of St. Vincent de Paul, spirituality involves a growing relationship with Jesus. Vincentians strive to grow in intimacy with their Lord and Savior. This means coming to know what he knows and coming to love as he loves. (US Manual of the SVDP, p.15)

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

How do we preach the "good news" to the poor today?

Closing Prayer:



**Share in the
annual's blessings**

May we preach the "good news" to the poor,
-Give us the grace to show them that Jesus loves them.
May we grow in intimacy with Jesus our Lord and Savior,
-Give us the grace to be instruments in God's hands.
May we find Jesus at the center of our life and ministry,
-Give us the grace to be true Vincentians.
Amen

ASH WEDNESDAY
March 1, 2006

Gospel: (Mark 6:1-6)

Jesus said to his disciples: *"Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you."*

Reflection:

The gospel leads us to see penance as having right relationships with others, God, and self; and it specifies what acts help us to "return to God with our whole heart." It doesn't begin with ourselves; it begins with a reminder about giving alms and charity, to others. Without this turning outward toward others, any inward turning to ourselves through fasting runs the risk of being self-centered and self-satisfied (already our reward). Reach out to others is a means of reminding ourselves that any self-emptying is for the sake of the other, that being in right relationship with ourselves is conditioned by our willingness to reach out to the other. Charity-centering on others- turns us toward the right relationship with self. Losing ourselves enables us to find ourselves. (Living Liturgy, p.72)

Vincentian Meditation:

There is a corporate humility which both St. Vincent and Blessed Frederic fostered. Humility helps inspire a spirit of selflessness, dissipate hurt feelings and touchiness, teaches us not to seek accolades and not to accept offices as honors but as responsibilities of a servant leader. Vincentians refer to God as the originator of all good that is done. They acknowledge that God alone is the author of all good. They are not. Vincentians also acknowledge that God uses them as viable instruments. God uses their talents, skills, good will and commitment. The Society shuns collective pride, exclusiveness and jealousy. It is ready to collaborate with others when a need arises after the example of St. Vincent and Bl. Frederic. (Core Value "Humility": US Manual of the SVDP, p.6-7)

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

How do we live our Core Value of Humility in our service to the poor, in our almsgiving?

Closing Prayer:

May this season of Lent open our hearts to be servants of the poor,

-Give us a spirit of selflessness and humility

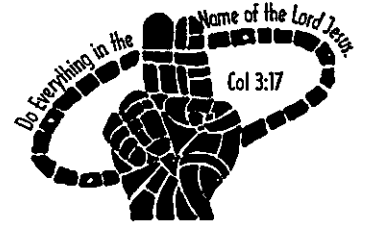
May we "return to God with our whole heart".

-May we be instruments in God's hands.

May we acknowledge that God alone is the author of all good,

-As we work in collaboration with others when a need

arises after the example of St. Vincent and Bl. Frederic. Amen



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

March 5, 2006

Gospel: (Mark 1:12-15)

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: *"This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

Reflection:

Jesus went out into the desert to be alone. He is on the brink of inaugurating his public ministry. Something new and important is about to happen. He does the natural thing: goes off alone to think things through and confront the demons that would dissuade him from his mission. Then he goes to Galilee to proclaim the gospel of God. This defines in a nutshell what Lent is all about: we, too, spend extra time by ourselves during Lent so that we can come to the Easter celebration better able to proclaim the gospel. (Living Liturgy, p.74)

Vincentian Meditation:

The spirit of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is supernatural because Jesus' mission was supernatural and because the Church's mission is supernatural. All activities of the Society converge on extending the Reign of God, whether these activities relate to the spiritual growth and formation of the individual Vincentian through spiritual means or to the corporate body of the Society as such, or to the acts of mercy and justice performed in the name of Jesus Christ. (US Manual of the SVDP, p.6)

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

How can we better take the time to pray both alone and at our Conference meetings so that we can truly proclaim the gospel of God?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, model of prayer,

-lead us into silence and prayer.



Jesus, model of compassion,
-give us compassionate hearts.
Jesus, model of meekness and mildness,
-make us meek and humble of heart.
Jesus, model of proclaiming God's kingdom,
-transform us so that we can extend your kingdom.

Amen

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT March 12, 2006

Gospel: (Mark 9:2-10)

Jesus took Peter, James and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. He was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white...Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus...Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son, Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them. As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

Reflection:

The dying and rising of the paschal mystery is found everywhere. In this gospel we first see Jesus transfigured glory and then the allusion to Jesus' dying. One thing Scripture bears out for us: whenever there is evidence of dying, there is equal evidence of rising. In our own lives we must begin to look for both the dying and the rising. As we see the paschal mystery unfolding more and more in our own lives it becomes easier to let go of ourselves and let God lead us. We can let go, knowing that we can look up and see "only Jesus." (Living Liturgy, p. 78)

Vincentian Meditation:

Blessed Frederic Ozanam was a man of prayer. He understood it as his life-line and foundation for who he was and what he did. Prayer nourished his life and ministry. Frederic believed in the teaching of St. Vincent: "Give me a man of prayer, and he will be able to do all things; he can say with the Apostle Paul, 'I can do all things in him who strengthens me.'" For Vincentians, prayer flows from and leads to action. Separated from ministry, prayer can turn escapist and creative illusions of holiness. Separated from prayer, ministry can become superficial and compulsive. (Manual of SVDP, p. 30-31)

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

In what ways do you see in your Conference how “prayer flows from and leads to action”?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, may we become persons of prayer and action,
-give us courage to walk in the footsteps of Frederic.
You inspired Frederic with a great love for the poor,
-grant us the grace to serve with the same spirit of love.
You inspired Frederic with a heart deeply rooted in prayer,
-teach how to “let go and let God lead us.”
Amen



FEAST OF ST. LOUISE DE MARILLAC
March 15, 2006

Gospel: (Matthew 25: 31-46)

The King will say to those on his right hand, “Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me...I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.”

Reflection:

Louise de Marillac, (1591-1660), married Antoine LeGras and they had a son whom they named Michel, but at the age of 34 she became a widow. Vincent de Paul became her spiritual director and under his guidance she began caring for the poor and visiting the Confraternities of Charity. Vincent and Louise co-founded the Company of the Daughters of Charity, and dedicated them to serve the poor with humility, simplicity and charity. In 1960, Pope John XXIII proclaimed Louise the patron saint of all Christian social workers.

Vincentian Meditation:

“Above all, be very gentle and courteous toward your poor. You know that they are our masters and that we must love them tenderly and respect them deeply. It is not enough for these maxims to be in our minds; we must bear witness to them by our gentle and charitable care.”(St. Louise de Marillac: Gibson and Kneaves, Praying with Louise, p. 72)

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

In what ways do you see your Conference serving the poor today in the spirit of Louise: in gentleness... loving them tenderly and respecting them deeply?

Closing Prayer:

Compassionate Christ, Louise ministered to the needs of your people,
-give us courage to walk in her footsteps.
You inspired Louise with a great love for the poor and the abandoned,
-grant us the grace to serve with the same spirit of love
You inspired Louise with compassion for the destitute and sorrowful,
-may we love them tenderly and respect them deeply.
May the Vincentian Family continue to grow and multiply throughout the world,
-so that the poor will know God's love in a tangible way.
Amen



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT March 19, 2006

Gospel: (John 2:13-25)

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area...saying, *"Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace."* His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, *"Zeal for your house will consume me."* At this the Jews answered and said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up"...He was speaking of the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Reflection:

The Jews see signs and know that the divine has visited us in the blessings of our lives; This story gives us a glimpse of the human struggle over Jesus and the gospel: we, like but we often lose sight of our goal and fail to see and believe the signs. The simple call of the gospel is to see the signs in our midst. Jesus showed us the signs so clearly; he was crucified and then raised up. Like Jesus, the zeal that ought to consume us, too, is a single-mindedness about suffering and dying to ourselves so that we, too, can live. Just as God raised Jesus from the dead, so will we be raised up. (Living Liturgy, p.84)

Vincentian Meditation:

"It is our vocation...to set people's hearts ablaze, to do what the Son of God did, who came to light a fire on the earth in order to set it aflame with his love. It is not enough for me to love God if my neighbor does not love him. I must love my neighbor as the image of God and the object of his love...I must act in such a way that people love their Creator and each other in mutual charity for the love of God who loved them so much that he delivered up his own Son to death for them." (St. Vincent de Paul: US Manual of the SVDP, p.5)

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

Does zeal consume us, so that we can set people's hearts ablaze with God's love?

Closing Prayer:

When we look into the wondering eyes of a child,

-Help us to set their hearts ablaze.

When we reach out to the homeless,

-Help us to set their hearts ablaze.

When we walk with those caught in poverty,

-Help us to set their hearts ablaze.

When we listen to the fading voice of the aged,

-Help us to set their hearts ablaze.

Amen



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
March 26, 2006

Gospel: (John 3:14-21)

Jesus said to Nicodemus: *"Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have life."* For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God...Whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

Reflection:

Jesus is the One raised up and by whom we are saved, we only must gaze on him and believe in him. The light of Christ enables us to see; seeing is believing. But we can only come to the light and believe if we "live in the truth" which is expressed in good works. Light and faith are gifts, and we demonstrate that we accept these gifts when we do good works. God demonstrates great love for us by sending the Son to be lifted up on the Cross and then raising him to eternal life. We demonstrate our great love for God by doing good works. Our good works: reaching out to others, doing our daily tasks for our family with love and care, working professionally and honestly, acting justly and charitably, then our way of being is "lifted up." This is how we live in the truth, so that our works may be clearly seen as done in God. (Living Liturgy, p.90)

Vincentian Meditation:

Pope John Paul II has said to the laity: " There cannot be two parallel lives in your existence as lay men and women: on the one hand, the so-called 'spiritual' life, with its values and demands; and on the other, the so-called 'secular' life, that is, life in a family, at work, social responsibilities of public life and in culture. The branch, engrafted to the vine which is Christ, bears its fruit in every sphere of existence and activity. Every

activity, every situation, every precise responsibility...are the occasions ordained by Providence for a 'continuous exercise of faith, hope and charity.' (US Manual of the SVDP, p.12)

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

How have you found that every activity-at home, at work and in the Society, are occasions ordained by Providence, so that we live the truth and that our works may be clearly seen as done in God?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, you urge us to take up our cross, and so we pray:

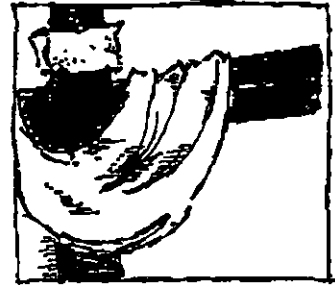
-Jesus, we turn to you.

For the grace to love life and faith into our families,

-Jesus, we turn to you.

For the grace to surrender to Divine Providence,

-Jesus, we turn to you. Amen



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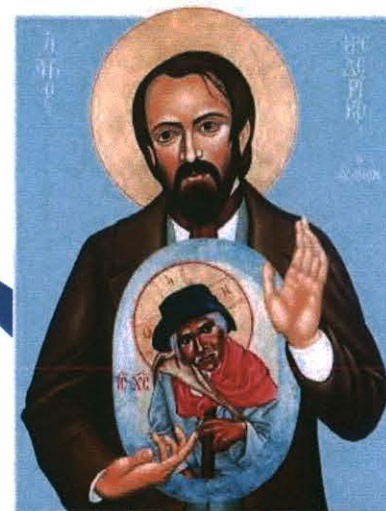
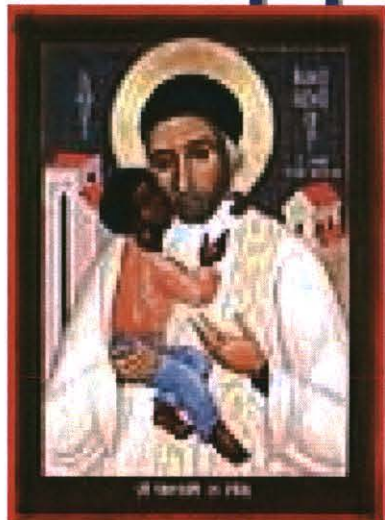
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Happiness Is . . . Service



Through the Eyes of St. Vincent De Paul
and Blessed Frederic Ozanam

Presenter:

Timothy M. Kelly

Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

San Antonio Archdiocesan Council

Society of St. Vincent De Paul



Agenda for Vincentian Workshop



- Introduction
- Opening Prayer & Spiritual Reflection
- Ice Breaker
- Mission Statement
- History: St. Vincent de Paul
- Key Player in the Vincentian Family
- History: Blessed Frederic Ozanam



Agenda for the Ozanam School



- History of the Society in the US
- Statistics of the Society
- Basic Principles of the Rule
- Young Vincentian Conferences = Service
- Prayer for Youth and Young Adults
- Closing Comments & Questions



Mission Statement



- Inspired by Gospel Values, the Society of St. Vincent dePaul, a Catholic lay organization, leads men and women to join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to the needy and suffering in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent dePaul.



Mission Statement



- As a reflection of the whole family of God, members who are known as Vincentians are drawn from every ethnic and cultural background, age group, and economic level. Vincentians are united in an international society of charity by their spirit of poverty, humility and sharing, which is nourished by prayer and reflection, mutually supportive gatherings and adherence to a basic Rule.



Mission Statement



- Organized locally, Vincentians witness God's love by embracing all works of charity and justice. The Society collaborates with other people of good will in relieving need and addressing its causes, making no distinction in those served, because in them Vincentians see the face of Christ.



Key Players in the Vincentian Family



(taken from www.svdpusa.org)

St. Vincent de Paul

(1581-1660)

The founder of the Congregation of the Mission, Daughters of Charity, Confraternities of Charity and Ladies of Charity. A man of deep faith, keen intellect and enormous creativity he has become known as the "The Apostle of Charity" and "Father of the Poor." His contributions to the training of priests and organizing parish missions and other services for the poor shaped our Church's role in the modern world.



Key Players in the Vincentian Family



St. Louise de Marillac

(1591 – 1660)

A contemporary of St. Vincent, Louise was inspired and directed by Vincent's spiritual leadership. She was Vincent's collaborator in founding the Daughters of Charity and organizing hospitals for the sick & poor, asylums for the orphaned and workshops for the unemployed. She championed literacy for the uneducated, and establishing standards for local charities. Louise was a wife, mother, teacher, nurse, social worker and religious foundress.



History of the Life of St. Vincent de Paul



- **Born in France April 24, 1581.**
- **Vincent grew up in a poor peasant family, and was encouraged into the priesthood by his father for reasons of financial security.**
- **Vincent was ordained a priest on September 1600.**
- **1608 – Vincent moved to Paris, and his work was focusing more on God, rather than on ambition and wealth.**
- **1617 – Vincent begins using the pulpit as a means of requesting help for poor parishioners.**



History of the Life of St. Vincent de Paul



- **1619 – Vincent experiences a “two-fold conversion” Making the poor important in his life & seeing that his priesthood was a personal relationship w/Jesus.**
- **April 1625 – The Congregation of the Mission was founded, and followed the tenets of poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability.**
- **1635 – Mother houses were established throughout France, other European countries, and Africa.**
- **1635 – Vincent became the spiritual director for the Ladies of Charity (a lay organization of women serving the poor, founded by Louise de Marillac).**



History of the Life of St. Vincent de Paul



- **1635 – Louise starts the Daughters of Charity (religious community of women who served the poor in the city, and visited the sick in their homes, cared for prisoners, and ministered to those in hospitals).**
- **June 1643 – Vincent began to serve on the Queen’s Council of Ecclesiastical Affairs and brought the needs of the poor to the notice of the government of France.**
- **September 27, 1660 – Vincent died at the age of 80.**
- **June 10, 1737 - He was canonized a saint.**



Key Players in the Vincentian Family



Blessed Frederic Ozanam

(1813 – 1853)

The founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Frederic was a husband and father, professor and servant of the poor. He founded the Society of St. Vincent de Paul on his 20th birthday. At the time, he was a law student at the Sorbonne in Paris. The Society was formed when Frederic was challenged by some of his peers. Taking action on a challenge . . .
“You Catholics, what do you do for the poor?”



Key Players in the Vincentian Family



Sister Rosalie Rendu, D.C.

A Daughter of Charity who is considered, one of the most important mentors to Frederic and to the fledgling Society of St. Vincent de Paul. She taught the first members of the Society, the art of helping the poor and the sick, first to their physical needs and, only then to their spiritual needs.

*Sister Rosalie will be beatified in Rome on:
Sunday, November 9, 2003*



History of the Life of Frederic Ozanam



- **April 23, 1813 – Frederic Ozanam was born in Milan, Italy to French parents.**
- **1829 – Frederic experienced a “crisis of doubt” about his faith.**
- **1831 – He entered the Sorbonne University in Paris, France to study law.**
- **April 1833 – Frederic established the Conference of Charity with 5 other young men at the Sorbonne University.**



History of the Life of Frederic Ozanam



- **1835 – The Conference of Charity officially became the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.**
- **1836 – He was awarded the Doctor of Laws degree.**
- **1845 – Frederic married Amelie Soulacroix.**
- **1842 – He represented the Church in negotiations with the government.**
- **1844 – He became the Chair of Foreign Languages at the Sorbonne.**
- **Frederic and Amelie gave birth to their only child, Marie.**



History of the Life of Frederic Ozanam



- **1845 – The Society is recognized by Pope Gregory XVI. At this time, the first conference in the United States was formed in St. Louis, Missouri.**
- **1847-1853 – Frederic wrote and publicized many foreign language journals, was publisher and editor of the leading Parisian Catholic Newspaper and oversaw the growing Society of St. Vincent De Paul.**
- **1852 – He resigned from his position at the Sorbonne because of failing health.**
- **Sept. 8, 1853 – Frederic Ozanam died from kidney failure at the age of 40 in Marseilles, France.**

History of the Society in the United States



- **November 20, 1845 – The first US conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is held in St. Louis, Missouri at the “Old Cathedral.”**
- **1872 – The first Texas conference is formed in Houston.**
- **1872 – Conferences were formed in San Antonio.**
- **1880’s – Women are allowed to join the Society.**

History of the Society in the United States



- **1880's – Women are allowed to join the Society.**
- **1989 – The first young adult conference was established at St. John's University, New York**
- **Aug. 22, 1997 – Coinciding with World Youth Day activities; Frederic Ozanam is declared "Blessed" – a step towards sainthood and canonization.**



Statistics of the Society



- **Approximately 7500 Youth and Young Adults are active in the Society today.**
- **There are around 48,000 Conferences in over 130 countries.**
- **There are over 600,000 members in the Society worldwide.**



Basic Principles of the Rule

- **The Society seeks in a spirit of justice and charity and by person-to-person involvement of its members, to help those who are suffering.**
- **The Society constantly strives to renew and adapt itself to the changing conditions of the world.**
- **The Society is open to all who wish to live their faith by loving and serving their neighbor.**
- **No work of charity is foreign to the Society.**



Basic Principles of the Rule

- **Members are united in the same spirit of poverty and sharing.**
- **Vincentians are spiritual in nature, and seek to build relationships with those they serve to bear witness to the love of Christ.**
- **Vincentians are at the service of the poor and do not judge.**
- **Vincentians gather in groups called “conferences”, which meet regularly and frequently.**



Basic Principles of the Rule

- **The mark of the Society's unity is the “aggregation” of the conference and “institution” of the council, pronounced by the Council General.**
- **Meetings are held in a spirit of friendship, simplicity, and Christian joy.**
- **Confidentiality is strictly observed among members regarding those persons served.**
- **This charitable service to those in need is part of the life of the Church.**



Projects and Ideas for Young Adult Conferences

- SOUP KITCHEN MINISTRY
- SPIRITUAL RETREAT TEAMS
- TUTORING & MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS
- HOLIDAY BASKET DELIVERY
- NURSING HOME/SENIOR CENTER VISITS
- COLLECTION FOR FOOD/CLOTHING DRIVES
- CLOWN MINISTRY AND/OR MIME MINISTRY
- PUPPET MINISTRY AND/OR ACTING TEAM
- WORKING WITH ILLITERATE INDIVIDUALS



Projects and Ideas for Young Adult Conferences

- **PREPARING FOOD BOXES FOR THE HOMELESS**
- **DELIVERING GROCERIES AND SUPPLIES TO THE ELDERLY AND HOMEBOUND**
- **MINISTRY TO SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS ON CAMPUS, IN COMMUNITY AND IN SURROUNDING AREAS**
- **TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY**
- **FUNDRAISING MINISTRY**
- **SOCK, BABY CLOTHING, SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVES**



Projects and Ideas for Young Adult Conferences

- **TAKING PETS TO NURSING HOMES**
- **PARTICIPATE IN A "Christmas in April" PROJECT TO REFURBISH A HOME**
- **PARTICIPATE IN HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**
- **HOLD A BAKE SALE, PANCAKE BREAKFAST, SPAGHETTI DINNER & DANCE, ETC. AS A FUNDRAISER FOR A YOUTH/YOUNG ADULT OR TRADITIONAL ADULT CONFERENCE**
- **MEALS ON WHEELS PARTICIPATION**



Prayer for Youth and Young Adults

**We offer to you Loving God,
the gifts and needs of youth.**

**Bless them with your guiding grace as they face
the challenges and opportunities in their lives.
Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your
love, that they may know they are valued and
valuable beings.**

**Send your spirit of hope to their lives, that they
may believe in themselves and know they are
needed in the world.**



Prayer for Youth and Young Adults

Grace them with the gift of joy that they may celebrate life through laughter and tears alike.

Guide us, as we may continue to grow in our appreciation of the many gifts of young people, in the ministry opportunities we offer to them, in the journey of faith we walk with them, in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship in the world.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.



CHECKLIST FOR CAPSTONE PROJECT

Four Step Process: Please complete the following steps in the order given

ARTICULATION / DESCRIPTION

- 1) Articulate your theology of Church and Ministry
 - a) 3 – 5 page paper
 - b) A brief description (2 paragraphs maximum) of your project

PLANNING / PROPOSAL

- 2) The Planning Process
 - a) Work with a Focus Group to complete the planning
 - b) Submit the Proposal (follow guidelines in package)

IMPLEMENTATION

- 3) Implement the project as planned
 - a) Keep a log of progress along the way
 - Maybe in the form of lesson plans and worksheets

EVALUATION

- 4) Evaluation Procedure
 - a) Submit the Evaluation Form (follow guidelines in package)
 - b) Submit a three-page paper described in the “Evaluation Format” provided

The Finished Paper: should have the following components

- 1) Blank Page
- 2) Title Page
- 3) Theology of Church & Ministry
- 4) Brief Description of Setting
- 5) Proposal
- 6) Evaluation
- 7) Brief summary of the Project

Phase II of the Collaborative Effort

▪ Plan – Present – Evaluate

- Evaluation (as a Statistical Analysis):
 - (1) Writers Evaluation
 - (2) Focus Group member Evaluation
 - (3) Brief Project Summary – “Theology of Church / Ministry” reviewed