

Spiritual Reflections for the month of October 2023

Please choose a reading and questions for reflection.

Reflection: The Grace of God in Our Work

From the New Testament (1 Cor 3:5):

The apostle Paul writes, “. . . [W]e are [not] . . . competent of ourselves to claim anything coming from us; our competence is from God. . . . “

From the *Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul* (i.e., recordings of his spiritual counsel to female religious in Paris), #31, 18 August 1647:

“ ‘Sister, what do you think should be done in order to make a good Holy Communion?’

The Sister replied that she thought it is necessary to ask God for the grace to do so. ‘That is quite enough, my daughter, and that is how we should begin. For who can hope to do a good deed if God does not give him the grace to do it? . . . No man living, my daughters, can do so of himself, and again it is St. Paul who says so.’”¹

Questions for Reflection:

1. What does the grace of God mean to you?
2. Have there been occasions (maybe a home visitation, or maybe elsewhere), when either you have consciously asked for God’s grace, or you have not? Have you sensed the impact of this decision?

The SSVP Home Visitation Prayer:

O God, someone in this house needs me. I don’t know how I will be received, but I go as Your ambassador, however unworthy and weak I am myself. Give me Your power to help in the best way possible, offering what is needed, giving the proper advice, saying the right thing. I am Your servant and the servant of anyone who needs me. I am weak – You can make me strong: I am tongue-tied – You can supply my words; I lack courage – You can reinforce me; I am perplexed – You can give the answer; I am useless – You can make me useful. Above all, make me recognize You in these people, and seeing You let me love them as I love You. They need Your love, they need my love, let’s love them together. I’ll do my best: be with me in what is Your work, and mine. Kind, gentle, understanding Saint Vincent de Paul, inspire me in all my dealings with the needy whom you knew, understood and loved so much. Amen.

- Alex Damm, Vincentian St. Jerome Conference, Peel North PC

¹ *The Conferences of St. Paul to the Sisters of Charity*, trans. Joseph Leonard, vol. 1 (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1938), 299. Notes in the critical edition offer the reference to 1 Cor 3:5.

Reflection: Prayer of St. Thomas More:

O Lord, give us a mind that is humble, quiet, peaceable, patient and charitable, and a taste of your Holy Spirit in all our thoughts, words and deeds.

O Lord, give us a lively faith, a firm hope, a fervent charity, a love of You.

Take from us all lukewarmness in meditation and all dullness in prayer.

Give us fervor and delight in thinking of You, your grace and your tender compassion toward us.

Give us, good Lord, the grace to work for the things we pray for.
Amen

Questions for Reflection:

St. Thomas More's prayer was an attempt to inspire people to become active members of their faith, to become involved in its spirit on a daily basis, not just passively.

1. What do we, as Vincentians do in our inter-action with Neighbours in Need that helps to give us "a lively faith, a firm hope and a fervent charity"
2. How do our Special Works give Vincentians an opportunity to grow in the qualities that St. Thomas More describes?

- Valerie Chavossy, Vincentian, Blessed Sacrament Conference, Toronto North PC