

Spiritual Reflections for the month of February 2024

Please choose a reading and questions for reflection.

Tongue Tied

From the writings of St. Vincent de Paul (a dialogue with Daughters of Charity, 1645):

St. Vincent: “How do you think our Lord used to Act? He was not satisfied with curing the sick; he also taught them what they should do when they were well. Imitate him.”

Sister: “But . . . ought we who are so ignorant teach anything?”

St. Vincent: “Oh my daughters, have no doubt about it. Do not be afraid to ask God to tell you what you should say to people. He will never fail to inspire you. . . . [Y]ou have words in your mouths that show your hearts are filled with the love of God, and that you wish to share them with his dear poor. . . .”¹

Question:

What is your experience engaging with or addressing Neighbours in Need? Do you feel confident in conversation (e.g., listening; offering advice; asking questions; nudging people towards answers)? Or are there times where you feel tongue tied? Why might this be?

Let us pray...

(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 recognise 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.

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

¹ From “Continuation of the Conference on the Observance of Rule (January 22, 1645),” in *St. Vincent de Paul and Mental Prayer: A Selection of Letters and Addresses*, ed. and trans. Joseph Leonard (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1925), 124.

Seeking Quietude

From the New Testament and writings of St. Vincent de Paul:

- Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness. . . . (Luke 4:1)
- Writing in 1652 to nuns in the war-ravaged French city of Valpuiseaux, St. Vincent de Paul remarked: “I come . . . Sisters, to beg you . . . to take great pains to build up your exhausted strength; do not be in any hurry to get back to work; see that you are quite recovered before doing so, Just now you are, as it were, in a desert, because I regard Val de Puisseau as such; but remember, Our Lord Himself honoured solitude because, as you know, it was His will to spend some time in the desert. Now, it is always a blessing for us to find ourselves in those states through which Our Dear Lord . . . has passed.”²

Question:

What role does solitude or quietude play in your spiritual life?

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

² From *The Letters of St. Vincent de Paul*, ed. and trans. Joseph Leonard, with an introduction by Henri Bremond (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1937), 282.