

Spiritual Reflections for the month of January 2025

Please choose a reflection and mediation

Reflection: Marking Year of Hope

And not only that, but we boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given us. (Romans 5.3-5)

On the evening of 24 December 2024, His Holiness, Pope Francis inaugurated the 2025 Jubilee of Hope - a historic event taking place every 25 years.

Pope Francis exhorted us: "With haste, let us set out to behold the Lord who is born for us, our hearts joyful and attentive, ready to meet him and then to bring hope to the way we live our daily lives. For Christian hope is not a 'happy ending' which we passively await, but rather, a promise, the Lord's promise, to be welcomed here and now in our world of suffering and sighs."

He also reminded us of the importance of marking this year-long of prayer, witness and service: "This is the season of hope in which we are invited to rediscover the joy of meeting the Lord. The Jubilee calls us to spiritual renewal and commits us to the transformation of our world, so that this year may truly become a time of jubilation."

As members of the faith community, we believe we live in God and God lives in us and we have a reason to have hope. We only have to kindle the virtue of hope that is within us all.

Not matter of faith alone, our journey to holiness is to be accompanied by good works. As such, we are called to respond to God's saving love by actively engaging in charity and good works. As Vincentians, we are challenged to faithfully live our Society's mission of charity and justice.

Hence, how do we in our mission help our Neighbours in Need experience hope when they confront and ride through poverty, marginalization and other many challenges? ***What gives them hope?***

Words of comfort when they are in grief over loss, a sympathetic ear, our undivided attention, phone call to follow-through their needs, reassurance of their dignity, tough conversations, a gentle nudge, touching and coming into their lives, feeling of being connected to their family's situation, sometimes persistent efforts to reach out, encouragement for them to stay focused, they being listened to and understood, shared joy and concerns. Oftentimes, these are small gestures of kindness animating optimism and courage, and helping them find their way to better life and fulfill their goals. They, as our fellow creations, have the virtue of hope within them, too.

God speaks in their pain and anguish, and offer us a window to be participants and witnesses to His hope-giving joy.

Reflection Questions

1. How do you stay hopeful in very difficult situations? What aspects of your future are you most hopeful for?
2. How do you bring hope to those people who may be driven to despair and despondency? What does it take for you to offer hope to people you barely know?

Let us pray... Lord, help us to become true and faithful hope-givers to our neighbours-in-need. Help us clearly see ways of lifting our neighbours-in-need out of the depth of messiness, walking alongside to get them to a better place. May we as Vincentians bond more in our commitment to serve those most in need and help kindle the virtue of hope that is within them.

- Vincentian Bro. Jose I. Torres, Peel North Particular Council President

Reflection: To be Loved

Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, 'Lord, who is that is going to betray you?' When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, 'Lord, what about him?' Jesus said to him, 'If it is my will that he remains until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!' (John 21.20-22)

Father Roshan Loy D'Souza, CSC in his May 18, 2024 Daily TV Mass homily related the Gospel reading to an aspect of our humanity:

Our need and desire to be loved is paramount in qualities human beings have in common. Our need to be special is at the core of who we are. Without love, we are afraid and lost...we are truly alone and often frightened. We also need to know we are the beloved of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. However, at times in our lives, we all have Peter's experience. Were you ever jealous of someone who seemed to be loved and accepted by everyone? Have you ever longed to have the gifts and talent of a sibling or a friend? As normal these feelings are, we need to learn how to manage them or else they will begin to manage us.

Our biggest problem happens when we act as if we know it all, hence able to manipulate people and things. We have but one mission in life - to be a saint, to be holy, to be more like our Lord. We will never able to swallow the depth, the height, the breadth, the width of God's creation with God. If we work to find the true meaning of anything, then we must start with the Lord who thinks and lives inside and outside of us.

Reflection Questions

1. How do you foster meaningful relationship with those around you? Have you set plans for this new year to work on improving your relationships?
2. How does God's love shape virtues you choose to practice?

Let us pray...

O Lord, show us Your mercy for the insecurities that dampen our love to You, and help us focus on making full and creative use the unique gifts You have bestowed. May You grant us to fully trust and bear witness to Your love and friendship, and selflessly bring those to the needy and suffering, and to those dear to us.

- Vincentian Bro. Jose I. Torres, Peel North Particular Council President