

November 2026

Training
Building Your Donor Base
Wednesday 11/4, 5 – 7:30 PM
St. Mary, Walnut Creek

Training
Ozanam Orientation
Saturday 11/7, 9 AM – 3 PM
St. Jerome, El Cerrito

Meeting
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday 11/17, 9:30–11:30 AM

Meeting
Advent Spiritual Retreat
Saturday 11/21
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
St. Isidore, Danville

Event
Thanksgiving
Thursday 11/26, 11 AM – 12:45 PM
Family Resource Center, Pittsburg

Training
Home Visit Workshop
Saturday 12/5, 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM,
St. Jerome, El Cerrito

*For the complete calendar visit the Members section of www.svdp-cc.org

Vincentian **Wisdom**
Quotes · Charism



Pat Walsh Corner

Who is My Neighbor?

In Luke 10:25 – 37, Luke recounts a wonderful story from Jesus' ministry. Jesus was challenged by a "scholar of the law". According to Luke, the man stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus was always being challenged by those who sought to discredit him or trap him in his teaching. This "scholar of the law" was not seeking enlightenment, rather he stood up to test him. Jesus does not directly answer him. Instead, Jesus asks a question in reply. "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"

The man replied, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Jesus replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

But the "scholar of the law" just cannot let it go. Luke writes, but because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (Note that Luke tells us the "scholar of the law" *wished to justify himself*. This man was not interested in learning anything new.)

Jesus then masterfully tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. If you have a couple of minutes, go back and re-read this section of Luke's gospel.

(Continued on next page)

The gist of the story is that a man was a victim of a robbery and beaten and left half-dead. As he lay on the ground, he was passed by a couple of "holy" men, who crossed to the other side of the road and ignored him. Then, a Samaritan passed him and was moved by compassion to help him. The Samaritans were enemies of the Jews, and Jesus used the parable to reframe the notion of "neighbor".

Jesus asks, "Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" The "scholar of the law" answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (Note that Jesus did not give up on the "scholar of the law", rather he continued to give him guidance. We are blessed to have a Lord and Savior who does not give up on us, even when we try to justify ourselves rather than follow his Word.)

As Vincentians, we are called to help our neighbors in need. In The Rule 1.3 – 1.4, we are instructed to provide "any form of personal help to anyone in need. The Society serves those in need regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender, or political opinions." St. Vincent de Paul instructs us, "We must love our neighbor as being made in the image of God and as an object of His love." Further, he said, "We must move from affective love to effective love, which consists in the practice of works of charity."

As we reflect upon our service, here are some questions we can ask to inform our work:

To what extent do we:

- See our neighbors?
- Know our neighbors?
- Ensure that we are serving those who are marginalized in our society?
- Serve neighbors regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender, or political opinions?
- Provide assistance that is appropriate for neighbors whose backgrounds are different than our own?
- Reach out to those who are marginalized by society, rather than waiting for them to call us?
- Serve our individual and collective Samaritans?

In Joseph A. Fitzmyer's book, The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX), he writes:

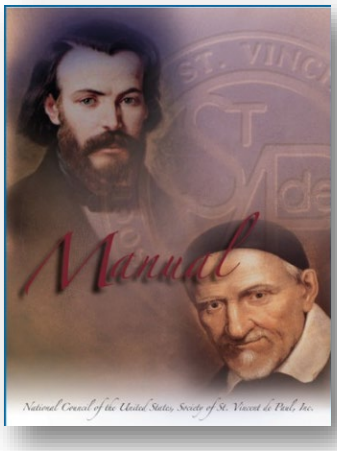
"By reflecting on the worlds behind and in front of Scripture and guided by the Church and God's grace we are better able to discern God's revelation to us today. It is not enough to discern and reflect on this revelation, however. Such discernment and reflection help us to hear God's call in Scripture, but we must take the final step and carry out that call in our own lives and communities."

Thank you for all you do to carry out that call in your own lives and communities!

In Vincentian Service,

Pat

Manual 3.2 Vincentian Spirituality- The Mystery of the Incarnation



Central to an understanding of Vincentian spirituality is the Mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery and grace that God became human. Every Sunday, we profess our faith in the words of the Nicene creed: …for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary and became man.". In God's unfathomable love for humankind, the Word of God becomes flesh: divinity and humanity meet in a wondrous reality.

St. Vincent de Paul promoted the Mystery of the Incarnation among his followers. He said: "Honor the Incarnation, a mystery beyond words." Vincent taught: "Since Christ willed to be born poor… he made himself the servant of the poor and shared their poverty. He went so far as to say that he would consider every deed which either helps or harms the poor as done for or against himself."

While St. Vincent de Paul sees the historical Jesus in the persons of the poor and suffering, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam sees the risen, scarred Jesus in them. He based his incarnational spirituality on the 20th Chapter of St. John's Gospel:

> Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." (John 20:26-29)

Frédéric wrote: "Both men and the poor we see with eyes of the flesh; they are there and we can put finger and hand in their wounds, and scars of the crown of thorns are visible on their foreheads; and at this point incredulity no longer has place and we should fall at their feet and say with the Apostle, "Tu est Dominus et Deus meus.' You are our masters, and we will be your servants." (Letter #137, November 13, 1836).

The Mystery of the Incarnation, so loved by St. Vincent de Paul and Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, is a doctrine not just to be believed but to be put into practice by the corporal and spiritual acts of mercy. Vincentians who minister to the least of their brothers and sisters find in them the person of Jesus, the incarnated Jesus. And the encounter with Jesus, this interaction, transforms us. Vincentians grow spiritually through their person-to-person service. We do what we do for the person of Jesus, who is, in truth, the flesh-and-blood poor person before us. Every human being is a word of God become flesh.

Vincentians expect God in the unexpected: in unexpected people, times, ways, and places. God wears a human face. When we see Jesus in others and try to be Jesus for others, the mystery of the Incarnation comes alive for us.

Feast Day of St. Catherine Labouré and of the Miraculous Medal

November 27 and 28 mark two important celebrations in the Vincentian family: the Feast of the Miraculous Medal and the Feast of St. Catherine Labouré. These celebrations remind us of the Blessed Virgin Mary's love, the power of prayer, and the importance of trusting in God's grace. A website you can visit to learn more about the story behind the Miraculous Medal is Famvin.

This is the info that was found. November 27th is the feast day of the Miraculous Medal and it was this day in the year 1830 that the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Catherine Laboure in the chapel. She described seeing what appeared to be two living paintings, one fading into the other, in which the Blessed Virgin Mary stood on a half-globe, her feet crushing the head of a serpent. In this first image, the Virgin held a small golden globe topped with a cross that she lifted up toward heaven. Catherine then heard, “This globe represents the entire world and every person.”

The second image was of beautiful rays of light streamed from the Blessed Virgin’s open hands, which were covered with jeweled rings. At that same moment, St. Catherine heard a voice say, “These rays are a symbol of the graces that I pour out on those who ask them of me**.”** Then, an oval formed around the apparition, and Catherine saw this invocation emblazoned in gold letters shaped in a semi-circle: “O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.” She then heard the words, “Have a medal made in this image. For those who wear it with confidence, there will be abundant graces.” Finally, the image turned, and Catherine saw the reverse side of the medal: the letter “M” surmounted with a little cross; two hearts below the cross, one crowned with thorns and the other pierced with a sword; and twelve stars bordering the medal.

The Feast of St. Catherine Laboure is celebrated on Nov 28th. She was born May 2, 1806 in Fain-les-Moutiers, France. When she was nine years old, her mother died and she looked to the Blessed Virgin Mary to be her mother. She entered the Daughters of Charity on April 21, 1830. It was only a few months later that the Virgin Mary appeared to her and asked her to have a medal struck in her honor. Because of the many miracles that resulted from devotion to it, it became known as the “Miraculous Medal.” Catherine Laboure was canonized in 1947.



Sharing Thanksgiving: A Meal of Hope and Gratitude



As we approach Thanksgiving, we are reminded of the many blessings God has bestowed upon us and the importance of sharing those blessings with others. Through acts of kindness, generosity, and service, we can share God's love with our neighbors and bring hope to those who may be facing difficult times.

In the spirit of gratitude and fellowship, The District Council with the help of Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa will be hosting its annual Thanksgiving meal at the dining hall of the family resource center for our neighbors in need. This gathering is more than a meal; it is an opportunity to extend compassion, share the joy of the season, and remind our neighbors that they are valued and cared for.



We invite our Vincentian community to be part of this special event by contributing food and other needed donations or volunteering your time on the day of the event. Whether you help prepare and serve the meal, welcome guests, or support the event in another way, your generosity helps make this gathering possible.

Every contribution, big or small, helps us share God's love and make this Thanksgiving a little brighter for our neighbors.

Please follow the link or scan the QR code found below to learn how you can support the event through donations or volunteering. Thank you for helping us bring the spirit of Thanksgiving to life through our Vincentian mission of serving with love and compassion.

https://bit.ly/SVdPThanks2026





Join us as we review the background of Advent and allow ourselves some silent time during this season.
What is this season asking of us?

Come pray and reflect with Mary and the women of Scripture as we prepare our hearts to welcome Christ this Advent.
Let their yes, be your own.

Sr. Paule Freeburg, D.C., our West Region Spiritual Advisor, will gently guide us through reflections in preparation for Advent.

Please Join us! Nov 21, 2026
8:30 a.m. (Mass) – 12:30 p.m.
St. Isidore, 440 La Gonda Wy, Danville

https://bit.ly/AdventRetreatNov21

Participants must Register by Nov. 16, 2026

Walking Together in Hope: Friends of the Poor Walk

This year, three of our St. Vincent de Paul conferences came together to host the Friends of the Poor Walk, demonstrating the power of community and our shared commitment to serving those in need.

The Friends of the Poor Walk is more than a fundraising event. It is an opportunity to raise awareness of poverty, strengthen our bonds as a Vincentian family, and put our faith into action. Every step taken reflects our commitment to walking alongside our neighbors with compassion, dignity, and hope.

We are grateful to the conferences, volunteers, and supporters who helped make this year's walks possible. Their generosity and dedication remind us that when we come together in service, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need our support.

Thank you to everyone who participated and helped carry forward the Vincentian mission! Enjoy photos from the walks shown below.













Thought for the Month

What would you say to someone who is considering becoming a Vincentian?

This is an exciting question to answer because there is so much to discover about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul! From our rich history and the inspiring examples of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, Bl. Frédéric Ozanam and Bl. Rosalie Rendu to the meaningful friendships we build along the way, being a Vincentian offers a truly unique journey of faith and service.

Who comes to mind are those that attend an Ozanam orientation for the first time. It's exciting to see and talk with them about what brought them to the Society in the first place, how their experience has been so far, and what inspired them to want to learn more.

What makes this journey especially beautiful is that we do not walk it alone. We grow in holiness alongside our fellow Vincentians, encouraging one another, learning from one another, and deepening our relationship with Christ through our shared mission.

Becoming a Vincentian is more than an opportunity to serve; it is an invitation to be transformed by the very act of serving. It is a chance to discover the joy of living out our faith, to find purpose in our vocation, and to become part of a spiritual family committed to bringing hope and compassion to those in need.

Thank you for taking the time to read this month's Vincentian newsletter. We hope the stories, reflections, and updates have inspired you and strengthened your connection to our Vincentian family and mission.

We are always looking for ways to make this newsletter meaningful and engaging for our readers, and we would love to hear from you! Please feel free to reach out at **m.ceballos@svdp-cc.org**. Your contributions help us celebrate the work of our conferences, encourage one another in our Vincentian vocation, and strengthen the bonds of our Vincentian community.

Thank you for all that you do to live out our mission of serving Christ through our neighbors in need. May God continue to bless you and your service!