

MORNING MEDITATION

Saint Vincent de Paul

It was the simple and the humble who could understand God's self-revelation.

Job 3:1-3, 11-17, 20-23

Job, the faithful, virtuous and holy man broke down and cursed his day and began questioning the reason for his birth and wished that he had died at his birth. After expressing all his frustration, he concluded that the path of life is hidden from men, but known to God.

Trust in the Lord and His plan and purpose for you.

Psalm 88

**O Lord, my God, by day I cry out;
at night I clamor in your presence.
Let my prayer come before you;
incline your ear to my call for help.**

Luke 9:51-56

This excerpt gives us the response Jesus made to those who did not welcome him and to those who wished to follow him. It also tells about how he challenged them to remain resolute and faithful to their mission and surrender themselves in service. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem through Samaritan territory. The Samaritans did not welcome him. James and John wanted to do something about it. They asked him if they could call down fire from heaven and destroy them. It was another way of saying, "Shall we beat their brains out?" Jesus said: Let them be. Let's go on to fulfill our mission. Jesus journeyed into hostile territory without fear and without security measures and invited others to follow him without turning back.

Cultivate values of the Kingdom, nonviolent attitude, love of enemies, love for the "reign" of God above earthly matters, tenacity in fulfilling chosen mission...

Saint of the day, September 27 - St. Vincent de Paul and 16 other saints are remembered this day

Vincent de Paul was born on April 24, 1581 in the village of Pouy, in the Kingdom of France, to peasant farmers. At 15, his father sent him to a seminary, managing to pay for it by selling the family's oxen. For two years, Vincent received his education at a college in Dax, France, adjoining a monastery of the Friars Minor where he and others resided. In 1597, he began his studies in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Toulouse. He was ordained a priest on September 23, 1600, at the age of nineteen. This

was against the regulations established by the Council of Trent which required a minimum of 24 years of age for ordination, so when he was appointed parish priest in Tilh, the appointment was appealed in the Court of Rome. Rather than respond to a lawsuit in which he would probably not have prevailed, he resigned from the position and continued his studies. On October 12, 1604, he received his Bachelor of Theology from the University of Toulouse. Later he received a Licentiate in Canon Law from the University of Paris.

In 1605, while on a ship traveling from Marseilles to Narbone, he was captured, brought to Tunis and sold as a slave. Two years later he and his master managed to escape, and both returned to France. St. Vincent went to Avignon and later to Rome to continue his studies. While there he became a chaplain to the Count of Goigny and was placed in charge of distributing money to the deserving poor. He became pastor of a small parish in Clichy for a short period of time, while also serving as a tutor and spiritual director.

From that point forward he spent his life preaching missions to and providing relief to the poor. This work became his passion. He later extended his concern and ministry to convicts. The need to evangelize and assist these souls was so great that he founded the Ladies of Charity, a lay institute of woman, to help, as well as a religious institute of priests - the Congregation of Priests of the Mission, commonly referred to now as the Vincentians.

This was at a time when there were not many priests in France and what priests there were, were neither well-formed nor faithful to their way of life. Vincent helped reform the clergy and the manner in which they were instructed and prepared for the priesthood. He did this first through the presentation of retreats and later by helping develop seminaries. At one point his community was directing 53 seminaries. His retreats, open to priests and laymen, were so well attended that it is said he infused a "Christian spirit among more than 20,000 persons in his last 23 years."

The Vincentians remain with us today with nearly 4,000 members in 86 countries. In addition to his order of Vincentian priests, St. Vincent cofounded the Daughters of Charity along with St. Louise de Marillac. There are more than 18,000 Daughters today serving the needs of the poor in 94 countries. He was eighty years old when he died in Paris on September 27, 1660. He was canonized on June 16, 1737 by Pope Clement. He had "become the symbol of the successful reform of the French Church". St. Vincent is sometimes referred to as "The Apostle of Charity" and "The Father of the Poor".

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