

Greetings Fellow Vincentians,

"We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Land on which we stand. We acknowledge the Wiradjuri people and pay our respects to Elders past and present."

During the last week I received the following missive from Odette Dotter. Odette is in the Griffith conference and is the twinning officer for the Wagga Central Conference:

"Australia Post advised me mail had ceased to India from May 2020. Any mail sent will be "return to sender". This also applies to Philippines. Airmail and shipping mail.

If you don't have an email address for your Indian twin it will mean no correspondence. You may be able to get an email address of the Indian Central Council for your Twin if you contact Ms Jude Blacklock, our overseas administrator at

overseasadmin@svdp.org.au

Many of us may not be aware of the Twinning program and may not view it as important. The Rule informs us: "The direct link between two Conferences or Councils, consisting of sharing prayer, a profound friendship and material resources, is called twinning. This activity contributes to world peace and to understanding and cultural exchange among peoples."

It is part of our mission to assist others in need and links us to the International St Vincent de Paul Society. It is an important part of what we do as a Society. The Projects are minor projects more often than not. They are assistance at a local level in a remote village or a disadvantaged towns. The cost of these projects can range from \$700 to \$2,000 and the types of projects could be setting up a tailoring school in a village for young girls where they can acquire a skill to make them employable or set up a small enterprise to assist the family income.

The assistance can be national or international. As the Rule says it is one of the activities "most cherished by the Society". We are called to look outside the limits of our own conference or diocese and recognise the acute poverty in a great number of countries outside of our own, as well as the extreme poverty in parts of our own nation.

So, when Odette writes and tells us of the difficulty in contacting our partners in India we can see how international events can impact on the contact we have with other Vincentians across the globe. I would like all conferences to have a renewed look at what they do in regards to twinning as this is an essential mission of the Society.

The Society has had a bit of coverage in the media lately. Our hope is to raise a positive awareness of the society and what we do. St Sebastian's conference – the youth Conference in Wagga – has had TV and newspaper coverage lately. Again if I go to the Rule: "Young members keep the Society young." And further: "The senior members assume their responsibility of assisting them along their path of training, respecting their personal choices and their aspirations of Vincentian service."

Importantly St Sebastian's can exist, and should not be allowed to exist in a vacuum but must become part of our Vincentian family in Wagga. We may be separate conferences but we remain one family in Christ.

Spiritual Reflection

From Peter Gormly, Mission, Spirituality and Pastoral Care

I am sure many of you would feel so much has happened in the past two weeks. The uncertainty with many new cases of coronavirus in Victoria, to the extent that the NSW border is now closed.

Many people were starting to feel that life was getting back to the way life was before COVID 19. The Victorian people have now being informed, that school children will not be returning to school, and families will need to provide home schooling again to manage Coronavirus.

This weekend is the sixteenth Sunday in ordinary time.

We have the story of the three parables, weeds in the field, the mustard seed, and yeast in the flour. In the parable of the seeds in the field, Jesus spoke how a field was sowed with a good wheat seed, and then while everyone was asleep darnel(evil) was sowed among the wheat.

When we think of the darnel that was growing among the wheat Jesus said, we cannot pull out the darnel without pulling out the wheat at the same time. Jesus is saying that in our life both the good and the evil are intertwined. The challenge is for each of us to make decisions in each moment of the day, so that the good seed gets our focus, not the evil.

We know the sower is the son of man, the field is the world and the good seeds are the people for the kingdom of God. Darnel is the evil and the enemy who sows the darnel. The harvest is the end of the world. (Creative ministry 2008)

Maybe at times, we are the sower of the good wheat, and at other times the evil one. We may show ourselves through judgment, attitude, values, and behaviour. We all know that Jesus often behaved in ways that was different to the expectation of his culture. Jesus often thought, and behaved in what would have being seen as radical, during his time. It is so easy to do what we have always done, as we feel comfortable. When we do change our thinking and or behaviour this can be uncomfortable for us and others around us.

I know when I was young I often thought about God in a very traditional way, and followed God out of obligation, not based on my faith. It was about what was expected of me. I have experienced life in a broad context; my work and life experiences have in many ways changed me. During my life I have evaluated my values, behaviour and thinking, both in my early twenties and some have continued to change and see Jesus, in a more contemporary and radical way.

A Question to Ponder

I would like you to think of a time, where your attitude, values or behaviour have changed your traditional ways of doing or thinking about things.

PASTORAL CARE

Please remember, Pastoral Care is always available for you, to talk about whatever is important for you. I am here to listen, without any judgement. Please contact Peter, at any time on 0478 368 169.

I hope this week will fill you with hope, love and prosperity.

Peter Gormly

Mission, Spirituality and Pastoral Care

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