

Greetings Fellow Vincentians,

Apologies for the lateness of the newsletter but I have had a shoulder reconstruction (a date of birth issue the surgeon assured me) and am slowly regaining mobility. I would like to start by revisiting my previous missive and recall the Social Justice aspect of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

This is particularly relevant as earlier this week His Holiness, Pope Francis signed his third Encyclical at the beautiful Cathedral, in Assisi, Italy. It is titled "*Fratelli Tutti*" – *On Fraternity and Social Friendship*. I feel that there is a call here for all of us. Our Pontiff in writing about St Francis of Assisi says "Francis did not wage a war of words aimed at imposing doctrines; he simply spread the love of God. He understood that "God is love and those who abide in love abide in God" (*1 Jn 4:16*)."

This is our mission. How could we more reflect this idea when St Vincent de Paul calls on us to see "the face of Christ in the poor".

This week is Anti-poverty Week. I have highlighted a link for you to look at and start to understand the issues involved. In these days of Covid we know that our services will come under greater demand. As always I am impressed and thankful for the dedication and commitment of so many of you.

<https://mailchi.mp/b3a5bf6de508/support-anti-poverty-week-next-week?e=79cd245ebc>

The sleepout is close and a means for all of us to get involved. If you don't feel that you can get involved then perhaps you might consider supporting those who are sleeping out. All the money raised does not leave your local area so it is a great way to support your local Vinnies.

If you click on this site <https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/joinnow>

Then scroll down to your region – Wagga, Murrumbidgee and Albury. Find someone you like and make a contribution.

Social Justice Committee

I am about, as I have mentioned before, to start a Social Justice Committee as part of the Central Council. This is an important and essential function of our Society and one that we have not really involved ourselves in. The Social Justice Committee at all levels considers vital issues related to those we support including climate change, refugees, mental health, cost of living and reconciliation.

As a Central Council we need to be involved in these discussions and have our voice heard. Please let me know if you are interested and we will get the committee started. We are starting to lose our voice at a State level as we are not involving ourselves in vital areas like social justice and spirituality.

Spiritual Reflection:

I found this on the site www.svdpusa.org

® Contemplation: Life is not simply time that passes

In his newest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis sounds some very Vincentian themes, especially in his exegesis in Chapter Two on the Parable of the Good Samaritan. He challenges us to be the neighbour, to help build a “civilization of love.”

To love, he explains, is more than a “series of benevolent acts.” Instead, we are called to love the other fully for who they are, which leads us to seek the best for their lives. (This is the very definition in our Rule for the Vincentian Virtue of zeal!)

The Samaritan did not have the modern option of “slacktivism,” wherein one publicizes the plight of the poor through social media but can’t be bothered to touch them. He had to make a choice – in the middle of his busy day, in the middle of a trip, in the middle of the road. He chose to give his possessions, and more importantly his time, to a fellow human - a stranger - not because he was deserving, but because he was in pain.

Like the Samaritan, Vincentians offer a ministry of presence; we don’t merely stand with the poor, we sit with them, we listen to them, we pray with them, and we help them in the best way that we can.

Blessed Frederic challenged himself and his friends, saying “weak Samaritans, worldly and people of little faith that we are, let us dare nonetheless to approach this great sick one. Perhaps he will not be frightened of us. Let us try to probe his wounds and pour in oil, soothing his ear with words of consolation and peace...”

“By his actions,” Pope Francis says, “the Good Samaritan showed that ‘the existence of each and every individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for interactions.’”

As Christ said after telling the parable, “Go and do likewise.”

Contemplate How can I use more time for interactions of love and kindness?