

Greetings Fellow Vincentians,

Last week I spoke to you about starting a Social Justice Committee across the Wagga Wagga diocese. Let me be clear, it is essential that we start a Social Justice Committee here. Why? I hear you ask. Because in my mind it is with our accent on wellbeing and social conditions of those we serve that we sow our love for them. Without this accent on social justice across the whole Society we are but “a noisy gong or a clashing cymbal.” (1Cor, 13:1)

So, I am asking all members to give consideration to how they can involve themselves in issues around social justice: issues like improving Newstart, Mental Health issues, Housing, Cost of living, climate change and Drug Law reform to mention a few. Then I will be writing to all conferences and encouraging them to send a delegate to our newly formed Social Justice committee. It is only by the voice of many of us that we can influence social change. Think about how YOU could make a difference in our Society.

The Sleepout

For all those who slept out, our deeply felt thanks. At 70 I am feeling that perhaps I have grown too old. But I suppose time will tell. Congratulations to Trish Parkinson, who at last count had raised over \$4,500. An unbelievable effort. The Murrumbidgee Regional group exceeded their target of \$10,000 due to the efforts of a number of big contributors of over \$1,000. It is not often that we are joined by the clergy and so a special thanks to Fr Grace from Griffith who was one of the \$1,000 plus group.

If your conscience is troubling you and you want to contribute it is still open to you all to do so. Go to <https://fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/joinnow> and donate to someone in your local area.

Vale Nathalie Prentice (1972-2020)

It is with great sadness that I report to you the sudden passing of Nathalie Prentice. In her role of Regional Manager, Housing and Homelessness Services South/West Natalie managed a diverse range of services including: Edel Quinn Wagga Wagga, Quarmby House and Nagle Centre Albury, Vinnies Services Deniliquin, Broken Hill Meals Centre, Coniston (Wollongong) Accommodation and Case Management Team, John Purcell House Nowra as well as facilities in Young and beyond.

But it is not this side of Nathalie that has most endeared her to all those who have come in contact with her. She was a woman of great love and empathy as well as enormous energy. She had time for everyone. Nathalie, along with a strong contingent from Edel Quinn slept out at CSU last winter to raise money for homeless people. She was in the process of organizing the sleepouts in Broken Hill and Deniliquin before the Good Lord took her to himself. She believed in what she did and worked tirelessly to deliver a quality service to the most needy in our community.

Besides being responsible for seven separate Vinnies services Nathalie always had time for the individual cases as they came to her. Nathalie will be greatly missed by all those who came in contact with her. Please remember her in your prayers.

May the souls of our departed members and the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Spiritual Reflection:

I have once again borrowed from our American Vincentians for my Spiritual Reflection. This story is close to my heart as it speaks of the job that we do in our communities. A hundred and twenty years ago daily communion was not usual as it is in our days.

Gospel: (Matthew 11: 25-30)

Jesus exclaimed: *“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. ...Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves.*

Reflection:

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was born in 1901 in Italy, and his mother taught him verses from the Gospels. Pier Giorgio was deeply moved by them, and developed an exceptional relationship with God. Indeed God reveals his love to “little ones.”

From the time he was twelve until his death at twenty-four Pier Giorgio received Holy Communion daily. At 17, he joined the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and committed himself to serving the poor. Pier Giorgio said: “Jesus visits me every morning in Holy Communion. I repay him with my poor means, visiting the poor.”

When asked how he could stand the bad odors and dirt of the poor, he answered: “Don’t forget that even if the house you visit is very dirty, there you may find Jesus.” The last months of his life were filled with suffering, he contracted poliomyelitis and became paralyzed.

Pier Giorgio died in 1925, a young man who achieved a great deal in the name of our God. During the rise of Mussolini Pier Giorgio was a strong and active opponent to fascism and suffered for his beliefs.

When he died hundreds came to view his body and there was a line of unknown faces who loved this good and generous young man that always had a good smile for everyone. Pier Giorgio was beatified by Pope John Paul II on May 20, 1990. On this occasion John Paul II said that Pier Giorgio was “able to witness to Christ with singular effectiveness in this century of ours.”

God bless

Peter Burgess