



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE US SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Contemplation: A Virtuous Inspiration

Last week, my very good friend James Davis died, finally at rest following years of illness and other trials. Through them all, his great good cheer continued to bless all who were privileged to know him, many of whom had no idea the suffering he was enduring. James was a faithful Catholic, a dedicated Vincentian, Spiritual Advisor for his own Conference and for the South Central Region, a husband, a father, a grandfather, a friend to many, and a very good man.

James leaves a rich legacy that we in the Society can continue to treasure. He was the primary author of [Serving in Hope Module VII](#), which focuses on our beloved home visit. He also co-authored our home visit journal, [The Spirituality of the Home Visit](#). I could recount for many pages the contributions he made to so many familiar resources as a longtime member of the National Formation Committee, but all of those things only scratch the surface of his life and his legacy. As a regular presenter at Regional Meetings and the National Assembly, James was known to many Vincentians across the country. It is not enough to say that he was a gifted speaker, because he did so much more than convey information, or entertain, or teach – although he did all those things, too. When James led a workshop, he touched people's hearts. I truly believe that nearly everybody who attended one of his talks left the room feeling...loved.

I was blessed to meet James about ten years ago but came to know him better a few years later when we were asked to present a half-day workshop at the South Central Regional Meeting. Although we bounced some PowerPoint slides back and forth by email, we literally did not prepare or rehearse at all. Somehow, it didn't seem necessary. During that workshop, we completed each other's sentences like an old married couple, traded jokes like a vaudeville act, and even we felt as if we'd been working together for years. Afterwards a few people told us we were like "The Jim and Tim Show" and the name stuck. A few years later we even got t-shirts made with a list of cities we had "played" on the back. We both loved being a team.

All friendships begin with an encounter. Our encounter was "on stage" but it could have been anywhere. James was a friend at first sight, a "soul friend", and I will miss him, but I know that he still prays for me and for all his fellow Vincentians. As Blessed Frédéric reminds us, *"our beloved dead do not forget us any more than we forget them, that they think of us, love us, pray for us, that perhaps they walk with us as invisible guardians. And when we are greeted by some good thought, some generous feeling, some virtuous inspiration whose origins are unknown to us, let us think that it came to us from them, that it is a gift by which they wish to call our memories back to them, an inner voice by which they speak to us and seek to help us reach them where they have gone."* [\[113 bis, To La Perrière, 1836\]](#)

Rest in peace, my friend, and pray for me.

Contemplate

Do I "love with the awareness of a future farewell, but also with the knowledge of a reunion that follows"?

Recommended Reading

[Serving in Hope Module VII](#)