



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

Contemplation: Happy Travelers

Our Vincentian formation, [we are taught](#), is a lifelong process of becoming. Like all of God's people, our lives are not simply a series of events, but a journey – a spiritual journey towards perfection in union with our Creator. For us, this journey follows the Vincentian pathway, our special way of living our faith, which we call Vincentian Spirituality. If we seek to imitate the lives of our saints and founders, then, it is helpful to study their lives as examples of spiritual journeys that found their destination in holiness. When we do this, we will see that for Vincent, Louise, Frédéric, and Rosalie alike, several things distinguish their journeys, their spirituality, in ways that we can imitate, perhaps most especially two things that link their actions to their spiritual growth.

First, for each of them, the practice, the actual, physical work of charity, was foremost a spiritual exercise. As Saint Vincent once explained, *“loving those who are poor is to love Him in that way; serving poor persons well is to serve Him well”*. [\[CCD XIIIb:434\]](#) “Seeing the face of Christ” is not a mere slogan for Vincentians, it is our calling by Jesus, [who promised us we would find Him in the poor](#), and our spirituality, inherited from Saint Vincent de Paul. On our shared and individual journey then, we must, as Frédéric declared in founding the Society, *“go to the poor.”* [\[Baunard, 65\]](#)

Second, each of these role models of Vincentian holiness took the time to reflect on their encounters with the neighbor and to share with their communities the insights they'd gained. As Blessed Frédéric reminds us, *“the blessing of the poor is the blessing of God.”* [\[Baunard, 96\]](#) What a shame it would be if we were to spend so much time in the presence of Jesus Christ and not take the time to pray, to meditate, and to share with each other how He spoke to us, what He said, and how He transformed us! As Saint Louise put it, we should *“reflect that Our Lord wills that, after we have worked for our neighbor, we must turn our attention to preparing ourselves for heaven which is our blessed home.”* [\[SWLM, L.346\]](#)

Blessed Rosalie believed that reflection needn't be done only after the work, but that *“you can make it right here, without leaving your work. Reflect that your souls should be as white as these soapsuds and as light so that they can mount toward God”*. [\[Sullivan, 116\]](#) It was Rosalie who taught this practice of Vincentian spirituality to the first members of the Society, gathering them together in her parlor after each visit to reflect on it together in the hope of better discerning their growth, and God's will.

Our Conferences, our communities of faith, are at the center of our spiritual journeys. They are communities of *“faith and love, prayer and action.”* [\[Rule, Part III, St. 5\]](#) They are communities in which we do the work of charity, grow in faith together, and share with each other our own spiritual journeys through spiritual reflections in which *“members are always invited to comment as a means of sharing their faith”*. [\[Rule, Part III, St. 7\]](#) May we continue to share, and by sharing, be *“happy travelers at the end of our journey”*. [\[13, to Materne, 1830\]](#)

Contemplate

Do I truly open my heart in sharing my spiritual journey and theirs with my fellow Vincentians?

Recommended Reading

[Walking the Vincentian Pathway](#)

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