

Formation

Vincent invites us to study for the Glory of God and the service of others. In his own life Vincent wanted to enrich himself with what he learned and then **use his learning to serve others.**

Mission

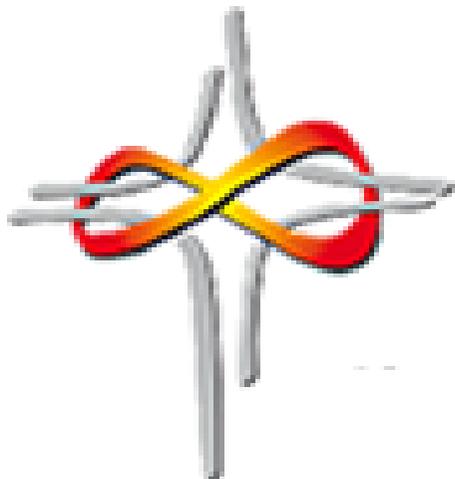
Vincent's life was one of mission, he prays " *I will like forever to be in hospitals and jails in order to help the miseries of the poor and the infirmities of the sick and thereby make all men and all creatures know, love and serve God, my Father and my all.*"

In the second reading today, Paul asks us to be awake to the needs and opportunities before us. Vincent writes about the urgent need to respond, " ***Besides doing whatever is suitable to my state of life, it seems that God, as an example of His infinite mercy to me, has additionally given me a holy impatience to do even greater things, although I know myself most inadequate to do them.***"

What are the ways in which I can come to know and respond to this God of Infinite love better?

Closing Prayer

God, Infinite Love, as Advent begins you urgently call us from sleep to the many needy people and events around us. Yet you ask us to wait, to let our desire for you grow strong, so that we can walk this Advent Camino together with you. Let love be our motive and service our strength. Help us to prepare well for the birth of Jesus, whose coming we await for he is our salvation and our light in the night-time. Keep us awake that we may meet him when he comes. Amen.



Pallottine Camino to Christmas - Advent Year A Week 1

Gathering Song

O Saviour come to those who wait
And open wide the heav'nly gate
Drop down O clouds like gentle dew
The One whose love makes all things new
Oh come, Oh come, Emmanuel
And save your suff'ring Israel



The word 'Advent' means 'Coming.' The basic attitude is waiting.

What is your lived experience of Advent?

For you, who is the One whose coming you are waiting for?

I was sleeping, but my heart kept vigil; I heard my lover knocking:

"Open to me, my sister, my beloved ..."

I opened the door to my lover – but my lover had departed gone. I sought him whom my soul loves: I sought him but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer."

(Song of Songs 5:2-6; 3:1)

"Wait! Oh the anguish of that 'wait', the emptiness of that absence!

But then little by little, I began to understand, as never before, that He was present in the emptiness, in the waiting" (Carlo Carretto, *The God Who Comes*, p 99).

Does this resonate with your own experience of waiting?

Where? ... at the bus stop, in the hospital waiting room...?

The Second Reading for the first Sunday in Advent Year A presents Advent as an alarm clock:

"It is time to wake up now."

A family was going on a holiday and stopped in at a motel. The next morning, the wife feeling a bit groggy started to pack the car; Still groggy she went into a bedroom and, thinking it was her husband still in bed, she yelled angrily, "Get outta that bed!" The man sat up wide-eyed and the woman realized she was in the wrong room and made a quick exit. On the way out she heard the man say, "Boy, that was some wake-up call."

We listen to the Word of The Lord

The Reading of St Paul's letter to the Romans (Rom 13:11-14)

"Besides, you know the time has come; the moment is here for you to stop sleeping and wake up, because by now our salvation is nearer than when we first began to believe. The night is nearly over, daylight is on the way; so let us throw off everything that belongs to the darkness and equip ourselves for the light. Let us live decently, as in the light of day; no orgies or drunkenness, no promiscuity or licentiousness, and no wrangling or jealousy. Let your armour be the Lord Jesus Christ, and stop worrying about how your disordered natural inclinations may be fulfilled."

In the circumstances of my daily life where do I need to put on the armour that is Jesus Christ?

(For a shield take your Baptism, for a helmet your faith, for a spear your love, and for body-armour your patient endurance.) *St Ignatius of Antioch to Polycarp.*

Gospel

Jesus said to his disciples

"As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of man comes. For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept them all away. This is what it will be like when the Son of man comes. Then of two men in the fields, one is taken, one left; of two women grinding at the mill, one is taken, one left. 'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

**Have you had your house burgled, what did it feel like?
Am I so caught up in daily affairs that I'm asleep to Jesus coming?**

The God of Vincent Pallotti

If you enter a darkened room you grope for a switch, the light source, but what if it's a total blackout like happened in Adelaide, how do you get to the power source? This is an image of Vincent Pallotti's struggle to get to God, Infinite Love.

Vincent Pallotti's spirituality was centred on the fact that the human person is made in the image and likeness of God, Vincent himself and each and every other person is an expression of God's immeasurable being, of God's immeasurable love and mercy. The fundamental aim of Vincent's life became the imitation of Jesus so that "it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me". He let his armour be the Lord Jesus Christ. Vincent recognized a natural tendency towards God in himself, and indeed in others. In relating to God a desire grows in us to cooperate with him, just as each person of the Trinity cooperates with the others. This cooperation becomes apostolate, it stems from the gift and dignity of being created in God's image and likeness. In cooperating with God under the tuition of the Holy Spirit, we cooperate in a unique way and from this we can discern our personal vocation.

From greater openness to God comes increased cooperation and leads to sharing the life of God with others, accompanying them and participating in the apostolate.

Created in God's image and likeness and cooperating with God is our Apostolate. For Christians our Apostolate is strengthened and focused on Jesus' double mandate of love of God and love of neighbour. And for Vincent 'neighbour' is "anybody who is capable of knowing, serving, loving and delighting in God."

Vincent was convinced that "Among all the divine gifts which God bestows on his creatures the most divine is that of being able to cooperate in the eternal salvation of souls." For Vincent this is a privilege, to be a co-operator with God in his very own work of salvation; for this is "*the most precious work of mercy*". He describes it as "*among the most noble*" of activities.

Do you sense this Godward tendency in you, leading to Apostolate? Can you give an example in your life?

In the Pallottine Family we prepare ourselves through **prayer** and **formation** and we then go about God's business right here through our actions in our daily lives and our apostolic **mission** to our neighbour.

Prayer

Vincent saw prayer as the means of union with God, "*The life of Our Lord Jesus Christ was a life of prayer. He gave us the precept of vigilant prayer as the means of reaching intimate union with God*". Vincent spoke of "*a life of prayer*" rather than periods of prayer. **It is in prayer that we learn the ways and means of imitating Jesus.**