

April 10, 2018

Meditation: Acts 4:32-37

2nd Week of Easter

They had everything in common. (Acts 4:32)

Isn't it striking how the first Christians took care of one another? Moved by their love for the Lord and for each other, the wealthier members of their community—people like Barnabas—freely shared their resources with those who were less fortunate. They considered their bounty as a blessing from God and saw it as something that they should share with each other rather than hold onto for themselves (Acts 4:34-37).

Blessed Frederic Ozanam is a more contemporary example of someone who, like the early Christians, looked beyond himself to the needs of the people around him. When thousands died in a cholera epidemic in Paris in 1832, many more were left destitute. Ozanam, a young university student, was moved at the hopeless state of families who had lost the support of their breadwinners. Then he was stung by another student's remark: "In former times Christianity worked wonders, but what is it doing for mankind now? And you, who pride yourself on your Catholicity, what are you doing for the poor?"

In response, Ozanam gathered a few friends and began to do whatever he could to relieve the suffering he saw in the slums of the city. Eventually, a new organization, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, grew from Ozanam's work and spread. Today, through this society, volunteers serve millions of disadvantaged people around the globe. They provide home visits, job training, housing assistance, food pantries, and medicine for the elderly. They pray with people, care for their needs, and show the love of Christ in countless concrete ways.

Most of us don't live in as close-knit a community as the first Christians did, where everything was held in common. Nor would many of us be able, like Barnabas, to sell our property, donate it to our local parish, and still be able to care for ourselves and our families. Still, God asks us to bear witness to his Son through acts of generosity and loving service that are in line with our circumstances. So ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the needs around you. Sharing even a little of your resources, even a little of your time and attention, can make a big difference!

"Lord, show me how I can share the blessings you have given me."

Psalm 93:1-2, 5

John 3:7-15