



St. Vincent de Paul Sacramento Diocesan Council



Monday Morning Memo



This was a difficult Easter Sunday for most of us. Isolation due to COVID-19 meant many were alone on this glorious day when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Families and friends were separated as we all shelter in place. Just a few weeks ago it would have been unthinkable to see our churches closed to us. What could possibly occur that would cause this to happen? And then we were faced with the coronavirus and in the blink of an eye, everything we knew to be normal changed. Mercifully, we are a nation of people who adapt to changes as needed. And when it comes to our religion, we made modifications so we could practice our faith, just in a different way.

In 2020 we have the option of “attending” mass online, on TV or even on our phones. We can listen to a mass said in our own parish or at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York, The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC or even hear Pope Francis preach at St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City.

How lucky are we to have all this options? I could have spent the better part of Easter Sunday going from mass to mass. Quite amazing isn’t it. As we begin the 50 days of the Easter Season, I choose to enter it with hope. I am hopeful that we will make it through this pandemic stronger and wiser for having endured such a difficult and uncommon time in our history. I believe many of the current modifications to life as we knew it will remain, but much will go back to the way we had been accustomed to doing them in the past.

My faith is strengthened by all the good things that are happening as a result of this national disaster. People are still helping people. Vincentians have made changes to their ways of serving the poor, but yes, they have found ways – they haven’t stopped. We see kindness and generosity continue to be evident all of over this great nation and that gives me hope.

Have a blessed first week of Easter, stay well, and thanks for all you do,

Judy

Some Wisdom from the Past: The Experience of St. Vincent de Paul

By Rev. Robert P. Maloney, C.M.

I am so fortunate to not only have people read my Monday communications, but frequently they write back to me with comments and observations. A few weeks ago, I heard from Sr. Paule Freeburg, D.C. She is the Western Region Spiritual Advisor and in many ways our historian for all things St. Vincent de Paul.

She sent me an essay written by Father Bob Maloney “about the pandemic faced by St. Vincent de Paul in the 17th century and seeing that in light of the pandemic we are facing today.” Sr. Paule shared that “Father Maloney was the 23rd Superior General of the Vincentian Priests and the Daughters of Charity from 1992-2004. He was the first to actually talk about the entire Vincentian Family and began to address his international letters to The Entire Vincentian Family. He has written several books on St. Vincent, Spirituality, Vincentian Service, etc. He wrote that wonderful little book *Turn Everything to Love*.”



The essay begins “St. Vincent was no stranger to pandemics. On perhaps no other topic were his emotions so deeply stirred. Tragedies piled up in Vincent’s life, especially in the 1650’s. He often spoke of “war, plague and famine” as the scourge of the poor.”

The essay in its entirety can be **found here**. It is interesting to note that In advising the members of his Vincentian Family about how to serve in the midst of the plague, Vincent chose a middle ground. On the one hand, he urged them to stay near the plague stricken and not abandon them; on the other hand, he encouraged the Family to observe the cautions that civil and ecclesiastical leaders were recommending. His wisdom has indeed survived the ages.

"Christ has no body now on earth but yours. No hands, but yours. No feet, but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on this world."
~ St. Teresa of Avila

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