a social justice teaching resource

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA

ANGELA TOHILL
FREE AT LAST

‘This is a God who insists that if you want to know who I am (and there is no task more central to human life), then look at what I do. This is a God who names himself in action and the Bible is an account of what God does. What does God do? ...

“Who brought you out of the land of Egypt.” This is what God did and does. Where is Egypt? Everywhere. We are all in Egypt somehow enslaved by the logic of Pharaoh which says, “Once a slave, always a slave: abandon hope all you who enter here.” So Pharaoh rules, OK? No, because God intervenes, fighting as a mighty warrior when we thought freedom impossible. We are a community of slaves set free and on the way to the promised land. That’s what the prophets defend when they see the identity of a community of slaves set free being threatened by the logic of Pharaoh – that is, by all the false gods who only take you back to Egypt, back to the world of hopelessness. That’s why the members of St Vincent de Paul are prime agents of the logic of God in the Catholic Church. You refuse to subscribe to the logic of Pharaoh. In all that you do, you are saying that it is possible to come forth from the land of Egypt, to take one little step away from the Nile and set foot upon the path of freedom.’

Bishop Mark Coleridge
Retreat for Vincentians, 2002
PASSION FOR JUSTICE

A SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHING RESOURCE

CELEBRATING
150 YEARS OF THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY
IN AUSTRALIA

ANGELA TOHILL
Angela Tohill
Angela Tohill is a teacher with 30 years experience at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. She has been a Curriculum Coordinator and a Religious Education Coordinator in schools and a Religious Education Curriculum Advisor for the Catholic Education Office in Melbourne. She is currently completing a PhD on pedagogy and leadership at Deakin University.

Thank you to:
The staff of the St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria, for their continuing support and encouragement, especially Damian Coleridge; the 150th Organising Committee and its chair Jim Grealish; those involved in the reading of the manuscript - Richard Rymarz, Maurice Ryan, Tony Dalton, Gavin Dufy; Maureen Duke, Bernard Green, Rosemary Graham, Laura Doherty, Cathy Jenkins and Lorraine Garland; Philip Mackey who greatly assisted with the editing; and Ramesh Weereratne and Damon Carr for their design skill and patience.

And thank you to:
St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria, for the photos pp67,77,78, the drawings pp56,57 and the graphic p81; St Vincent de Paul Society, NSW, for the video cover p6 and the drawings pp10,58; Vin Hindmarsh for the graphics on pp9,19,24,29, 30,36, 44; Peter Schumann and Northlight Studio Press – from Hallelujah, 1983 – for the graphics on pp 42,68,74; Harry N. Abrams Inc. New York – from Playing With Fire, Julie Taymor/Eileen Blumenthal, 1999 – for the drawings pp18,30 and the inside covers; Dover Publications – from Prints and Drawings of Kathe Kollwitz, 1969 – for the print p41; Editions du Signe, Strasbourg, for the image of Vincent de Paul p40; William Kelly and BBK – from Art Towards Reconciliation, BBK, 2000 – for the graphic p40; John Perrett for the paintings on front and back covers and p88; Agence France-Presse for the photo p53; Peter Casamento for the photos pp73, 95; St Vincent de Paul Society, Cairns, for the photo p73; and Peter Moore for the photo p92.

Copyright © St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Inc. 2004

All rights reserved. This publication is not to be reproduced, or duplicated, either in whole, or in part, without permission from the publisher – except to photocopy those images specifically designed for general use in the classroom.

Every effort has been made to trace and acknowledge copyright. However, should any contravention have occurred, the St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria, and the writer, tender their apologies and invite copyright owners to contact them.

Published by St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria Inc.
Design and layout: Damon Carr
Pre-press: Mahoney Typographics
Printing: Doran Printing Pty Ltd


Front and back covers: the paintings on the front and back covers are from Images of Jubilee, a series of paintings by John Perrett commissioned by the St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria, to celebrate the Great Jubilee in 2000. The flowering image on the front and back covers is entitled Life and the other image of new growth is entitled Hope.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Frederic Ozanam 1813 – 1853</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Strategies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Strategies</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Strategies</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Catholic Social Teaching</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Strategies</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>St Vincent de Paul</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Strategies</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>St Vincent de Paul Society</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Strategies</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Strategies</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Spirituality of the St Vincent de Paul Society</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Strategies</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AND THE CHILDREN WILL DIE
INTRODUCTION

This book has been designed for classroom teachers, years 5 – 10, to assist with background information and possible ideas for teaching about social justice, as seen through the lens of the St Vincent de Paul Society experience: its beginnings, founder, patron, spirituality, work and history in Australia.

The work presented here is meant to add to and support the Religious Education Program. It has been written as part of the celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the first conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia.

Areas in the Religious Education Programs that this resource could support are:

• God
• Creation
• Human Person and Family
• Jesus Christ
• Holy Spirit
• The Church
• Prayer

The ideas presented here are designed to be developed by teachers and incorporated into their classroom programs. The chapters are designed to either ‘stand’ on their own, or, just as comfortably, support each other in a unit of work, be it about social justice or an aspect of the history of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

All the activities offered here are designed as ‘open-ended’ strategies, that can be developed as much or as little as required, depending on the needs, understandings and interests of students and teachers alike. There is no implication intended here that any class must engage in any or all of these activities. The variety of activities presented here have been included deliberately so that teachers can select strategies that are suited to their preferred teaching styles as well as meeting the needs, interests and learning styles of their students.

There is no set sequence of activities presented in these chapters. In developing the ideas in this book, four assumptions have been made:

I. in each class there is a wide range of abilities;
II. no single text or activity will suit the range of abilities in any one class;
III. there is great variation among students regarding prior knowledge, experience and understanding of topics presented;
IV. interest in any of the particular topics will vary from student to student.

The information presented here has been collated from a variety of sources readily provided by the St Vincent de Paul Society.
NO TIME LIKE NOW
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERIC OZANAM

SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL
The Life & Times of Frederic Ozanam

France in the 1800s
Frederic Ozanam was born on 23 April, 1813 in Milan, a French province at the time, and was raised in Lyons, France. He lived during one of the most tumultuous periods of history:
- the overthrow of the Bourbon Dynasty in the 1830 July Revolution;
- the end of Louis Philippe’s ‘Bourgeois Monarchy’ during the 1848 Revolution.

Childhood and Family
While Frederic was born the fifth of fourteen children, he was one of only four who survived infancy. His two brothers were Alphonse, who became a priest, and Charles, who became a doctor. Frederic had a very special relationship with his sister Elizabeth, who had tutored him during his early education, and was devastated when she died at the age of nineteen. He was only seven.

After completing his secondary education in Lyons, Frederic moved to Paris to study law at the Sorbonne. Here he was confronted daily with the misery of the working poor of Paris, immortalised in Puccini’s opera La Bohème and Hugo’s novel Les Misérables.

Sr Rosalie
At this time Frederic and a few friends began helping Sister Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity, in her work among the poor in Paris. Sr Rosalie gave Frederic the names of some families to visit and some tickets for food to distribute. He was appalled by the squalor and desolation of the poorer parts of Paris.

Sr Rosalie provided food, fuel and rent money for the poor. Over the years she was to establish a pharmacy and a clothing dispensary, a nursery for children of employed mothers, a day nursery, a home for the elderly and a school to teach children trades.
France had not addressed the many social problems which threatened her people. Tremendous economic and social changes brought on by the transition from a more rural and farming society to an urban and industrial one, threatened to disrupt French life and were too often ineffectively addressed by the government.

**Conference of History**
With this background, Frederic and his friends spent a lot of time at the home of Emmanuel Bailly, who was a philosopher and editor of a newspaper *La Tribune Catholique*. Bailly organised a society for the students to study and debate historical and philosophical issues. This became known as the **Conference of History**. The meetings were open to all students, not just Catholics, so as to provide an opposing view. Frederic quickly became the leader of the Catholic debating ‘team’. It was in this forum that the relevance of the Church in modern Paris was constantly raised.

Other groups of intellectuals, such as the followers of the Utopian Socialist, Saint-Simon, also began to suggest ways to improve the condition of the poor by forming ideal societies of labourers. Such groups were frequently severe critics not only of the government but also of the Catholic Church and all things religious. When only eighteen, Frederic attacked the ideals and teachings of Saint-Simon because they gave the poor a wrong belief and an equally wrong path to a ‘better life’, because that life was not based on Christian principles of love and mercy, was not infused with Christian faith and was not improved by works of true charity.

**We Challenge You!**
In 1833, during one of the meetings of the Conference of History, Frederic, then aged 20, and his colleagues were defending attacks on Christianity. The argument was that Christians were doing nothing for the poor, that Frederic and his friends were doing nothing themselves to help the poor and that they were only talking about Christianity, without any action. The Christian students were challenged to ‘Show us your works’.

This confrontation prompted Frederic and his friends to organise and enlarging the work they were already doing with Sr Rosalie. She not only gave the students advice on how to assist the poor physically and spiritually, but she was also an inspiration to them as she served the poor and stood with them at the barricades. She taught them how to minister to poor people with love, respecting their dignity as human beings created in God’s image and likeness.

**Conference of Charity**
Committed now to do more than talk about faith, the group met weekly to pray together, to pool whatever money they had and to visit poor people in their homes. They decided to set up a separate organisation of students to do charitable work - the **Conference of Charity**. Their task was to work face to face with poor people, to give of their modest means, to give of their time, conversation and knowledge to assist them.

**Patron Saint**
Frederic chose St Vincent de Paul as the model and patron of this first conference because of the spirit and commitment shown by Vincent as he lived his vision of the Good News. Vincent believed it should be brought to those in need by meeting their needs and addressing injustices. Frederic wrote this about the role of a patron:

‘A patron…is a model one must strive to imitate, as he himself imitated the model of Jesus Christ. He is a life to be carried on, a heart in which one’s own heart is enkindled, an intelligence from which light would be sought; he is a model on earth and a protector in heaven. A two-fold devotion is owed him, imitation and invocation…’

**Society of St Vincent de Paul**
After starting with less than eight members, conference membership soared to more than one hundred in 1834. Frederic believed the original conference must divide into smaller units in order to better meet the needs of poor people. By 1835, the society was named **The Society of St Vincent de Paul**, and conferences were founded beyond Paris, in Nimes and Lyons and beyond France itself, in Rome.

**To Become Better – To Do a Little Good**
Throughout his life, Frederic’s simple hope was to ‘become better – to do a little good’. He continued his studies and won a doctorate in law in 1836 and began work as a lawyer. In 1837 Frederic’s father, while visiting a patient in a tenement, stumbled on a broken stair and fell, fatally injuring himself.

Although he was hardly a success as a practising attorney, his thorough knowledge of law won him the respected position of Professor of Commercial Law at the University of Lyons. During this time his mother also became ill and died in 1839. Frederic deeply mourned her death.
In his university lectures in Lyons, Frederic denounced economic liberalism for turning people into tools for profit and driving wages below a decent level through the so-called law of supply and demand. Charity, he said, was not enough; there was a need for justice between workers and employers. He stated that regulating the labour market called for workers to organise themselves, and also needed other State controls.

While he was an excellent lecturer in Commercial Law, he was not content. Literature was his first love, and in 1840 he was invited to compete for the Chair of Foreign Literature at the Sorbonne. The examination covered knowledge of the literatures of three ancient and four modern languages. He was placed first and at the age of 27 became Assistant Professor of Foreign Languages.

In 1841, Frederic married Amelie Soulacroix, the daughter of the rector of the Lyons Academy. They made their home in Paris, and after several miscarriages, in 1845 their only child Marie was born. Frederic continued his work as a professor, teaching, writing and researching, as well as being deeply involved with the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society. In 1846 he became severely ill with pleurisy and almost died. While recovering, Frederic, Amelie and Marie travelled to Italy where he visited many cities and towns, researching and planting the seeds of the St Vincent de Paul Society. It wasn't long after this visit that the Society took firm root in Italy. A year later in 1847 the family returned to Paris where political tension was building. Frederic noted:

‘It is a struggle between those who have nothing and those who have too much. The violent clash of luxury and poverty is shaking the ground under our feet.’

Political Change
In February 1848 there was a new republican government in France. Frederic supported this government because he felt that it offered real possibilities for changing the social conditions which were destroying the lives of so many poor people. February 1848 also saw the beginnings of the violence when revolutionary mobs of unemployed workers broke into the Tuileries Palace. At the insistence of colleagues, Frederic reluctantly stood for election to the National Assembly. He just failed in his election bid, but his electoral manifesto contained the following:

‘This is what any constitution must include, as being far more important than the uncertainties of a mere parliamentary majority: individual freedom, freedoms of speech, of education, of workers’ associations and freedom of religion.’

1848 Barricades
On 24 June 1848, a vote was taken by the Assembly to close the National Workshops in an attempt to relieve pressure on government finances. Unemployment soared and the anger of the workers was once again taken to the streets; barricades were set up on the streets of Paris and rioting began. Over one hundred thousand armed rebels rampaged through Paris in the first hours of the June fighting. But the insurgents, without leadership, strategy or resources, were no match for the better equipped, trained and disciplined government troops. Soon the government forces drove their opponents behind the makeshift stone barricades. From there the rebels, although out-manned and outgunned, refused to retreat any further and fought it out, preferring to die rather than starve.

Violent Deaths
Frederic was called on, along with 800,000 others, to join the National Guard. He responded positively and suffered a deep and bitter anguish as he saw the very people he had worked so hard with and for, now being so mercilessly and methodically cut down. On the third day of fighting, Frederic and two colleagues approached Archbishop Affre of Paris with a plan to stop the slaughter. This involved the archbishop approaching the insurgents and offering them a government pardon if they put down their weapons. Aware of the great personal danger, the archbishop went alone to meet the insurgents at the barricades. They met him and he urged them to accept the offer of pardon. But a shot rang out, the archbishop was mortally wounded and the fighting again erupted. Archbishop Affre was dragged behind the barricades and taken to a nearby house where he died. The news of his death was enough to stop the insane fighting, which by now had claimed 10,000 dead and wounded.

Life Gets Tougher
Despite the bloodletting and great promises, social conditions in France failed to improve. Following the 1848 Revolution, two hundred and sixty-seven thousand workers were living in Paris, unemployed. Companies, factories and businesses refused to reopen in the politically unstable city. Paris, without commerce, business or money, was paralysed; there were no resources to care for children or the people
who were sick and poor. Members of the St Vincent de Paul Society worked tirelessly to relieve the sufferings of these people.

In early 1848, Frederic helped found a newspaper called the *New Era* for which he wrote an extraordinary series of five articles in ten days including one on the ‘Origins of Socialism and the Organisation of Work’. He was pro-republic, pro-democracy, pro-unions and a Christian supporter of democratic forms of socialism. The *New Era* supported:

1. legislation to protect children;
2. provision for sick or old workers;
3. reduction in working hours;
4. more just distribution of goods;
5. a graduated income tax instead of indirect taxation;
6. partnership and profit-sharing; and
7. compulsory arbitration.

His writing in the *New Era*, informed and pre-dated Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* by 50 years and his words continue to challenge us today.

**Personal Cost**

By 1852 Frederic’s health was again beginning to deteriorate and he was forced to take a break from all work commitments. With his family he journeyed to Italy. New conferences were set up wherever they went. Frederic’s health failed to improve, so the family began their journey back to France. At the age of forty, Frederic died in Marseilles on 8 September 1853, and was buried in the crypt of the Eglise des Carmes, near the Institut Catholique in Paris.

Frederic Ozanam was a teacher, scholar, husband and father. He was devoted to truth. From the time of his first challenge to live what he preached, he always tried to link a life of thought to a life of Christian action and to help others do likewise. In doing so he modelled a Christian life characterised by:

- dedication to social reform and Christian social justice;
- integration of professional and spiritual life;
- leadership that was simple and open;
- relevance of the Christian message to modern life.

The St Vincent de Paul Society continues his active work of Christian charity and justice.

Frederic was beatified on 22 August 1997 in Paris, another step toward his canonisation and sainthood.

**References:**

Baunard, M., 1925, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, Veritas Publications, Dublin.


Hanley B., *For Your Love Alone*, http://www.ewtn.com

http://www.secretariadojmv.org/inter/santos/english/frederic_ozanam.htm

http://www.vincenter.org/tree/svdp/stoz/bio.html

http://www.svp.ie/background.html


http://www.parravinnies.org/fredricozanam.htm


*No Time Like Now: The Life and Times of Frederic Ozanam: Video and Notes*, commissioned and produced by St Vincent de Paul Society; compiled by Pat Dalton, Lewisham, NSW.

Rationale:

This chapter looks at some of the major events in the life and times of Frederic Ozanam, founder of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Selective attention has been paid to the revolutionary history of France, with references to Puccini and Hugo, which could be integrated to support the development of greater detail and understanding of the times when Frederic Ozanam was alive. The materials presented in this chapter allow for great scope and exploration in discussion of the issues and dilemmas which led to the development of the St Vincent de Paul Society, many of them still evident in today's society.

Outcomes:

By the end of this chapter it is hoped that students will be able to:

Cognitive:

• Trace and recount the basic details of the life of Frederic Ozanam.
• Identify important stages in Frederic Ozanam's life and the development of the St Vincent de Paul Society.
• Identify the significant events, personal and historical which influenced Frederic Ozanam's journey.
• Discuss the range of issues which led to the formation of the St Vincent de Paul Society.
• Consider the challenge of the Gospels which led to the formation of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Affective:

• Investigate the challenges of Frederic Ozanam's life.
• Evaluate the qualities of Frederic Ozanam.
• Investigate the challenge of the Gospels in their own lives.

Notes:

For teachers with little background or previous work with the life and times of Frederic Ozanam, there is little option but to read some of the texts referred to in the reference list at the end of this chapter. This extra background will assist in helping to provide the students with an opportunity for a deeper understanding of some of the issues presented. The references are easily accessible through the local conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society, as well as through the internet references cited. Together they combine to allow the students to research as deeply as necessary. The strategies presented seek to involve the students in researching, discussing and developing their understanding of the society, the times, the person, the motivations and the faith of Frederic Ozanam, that led to the formation of the St Vincent de Paul Society. By being permitted to enter into the experience of others, all learners are permitted to clarify and develop their own thoughts, ideas and beliefs.
**Teaching & Learning Activities**

**Investigation - Time-Line (at a glance)**

Create a time-line of Frederic Ozanam's life, and link it with the major historical events of the time - e.g. dates of revolutions in Europe, White settlement in Australia, settlement of America, etc.

The following brief biography (supplied by the St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria, 2003) can be a starting point here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>Frederic Ozanam born in Milan (at that time under French rule) on 23 April. Both his parents, Marie and Dr Jean Antoine Ozanam, were dedicated to the works of charity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Revolution in France. Began his apprenticeship in law in Lyons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>First entered the public debate about the Church and progress. Ozanam wrote of the Church as an agent of progress: 'the Church must work to improve the moral and physical conditions of workers'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>May. First meeting of the Conference of Charity which subsequently became the Society of St Vincent de Paul. The legendary Sr Rosalie and other Daughters of Charity greatly encouraged the members of the new Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Obtained his Degree in Arts, to be followed by a Doctorate of Law in 1837 and a Doctorate in Literature in 1839. Professor of Commercial Law at Lyons 1839 and Fellow of the Faculty of Arts 1840.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>2,000 members of the Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>23 June, married Amelie Soulacroix in their home city of Lyons. They moved to Paris to be at the centre of the debates of the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Appointed permanent Professor of the Chair of Comparative Literature at the Sorbonne. He was 31 years of age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>His only child Marie was born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Illness began.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>Revolution in Paris and throughout Europe. He wrote: ‘Eighteen years ago, in 1830, it was a political revolution. Today it is a social uprising. These are the poor who are rebelling. For too long they have been neglected.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Tuberculosis grew worse. He retired from teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>Died on 8 September, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at Marseilles. The monument over his tomb in Paris bears the inscription: ‘He won the souls of youth to the standard of Christ.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>First Australian Conference established at St Francis’ Church, Melbourne.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Life-journey:**

You could also use the above information in picture format or storyboard presentation, which would show Frederic’s life-journey.

Developing the following **KWHL** chart at the same time as the development of the timeline will also help to develop further research ideas.

**KWHL Strategy**

The following review sheet can be used to plan an investigation into a topic and to gather information about the subject. It can be used in connection with other strategies that also assist students to analyse and evaluate material on a specific topic. It is basically a brainstorming strategy during which students can generate questions based on any confusions or aspects of the topic they wish to explore further. This strategy also supports the appropriate selection of accessible resources, and the evaluation of the quality of the knowledge gained in the study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I know about this topic</th>
<th>What I want to find out</th>
<th>How can I find out what I want to learn?</th>
<th>What I learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attributes or characteristics I expect to focus on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PASSION FOR JUSTICE**

FREDERIC OZANAM 1813 - 1853

FREDERIC OZANAM 1813 - 1853 • 13
Scriptural Reflection: Imitating Christ

This strategy is essentially a reflective activity designed to help students make relevant connections between information about Frederic Ozanam’s life story, the development of the St Vincent de Paul Society, Scripture quotes and possible relationships/connections to their own knowledge and experience.

Process
1. Create small discussion groups of four students.

2. Discuss the following statements in relation to (a) Frederic Ozanam and (b) our own lives:
   - Imitation is one of the primary ways Christians learn, live and pass on the Gospel. Think about people you may have imitated as you consider the following Scripture verses:
     - ‘Be imitators of me, as I am Christ.’ (1 Corinthians 11:1)
     - ‘I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me.’ (1 Corinthians 4:16)
     - ‘Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us.’ (Philippians 3:17)
     - ‘For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us.’ (2 Thessalonians 3:7)
     - ‘Be examples to the flock.’ (1 Peter 5:3)

3. As a group, discuss and complete the following chart, showing each person’s perspective and understanding for each section of the chart (enlarge as necessary). The following may be a support in developing this discussion and activity:
   - **Words**: describe in phrases, sentences, single words what it means to imitate Christ.
   - **Pictures**: draw a series of pictures showing, e.g. how Frederic Ozanam imitated Christ; how another person they know imitates Christ, etc.
   - **Connections to Life**: draw or write how the group thinks these quotes from scripture could be applied to a situation in our world today.
   - **Symbols**: create one or more symbols that could capture the meaning of imitating Christ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Symbols</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>Connections to Life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Character Map

Students can use this strategy to analyse the character of Frederic Ozanam. After a time of researching information about his life, students can use the idea to analyse and represent what they think might be his various thoughts, feelings, etc. Students are encouraged to imagine Frederic Ozanam’s world by attempting to ‘stand in his shoes’. They are encouraged to identify the relationships between thoughts, feelings and actions. This character map can be presented in poster form, Powerpoint, or as a dramatisation of his life.
Film/Cartoon strips/Powerpoint Presentation

Students can create film, cartoon strips or Powerpoint presentation to describe or summarise material or retell the story they have been studying. In each cell they create images/symbols etc. that can re-present the story of the life of Frederic Ozanam, or the society that he was a part of. Appropriate dialogue, soundtrack, music, etc. can be added to complement the visual images. Victor Hugo wrote about the condition of the poor of Paris in his novel *Les Miserables*. Perhaps the music used for the musical *Les Miserables* could be used as a support for this presentation.

Seven Strip Questions

This strategy involves developing creative thinking processes that can be used effectively across the curriculum. The questions to be answered cover seven different varieties: quantity, change, prediction, point of view, personal involvement, comparative association, valuing questions. In studying Frederic Ozanam, this strategy could be developed in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of question</th>
<th>Frederic Ozanam - his life and times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Why were there so many people in need living in Paris at this time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>What social change was occurring at this time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prediction</td>
<td>Change is happening all the time, what do you think Australia will be like in 2200? Will we have eradicated poverty in 2200?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of View</td>
<td>If you were a member of that first conference, what would your story be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal involvement</td>
<td>How would you feel if you were living in poverty and were visited by Frederic Ozanam and his friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative association</td>
<td>What was happening in Australia at the same time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing questions</td>
<td>Why are some people poor?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drama Activities

Research further the events that occurred in Paris, June 1848. Why were the barricades erected? What were the insurgents hoping to achieve? How were they organised? How did the government respond? How did Ozanam and his friends respond?

Workshop and develop the information you gather into a ‘production’. The following drama activities could be used as a springboard for this activity.

*Curtains Up, Curtains Down*

A group of players creates a series of frozen statue images related to a part of this story. The student audience closes their eyes (*Curtains Down*). The players form into their positions. The audience opens their eyes (*Curtains Up*). A narrator could read the story as it is being enacted by the players. This activity can be used well when developing the time-line of historical events or critical incidents from Frederic Ozanam’s biography.

*Conference*

Students can develop the scenario of the first conference/debate where Ozanam and his friends were challenged ‘to show us your works’. Both sides can develop the discussion of what to do to look after those in need in our community. Speakers for both ‘sides’ can present their ‘case’ as in a meeting. At the conclusion of the conference, students could be invited to assume the role of conference reporters and write an account of the session which summarises the main themes and the outcomes.
**Discussion Web**

The discussion web assists students to consider both sides of an issue before drawing conclusions. The form of the web stimulates thinking and seeks collaboration with peers in the process of decision-making.

This strategy could be used to stimulate discussion about the beginnings of the St Vincent de Paul Society, eg:

In 1833, during one of the meetings of the Conference of History, Frederic Ozanam and his colleagues were challenged to do more than just talk about what it meant to be Christian. They were challenged to ‘show us your works’ - to put their words into action. How could we do this today?

Use the following chart as a way of recording the points raised in the discussion.
Poverty
Disadvantaged and marginalised people

‘I am devastated at the sight of the poverty which is destroying Paris.’

‘It is time ... to seek the abolition of poverty.’
Frederic Ozanam

What Is Poverty?

‘Poverty is where people have unreasonably low living standards compared with others; cannot afford to buy necessities such as a refrigerator for example; and experience real deprivation and hardship in everyday life.’

McClelland, Our Children-Our Future

If you don’t have a Gameboy, are you poor? What if you can’t afford the ‘latest’ in clothes or shoes like those your friends wear, or you see advertised in magazines or on television? Go on that school outing? Or go to that concert? Does that mean you are poor? What if you don’t have enough to eat or anywhere to live? What if there is no doctor, no medicines and no hospital available when you are sick? Or what if there is no job available for you? Does that mean you are poor?

What does it mean to be poor? Who are the poor in our society today?

Research generally offers two distinct definitions of poverty:

1. Absolute Poverty refers to livelihood level of poverty whereby people lack sufficient means to survive. This concept of poverty is used to describe the widespread starvation, hunger and destitution in Third World countries. People who lack food and shelter for minimal needs are said to be living in absolute poverty.

2. Relative Poverty stresses economic disparity as the primary indicator of poverty. According to this concept, poverty is understood as a condition of relative deprivation or exclusion from normal social and economic activities and participation. Poverty in Australia is generally relative poverty. People are considered to be poor if their living standards fall below an overall community standard, and they are unable to participate fully in the ordinary activities of society.

In Australia there is no official measurement of the extent of poverty. Estimates are made from time
to time by researchers in various organisations that study social policy issues. Generally, poverty measurement is concerned with income poverty. A judgement is made about what amount of income is needed by families of differing compositions and the Australian Bureau of Statistics survey data is used to estimate how many income units or individuals fall above or below that income level. These estimates of poverty are generally estimates of relative poverty. They estimate how many families have low incomes relative to other families. The alternative, absolute poverty, would be measured by estimating the numbers of families that cannot provide the basic necessities such as housing, food or clothing.

Poverty is fundamentally about a lack of access to the opportunities most people take for granted – not only food, shelter and income, but also jobs, adequate education, health services, childcare, transport and safe places for living and recreation.

Both academic research and the experience of organisations who work with those who are disadvantaged point to rising inequality in Australian society. The ‘Great Divide’ in Australia between the relatively affluent and the poor is increasing. All people have worth and dignity and have a contribution to make. All people need access to the social opportunities and basic goods required to participate fully in everyday life. We all have an obligation to ensure that these needs are met.

Stigmatising those living in poverty disempowers the weakest and most vulnerable in our society.

We usually see the poor through the eyes of the rich, and so the poor appear as those without possessions, without knowledge, without power. They are those in want, the object of help from those with power, knowledge and possessions. When we enter into the lives of those who are poor and try to see through their eyes and from their social position, we discover their strength, their resistance, their courage and their creativity.

Dorothy Day writing for The Catholic Worker in 1964 wrote:

‘The mystery of the poor is this: that they are Jesus, and what you do for them you do for Him. It is the only way we have of knowing and believing in our love. The mystery of poverty is that by sharing in it, making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge of and belief in love.’

Poverty is not an isolated problem existing solely among a small number of anonymous people. It is a condition experienced at some time by many people in different walks of life and in different circumstances. Many poor people are working, but at wage levels insufficient to lift them out of poverty. Others are unable to work and therefore are dependent on outside sources of support.

According to King (1998), a disproportionate number of the unemployed – approx. 70 per cent – live in poverty. Other groups with large numbers in poverty include those on welfare, single parent families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, recent migrants, large intact families and aged single males.

Poverty negatively affects the life chances and opportunities of children. McClelland (2000) says children at greatest risk of poverty include Indigenous Australian children, the children of sole parent families, children where no parent is in paid work, children where the main source of income is government income support, children in public or private rental accommodation, and children with parents from certain non-English speaking backgrounds.

**What Causes Poverty?**

‘Government income support payments do not “create” poverty, they assist people in poverty. Circumstances such as broken relationships, losing a job, ill health and accidents, not having adequate skills or not living in the right place to find work can happen to any one of us.’

McClelland, *Our Children-Our Future*

Some of the documented causes of poverty in Australia and other western countries include:

- inadequate levels of government income support;
- continuing rise in long-term unemployment;
- changing family structures including the growing number of single-parent households;
- high housing costs and locational disadvantage;
- low wages – Eardley (1998) argues that the phenomenon of working poverty in Australia is real and growing. He estimates that about one in five low-paid workers now live in poor families;
- poor health;
- substance abuse; and
- low levels of educational attainment.

Donnison, *The Changing Face of Poverty*
Consequences of Poverty

The most serious consequence of poverty is homelessness. Both the shortage of low-cost private rental accommodation and continuing high levels of unemployment affect people’s ability to pay the rent. Very often it is a consequence of other forms of disadvantage such as drug and alcohol addiction, physical or mental abnormality, sexual and other forms of abuse. Conversely, when the crisis of homelessness does strike, it is likely to be itself a cause of other types of disadvantage: sickness, physical or emotional abuse, discrimination, isolation and loneliness, loss of self-esteem, even self-destruction.

Members of families with low incomes often have limited educational opportunities, leading to much narrower employment options. It can also contribute to poor self-esteem and less participation in society. In this way poverty and social exclusion can affect successive generations.

Shorris (2000) lists the following components of poverty:

- lack of money for current needs;
- lack of capital, both real and intellectual;
- inadequate housing;
- insufficient food and fresh water;
- inadequate clothing;
- unhealthy living conditions, including lack of heat and hot water and sanitation;
- limited access to medical care;
- lack of education;
- unsafe conditions; and
- unsatisfactory social life.

So poverty needs to be understood as more than just material deprivation and financial hardship; it also includes the social, psychological and spiritual aspects of being human and a full member of society.

Can Poverty Be Eliminated?

Frederic Ozanam intensely questioned the justification of an economic arrangement that gave rise to the growing gap between the rich and the poor of his time:

‘Will society merely develop a means of exploitation for the strongest members to make huge profits, or will all people devote themselves to the common good and the protection of the weak?’

Is the situation any different today in industrialised Australia? Have we advanced far as a society when we still have a wealthy few maintaining their status at the expense of many others?

Eliminating poverty then requires the reduction of isolation and social exclusion.

Mission Australia suggests that a key aim of ‘anti-poverty initiatives must be to expand the human spirit’.

‘If you oppress poor people, you insult the God who made them; but kindness shown to the poor is an act of worship.’

Proverbs 14:31

Frederic Ozanam, once wrote:

‘The knowledge of social well-being is learned, not from books, nor from public debate, but in climbing the stairs to the stairs to the poor man’s garret, sitting by his bedside, feeling the same cold that pierces him, sharing the secret of his lonely heart and troubled mind. When we know first hand the conditions of the poor in school, at work, in hospital, in the city, in the country, everywhere that God has placed them, then and only then can we begin to grasp the elements of poverty and hope we may resolve it.’

Baunard, Ozanam in His Correspondence
Dr John Falzon (2002, 5) puts forward a hypothetical future report to an imaginary UN Human Development Committee. What a proud and wonderful future we could create by:

- building equality by creating decent jobs for people;
- building equality through a social safety net that protects and enables rather than punishing and humiliating;
- building equality through its world-class public health-care system;
- building equality through its public investment in free education and childcare;
- building equality through affordable and adequate housing and transport.

Falzon finishes his article by saying:

‘Such an Australia is possible. By daring to work towards it we can share both bread and hope with ‘the owners of those faces in the street.’

The inequality that exists in our society can be addressed and even reversed. But we cannot simply transfer those responsibilities to government and leave it at that.

Each of us has a responsibility – indeed an obligation – to assist in whatever ways seem appropriate: reaching out to each other in a caring, compassionate and committed mission of service. An outreach to our neighbours.

References:


http://crnnews.pastornet.net.au/jmm/assi/assi0618.htm


http://www.bsl.org.au


http://www.nomorepoverty.org.au


Rationale:

This chapter explores what it means to be poor in today’s society. Students are given the opportunity to reflect on the human implications of poverty. It allows students to understand and appreciate what it means to work with the disadvantaged and marginalised in our society.

Outcomes:

By the end of this chapter, it is hoped that students will be able to:

**Cognitive:**
- Process and prioritise thinking.
- Identify the theme of service to the poor in Scripture passages.
- Evaluate the volunteer work of members of our community with the poor, disadvantaged and marginalised.
- Describe some of the support offered to people in need, especially by St Vincent de Paul Society.

**Affective:**
- Reflect on the severity of poverty being experienced in the world.
- Appreciate the plight of the poor in their community.
- Consider the degradation of human dignity caused by poverty and unemployment.

Notes:

It would be a mistake for us to identify the poor as simply those who have little or no income; those who don’t have enough food; those without shelter. Is not an illiterate person poor? Is not an aging person now without the use of his faculties very poor? What about those who have been deprived of companionship through the break-up of their marriage? Are they not poor in a way? People who are living with HIV, are they not particularly poor? I have heard some say that the poorest of all are the prisoners in our society. At this stage, of course, you might well object. Are these people not poor in these various ways through their own fault? Are they not to blame for their own poverty? As Jesus walked around his land, he never seemed to have asked who was to blame for those people being poor? It seemed to be enough for him that they were there and they were poor.

So you might describe the poor not just as persons who have very little in their purses or their wallets, perhaps little on their table, but those who are deprived, those who cannot choose for themselves where to go, what to do, what to have, who will be their friends, because all sorts of restrictions have come upon them to destroy choices. They are deprived of what should be expected.

Teaching & Learning Activities

**Perspective Spectacles**

In this strategy, students are required to think about and discuss issues, events, experiences, ideas, etc. about poverty from a range of perspectives. They are asked to attempt to ‘view’ their ideas, etc. through spectacles belonging to one/some of the people who are involved in this issue of poverty.

Provide the students with a variety of ‘spectacles’ (made from cardboard, or old spectacle frames, etc.) that can be worn to represent the views, opinions, ideas and values of children, adults, government officials, priests, visitors from the St Vincent de Paul Society, doctor, etc. What about Jesus? What would his perspective be? The idea is that the spectacles will help the students to ‘magnify’ or ‘focus’ on details of individuals affected in some way by poverty. Back up the opinions developed with evidence from various writings, talks, etc.

By using the ‘perspective spectacles’ students are encouraged to look at the issue of poverty from the perspective of others, and discuss and/or write about each of these different viewpoints.

Students are given a description of an issue/situation related to poverty and respond appropriately, according to the type of spectacles they are wearing.

**Y Chart**

As a response to the above activity, or in response to other activities, students could develop the following ‘Y’ chart, displaying possible understandings about poverty.
Poverty and the Bible

For he delivers the needy when they call,  
the poor and those who have no helper.  
He has pity on the weak and the needy,  
and saves the lives of the needy.  
From oppression and violence he redeems their life;  
and precious is their blood in his sight.  
Psalm 72:12-14

• **Brainstorm** how we might as a school help all students become ‘aware of poverty’ around us - e.g. in our street/in our suburb, etc. Use strategies such as **Think, Pair, Share**, where students first spend two minutes or so thinking and writing what they know about poverty, then in pairs discuss and share what they each know, together creating a new list and finally sharing their combined knowledge with the rest of the class.

• **Design and Create** a campaign for the rest of the school to raise awareness of poverty in our community, as well as devising ways of supporting organisations (St Vincent de Paul Society, Red Cross, Caritas, Catholic Mission) as a class or as a whole school community.

• **Read and Retell**: Read Matthew 25:31-46. Discuss. What is the author saying to us in this passage? What is his main/basic point? You are Matthew and you are living in today’s world. Rewrite this passage so that it is relevant to an audience of today. You could choose to be Matthew the news reporter (written or visual format), Matthew the storyteller, or Matthew the modern day Gospel writer.

• **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats)**  
Read James 2:14-26. Discuss what this passage tells us about our ‘call to action’/‘show us your works’.

This is a great activity to help students organise their thinking about this (or any) issue. After reading and discussing what it means to be an authentic and aware Christian and active member of society, students record their responses with regard to their perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The following graphic organiser could be used to support this activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Parnes Creative Problem-Solving Process**

Sidney Parnes created a model that provides a structured procedure to encourage imaginative problem-solving. The process he developed flows logically through the following five steps:

1. **Fact Finding**
   - Collecting data about the problem.
   - Observing the problem as objectively as possible.

2. **Problem Solving**
   - Examining the various parts of the problem to isolate the major part.
   - Stating the problem in an open-ended way.

3. **Idea Finding**
   - Generating as many ideas as possible regarding the problem.
   - Using the brainstorming strategy.

4. **Solution Finding**
   - Choosing the solution that would be most appropriate.
   - Developing and selecting criteria to evaluate the alternative solutions.

5. **Acceptance Finding**
   - Creating a plan of action.

Unlike many other problem-solving strategies, this process highlights the need to postpone judgement on possible ideas and solutions until a final decision is made. In this way, the flow of ideas in the third stage is not interrupted and all possible solutions can be put forward. All ideas are evaluated and scaled to support possible decisions being made.

**Using Parnes Creative Problem-Solving Strategy with the problem of Poverty**

- Jesus said, ‘...the poor are with us always’. What does it mean to be poor? What can we do to alleviate poverty? What can we do to eliminate poverty? Is it possible? Can we make a difference?
- Poverty of particular groups – e.g. youth
- Systemic poverty – e.g. migration; welfare and tax; unemployment
- Historical poverty – e.g. aboriginal; generational.
Consequence Web

In teams, students could propose a future perspective where they consider the possible consequences of a change in our society and its possible impact on poverty and those in need in our community. The ‘futures wheel’ below could be used to support the development of the ideas each team develops.
**Poverty and Bloom’s Taxonomy**

Use the following chart to develop activities which help students develop the concept of poverty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomy</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Possible products</th>
<th>Tasks examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge &amp; Comprehension</td>
<td>ask, match, discover, identify, listen, locate, observe, research</td>
<td>television, diagram, magazines, radio, books</td>
<td>Define poverty in our community, in the world. Present your definition as an item for a news presentation, magazine, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>list, construct, paint, sketch, interview, manipulate, record, report, experiment</td>
<td>diary, photographs, puzzle, scrapbook, mobile, model</td>
<td>List ten ways we could each help those in need in our community. Present your work as an ‘advertising campaign’; use magazine pictures to support your work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>classify, categorise, separate, compare, contrast, advertise, survey</td>
<td>graph, survey, report, questionnaire, chart, diagram</td>
<td>Conduct an investigation into people’s understanding of poverty. Present your findings in graph format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>combine, invent, compose, predict, create, write, imagine, role-play</td>
<td>cartoon, song, advertisement, news article, poem, story, play, puppet-show</td>
<td>Design a series of ‘strip cartoons’ (as presented in daily newspapers) showing ways we can support those working with the poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>evaluate, debate, judge, choose, decide, discuss, recommend</td>
<td>letter, panel, court trial, recommendation</td>
<td>Conduct a debate - e.g. ‘Care of the poor is the responsibility of volunteers.’ As a class, decide how we may be able to work with this responsibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘Justice demands a consecration of each one for the welfare of all and especially for the protection of the weak.’

Frederic Ozanam

Social Justice Committee, St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria

Social justice refers to people’s rights pertaining to life, welfare, interpersonal relations and freedom as human beings living in community. This then means that social justice has an economic, political and cultural structure. Where there is a balance between people’s economic, political and cultural rights and their economic, political and cultural responsibilities in the community, there is social justice.

Why are people poor? What’s going on in our town?

Social Justice

What is Social Justice?

‘If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, “I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty”, without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? Faith is like that; if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead.’

James 2: 15-17

If people lived alone, separated from one another, there would be no need for social justice. But the fact that we do live in society, creating a whole chain of connected associations, makes social justice necessary. It is when the imbalances within the society are sufficiently marked that they constitute social injustice. Macintyre (1985) says that this implies a social order in which one class controls the labour of another and where the dominant class extends and systematises its advantages into all the corners of social life.

‘Social Justice occurs when all members of a society have equal access to the opportunities offered by that society, AND when all members of that society share equally the burden of sustaining the society.

Conversely, Social Injustice occurs when some members of a society are denied or limited in access to the opportunities offered by that society, OR some members of that society do not share equally in the burden of sustaining the society.’

‘Social Justice occurs when all members of a society have equal access to the opportunities offered by that society, AND when all members of that society share equally the burden of sustaining the society.'
People throughout the world are suffering injustices imposed upon them by economic inequities, political forces and cultural restrictions. Social justice always means a struggle. The struggle for those groups who have been made weak or powerless is to find justice. They want to be treated as people with the same worth as others. They want to have a voice, opportunities and freedoms. They want access to power. Social justice is rarely a gift from those in power.

The Synod of Bishops in 1971 made the following statement about justice:

> ‘Justice is the recognition … that since all men and women are members of the same human family, they are indissolubly linked with one another in the one destiny of the whole world, in the responsibility for which they all share.’

Social justice emphasises that justice is bound up with the society, with people, with the community. Social justice emphasises the communal good rather than any individual right to be treated justly. It is important that all justice be concerned with community, and the fair balancing of community needs with individual needs. The words of the prophet Micah call us to do three things:

> ‘Here then is what your God asks of you:  
To act justly  
To love tenderly  
To walk humbly with your God.’

Micah 6:8

The God of Micah is a God who is just and loving and who wishes people to walk together in faith. The God of the prophets passionately calls his people back into right relations - to justice and righteousness.

Jesus proposed a way of life that was at odds with the prevailing practice in Israel and the Roman Empire and, as Schiblin (1983) says, it continues to challenge the customs of our age in the following three ways:

1. **Sharing goods:**
   Jesus called for a sharing of surplus goods with the poor.

2. **Being servants:**
   Jesus challenged the prevailing norms about the exercise of power. The understanding of power that Jesus recommends is the exact antithesis of the world’s understandings. As Schiblin points out, though evidently the Lord, he goes among his followers as the servant, eg. washing of the feet. This is the antithesis of the way the world works.

3. **Standing up for justice:**
   Many Christians today in their pursuit of justice for us all feel obliged in conscience to take a critical stance toward political authority.

This is the upside-down world of the Gospels – only we don’t often see it, hear it, or recognise it as such!

**Social Justice Principles**

In 1839, aged 26, Ozanam presented the following social principles in his lectures on Commercial Law at the University of Lyon. They are a precursor of the principles of the Church’s social teaching:

1. Economic Liberalism is a materialist system which degrades the dignity of the human person. Man becomes a means, even a machine, rather than an end.

2. The system of production is basically unjust for it leaves wages to the law of supply and demand instead of adjusting them to provide decent conditions for human life. Workers must not be treated as commodities whose price rises and falls with the market.

3. Charity may bind the wounds, but it is not an adequate remedy. Only justice can establish a true human relationship between employer and labourer.

4. The labour market must be regulated by the free organisation of workers and by some state control.
Distinguishing Between Charity and Social Justice

Each is essential, but each has its distinct characteristics. The St Vincent de Paul Society’s Rule, Article 33, expresses it this way: ‘Charity is a divine virtue: Justice is a natural virtue. Charity is love, benevolence, compassion, the disposition of heart, which inclines us to think favourably of our fellows and to do good. It includes supreme love of God, and universal goodwill to all, especially those in need.’

‘Justice consists of all people having what is their due, their right. Our actions of charity and justice should result from the value of all individuals, of their dignity and their right to a share of God’s gifts, the world’s resources in spite of the material and moral misery which afflicts them. In all our charitable actions, we search for justice, and we are encouraged by the Church to do this, to play our part in creating a more equitable social order.’

Charity – Being a Good Samaritan

Charity involves opening your heart to another. It is often concerned with the personal problems of people rather than the causes of these problems. It is:

1. occasioned by an accidental event, a so-called act of God – flood, famine, earthquake - or an individual tragedy resulting from such things as fire or highway fatalities

2. spontaneous: there is no attempt to identify and cope with the causes of catastrophes. Relief measures are not designed to deal with the root causes of disaster as such. Rather, the charitable donation is intended to move quickly to the victim.

3. essentially a temporary provision: the victims must be provided with immediate assistance to satisfy basic human needs, such as food, clothing and shelter; but the expectation is that conditions will return to normal and relief measures will no longer be needed.

4. non-controversial: when victims of natural calamities or individual tragedies are clearly identified, the dominant question usually is not whether to respond to people in need, but rather, when, where and how.

The action of the Good Samaritan is a classic example of the charitable response. The parable is silent about any attempts by the Samaritan to survey the root causes of highway banditry in Palestine, or determine why the particular traveller had been victimised, or to analyse the cause of clerical indifference to human tragedy. The Samaritan, confronted by the victim on the roadside, promptly provided him with immediate, temporary and adequate assistance.

Social Justice - ‘Let My People Go’

Social justice is concerned with the creation or maintenance of a just society. It is concerned with the society as a whole, not simply with the problems of individuals.

To deal with issues of justice demands a different set of responses. Conditions of injustice are not accidents. They cannot be considered as acts of God; rather, they result from the acts of human beings. To relieve the victims of injustice demands that the root causes of injustice be identified and removed. This requires persistent and concerted effort.

Love is at the heart of all works of charity and justice. Love is the soul of justice.

Those living with injustice and in need, frequently live in conditions similar to those suffering from the effects of major disasters: wretched housing, inadequate food, insufficient medical care, marginal educational facilities. The scene, on face value, may appear to call for acts of charity. However, the search for root causes is likely to uncover not an isolated event, but rather, institutionalised conditions which violate the human dignity of groups or persons. To fail to grapple with this is to fail to be connected with and to minister to those who hunger and thirst for justice.
The events in the book of Exodus, of Moses liberating his people, aptly illustrate efforts to remove root causes of injustice. Moses did not appeal to Pharaoh for teams of Egyptian volunteers with medicine and food to enter Jewish forced-labour camps. On the contrary, he challenged the institutional injustices of Pharaoh’s system, the enslaving logic of Pharaoh, even destroying unjust Egyptian laws; and ultimately he led his people to a new freedom and a new identity as a people.

This is what God does and what we are called to do. In this way we help to build the kingdom of God. This must be a kingdom founded in relationships which reflect the dignity of every human person. In what we might call ‘right relationship’.

Every citizen also has the responsibility to work to secure justice and human rights through an organized social response. In the words of Pius XI, ‘...charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account ... Let no one attempt with small gifts of charity to exempt himself from the great duties imposed by justice.’ The guaranteeing of basic justice for all is not an optional expression of largesse but an inescapable duty for the whole of society. (US Catholic Bishops, 1986, Economic Justice for All – Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching)

References:


St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, 2001, Building Bridges - Reflections on Social Justice.


http://www.osjspm.org/cst/eja.htm

http://www.vinnies.org.au


Rationale:
Charity and justice are inseparable. In 1968 the Latin American bishops said it simply: ‘...love is the soul of justice’. In the first half of the nineteenth century French society was in turmoil, with approximately ninety percent of the population suffering some sort of impoverishment. Ozanam was always focused on ‘the social question’: in his time it was “a complex of problems arising from the industrialization and secularization of society.” In 1833, Ozanam wrote: ‘There are many people who have too much, and who want still more. There are many people who do not have enough, who have nothing and who will take if they are not given. A struggle is starting between these two types of people. The struggle threatens to be a terrible one. On one side is the power of gold, on the other is the power of despair.’ He made the decision to be judged by his deeds. He stated, ‘...we must do what our Lord Jesus did when preaching the Gospel, we must go to the poor.’

Outcomes:
By the end of this chapter it is hoped that students will be able to:

Cognitive:
• Identify ways the Catholic community supports those in need.
• Discuss some of the issues which arise in our community.
• Interpret, explain and describe difficulties that could arise from living as Jesus asked us to.

Affective:
• Value the contribution of Catholics to the challenge of Jesus in the areas of politics, education, health and social welfare.
• Describe the principles Jesus taught and modelled in the way he lived and died which are central to living out our Christian life.

Notes:
The following chart is to act as a support, summarising the distinctions between charity and justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charity</th>
<th>Social Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause:</strong> Accidental events that affect individuals – e.g. car accidents, house fires</td>
<td><strong>Cause:</strong> Human systems that affect groups of people – e.g. retrenchments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristic:</strong> Spontaneity: victim is the focus, not the cause.</td>
<td><strong>Characteristic:</strong> Organised projects to impact practices that cause hardships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> Temporary and immediate: expectation that things will return to normal.</td>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> Long-term measures to change social systems and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-controversial Actions:</strong> Questions are not whether to respond, but when, where, how.</td>
<td><strong>Controversial Actions:</strong> Institutions and prevailing order are questioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture Examples:</strong> Jesus fed the hungry and healed the sick. The Good Samaritan does not question the causes of highway banditry but provides immediate assistance.</td>
<td><strong>Scriptural Examples:</strong> Jesus embodied change in attitude and practices (systems); e.g. treatment of women and foreigners. Exodus story: Moses did not ask for food and medicine; he challenged the injustice of the Pharaoh’s system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching & Learning Activities

Academic Controversy

The first Manual of the St Vincent de Paul Society, printed in 1835, insisted there be no political discussions: ‘The Society is all charity, politics are wholly foreign to it.’ It was referring to the thoroughly divisive politics of the day and did not want these divisions brought into the meeting. Of course Ozanam himself was very much involved in the political debates of the late 1840s which were determining the future direction of French society.

Can charity be separated from social justice issues and politics?

Use the Academic Controversy process below to develop arguments relating to issues of social justice, charity and politics.

### PROCEDURE FOR AN ACADEMIC CONTROVERSY

**Social Justice, Charity and Politics**

1. **PAIRS STUDY**  
   (10 – 30 mins)
   From groups of four, divide into pairs. The pairs each study the same background information about social justice, charity and politics. The information section of this chapter or the St Vincent de Paul Society (either via the web site or through the local conference) as well as other references can be of support here. One pair takes the positive perspective, while the other takes the negative. They spend at least 5 mins in developing their argument. They then meet with a pair of a similar viewpoint from another group to refine their perspective.

2. **PAIRS PRESENT**  
   (5 mins)
   Move back to their original group of four, and each side then presents their arguments. The other pair listens, except to ask clarifying questions.

3. **PAIRS CHALLENGE**  
   (5 mins)
   Each side challenges the other side’s position, asking for justification, looking for any inconsistencies.

4. **PAIRS REVERSE POSITIONS**  
   (5 mins)
   Each side now switches roles to argue the opposite side to the one they were previously defending. Those who supported the place of politics with works of charity and social justice must now present the defence for those who feel that the works of politics, social justice and charity must not be combined.

5. **GROUP REPORT WRITING**  
   (10 – 20 mins)
   Team members ‘drop’ their assigned roles and work together to decide which arguments are the most valid from both sides, and develop a statement or report that incorporates their discussion. Consensus is sought but not required. Each group member should be ready to report and defend the decision to the class. Assessment is based on the depth of the consideration of all the arguments.

6. **CLASS DISCUSSION OF DECISIONS**
   The teacher may wish to do this before the final report writing so as to further test the arguments.

7. **PROCESSING**  
   (At least 5 mins)
   Group members discuss how well they worked together. What worked best? How could we improve the way we did this activity?
Venn Diagram

Venn diagrams have two (or more) overlapping circles, and students can use this graphic organiser to compare and contrast the two aspects of charity and social justice.

Students write or draw the differences they can recognise between charity and social justice in the parts of the circles that do not overlap, and write or draw the similarities in the overlapping section. Summarise the information presented and support the students in interpreting this information. This information from the Venn diagram can be used to support an argumentative or comparative piece of writing.

Moral Dilemma – Drama Activities

All followers of Jesus are called to do what he did: to confront the social structures that diminish or enslave people. We need to look at things from the point of view of those who are poor and excluded. Using Matthew chapters 5 – 7 as a guide, find examples where Jesus highlights a moral responsibility in following him, e.g.

• loving your enemies.
• turning the other cheek.
• forgiving.
• making extra efforts to help others.

Workshop these examples from the gospel of Matthew into a modern day scenario that can be presented to the rest of the class. The following activities may give support here:

• **Role-Play** can be used for developing many different situations in a wide variety of contexts. Role-play allows students to enter imaginatively into the life experiences of others. It is important when using this strategy, to always debrief or ‘de-role’ students at the end of each role-play session

• **Hot Seat** is a variation on Role-Play. After the students have researched the topic – i.e., become ‘expert’ in the area of social justice, charity and the way Jesus gave us to live, a student is invited to sit at the front of the class and be a person who reflects an aspect of what has been studied. The student presents a brief introduction as background for their character, and then responds to questions and other comments from the rest of the class.

In both of the above activities, students should be encouraged to develop each of the following as well as they can:

• **Appearance** - concentrating especially on movement and stance
• **Emotions** – concentrating on how they might imagine the feelings, speech and actions of the character they are developing.
• **Speech** – are there typical words or phrases that the character uses?
• **Reactions** – what do other people say or think about this person? What kind of responses does the person have?
• **Choices** – what choices does the person make? Why? What other choices could have been made?

Debate

Topics to be debated can be developed as part of the introduction or assessment activity to this topic. Questions relating to the plight of the poor, the place of social justice and voluntary organisations, long-term charity and social justice issues - e.g. Jesus said, ‘The poor will always be with us’, so we have permission to let them be.

The whole class group can be divided into two equal and opposing sides, one for the affirmative and the other for the negative. If the class is large, each side can be further divided into three sub-groups which gather to select arguments for their side’s case. Selected speakers then briefly present the case for their side.
‘Bundling’ Scripture

Locate and read the following scripture passages, then classify and organise them to display how Jesus showed and taught us how to live and show care for others.

- Mark 1:29-34
- Mark 10:46-52
- Matt 18:12-13
- Mark 9:31-37
- Luke 5:12-15
- John 8:1-11
- Luke 10:30-37
- Luke 18:15-17
- John 4:31-38
- Luke 19:1-10
- Luke 16:19-31
- John 6:1-14

After classifying these stories, list the actions which Jesus highlighted when caring for those in need. Design a poster/mural which ‘celebrates’ these actions.

Facts and Feelings

Use the following worksheet about (A) facts and (B) feelings to allow students to articulate their learning in relation to charity and social justice, and their feelings in relation to what they have learned. Section C can be used to allow students to express their responses to this topic, what further investigation they could develop, as well as any unanswered questions and reactions they have experienced.
Catholic Social Teaching

‘… in so far as you did this to one of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.’

Matthew 25:40

‘But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.’

Amos 5:24

What is Catholic Social Teaching?

Catholic social teaching is based in Scripture and can perhaps be summarised in Christ’s teaching: “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.” (Matt. 25:40).

When we do this we are doing what God did when he freed the Israelites from their enslavement in Egypt and what the prophets alerted us to when they cried out to Israel to maintain its identity as a community of slaves set free.

Catholic social teaching promotes a vision of a just society that is grounded in biblical revelation, the teachings of the leaders of the early church, and in the wisdom gathered from the experience of Christians as they have responded to injustices and sufferings throughout history.

A commitment to social justice is an essential characteristic of a life lived according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not possible, in the Catholic tradition, to live out a full life of faith in the absence of this commitment.

The development of a Catholic social tradition over the past one hundred years has led to a sophisticated body of teaching that cannot be simplified or summarised easily.

This social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, council and episcopal documents that explore and express the social demands of our faith; and also, of course, in the lives of Christians, a great cloud of witnesses to the living out of the Gospels, over the last hundred years.

Catholic social teaching is a response to what Frederic Ozanam called the social question – in his day the effects of industrialisation and secularisation - and what Pope Paul VI in 1971 called ‘the new social questions’. These are the questions that arise in our time, in a post industrial society – e.g. the mass movement to great urban centres, the impact of technology, the globalisation of our lives, etc.

Easy answers to hard problems cannot be found in the social teachings.
The social teaching of the Catholic Church is both true doctrine and a framework for action.

This tradition calls on all members of the Church, rich and poor alike, to work to eliminate the occurrence and effect of poverty, to speak out against injustice and to shape a more caring society and a more peaceful world.

‘If a man who was rich enough in this world’s goods saw that one of his brothers was in need, but closed his heart to him, how could the love of God be living in him?’
1 John 3:17

At the heart of Catholic social teaching is the dignity of the human person.

**Papal Encyclicals**

One point to begin the discussion of modern Catholic social teaching is Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical of 1891, *Rerum Novarum* (Of New Things). It dealt with the conditions and dignity of workers in the context of the great transformation we call the Industrial Revolution.

In 1931, Pius XI returned to Leo XIII’s social themes with *Quadragesimo Anno* (Forty Years After), issued on the 40th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. Pius XII, in turn, expanded this social teaching, especially through messages on special occasions and to specific people.

After 1958, John XXIII introduced a new era and a new style. He broke new ground in two major social encyclicals, *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher), and *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth). They were addressed to all people of good will, and revealed an openness to the possibilities of the modern world.

Paul VI followed with major statements such as his 1967 encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of People). He directly challenged the planning of economic and social development in the modern industrial societies, at the expense of poor nations. Paul VI also initiated the making of important papal statements during visits outside Rome, such as to the United Nations in New York in 1965, and the meeting of Latin American bishops at Medellin, Colombia, in 1968. He also launched the Synod of Bishops which has become an occasion for major social teachings. In 1971 he said it was necessary for social teaching to confront what he called the ‘new social questions.’ These new social questions arise out of a post industrial society that is highly bureaucratised, shaped by technology and mass communication and powerfully urbanised.

John Paul II has continued and expanded the papal challenge to both capitalism and communism in encyclicals – *Laborem Exercens* (1981, On Work), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987, On Social Concerns); *Centesimus Annus* (1991, the 100th anniversary of Leo XIII’s encyclical) – in statements summing up synods of bishops and in major statements during visits around the world. It is clear he has made integral humanism, human solidarity and human rights his major concerns.

Encyclicals are papal statements which articulate the most important teachings of a pope. Directed to Catholic bishops and Catholics worldwide, they are expected to be taken seriously by all Catholics.

**Frederic Ozanam: a founding figure of Catholic Social Teaching**

According to the Australian historian John Molony in his book on *Rerum Novarum* ‘... not only did Frederic Ozanam’s work push the church into taking an option for the poor, but years before it was written he also believed in and proclaimed all that *Rerum Novarum* expressed.’

In that sense Frederic Ozanam may be thought of as a founding figure of modern Catholic social teaching. ‘A precursor of the social doctrine of the Church’ as Pope John Paul II said at his beatification.

**Solidarity**

‘This one word has become a shorthand way of summing up the church's Faithjustice tradition with a late 20th accent.’

‘Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people near and far. On the contrary it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual.’

John Paul II *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*

‘Solidarity is the conviction that we are born into a fabric of social relationships that our humanity ties us to others…’

‘Solidarity helps us to treat the others not as things to be used but as our neighbours.’

‘We cannot have solidarity without middle class Catholics reaching out to poor Catholics and vice versa.’
A Summary of Key Documents
This teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of today's society. Since 1891 it has been expressed in a tradition of papal encyclicals, and council and episcopal documents. Following is a summary of these documents, highlighting the key themes, as presented by Henriot et al. (1992) in their publication Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret:

1. The Conditions of Labour

Major Areas of Concern
• Care for the Poor
• Rights of Workers
• Role of Private Property
• Duties of Workers and Employers
• Return to Christian Morals
• Role of Public Authority

Context
Much poverty. Because of the Industrial Revolution, workers are being exploited by profit-hungry employers. Public authorities are not protecting the rights of the poor.

Innovation
First comprehensive document of social justice; brings the subject of worker's rights to light.

2. The Reconstruction of the Social Order
Quadragesimo Anno, Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI, 1931

Major Areas of Concern
• Role of the Church
• Responsible Ownership
• Labour and Capital
• Public Authority
• Just Social Order
• Capitalism and Socialism

Context
A response to the Great Depression, which began in 1929 and rocked the world. In Europe, democracy has declined and dictators have emerged to take power. Fortieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum.

Innovation
Introduces the concept of ‘subsidiarity’, saying social problems should be resolved on more local levels first.

3. Christianity and Social Progress
Mater et Magistra, Encyclical letter of Pope John XXIII, 1961

Major Areas of Concern
• Just Remuneration
• Subsidiarity
• Agriculture
• Economic Development
• Role of the Church
• International Cooperation
• Socialisation

Context
Advancements such as nuclear energy, automation, space exploration and improved communication technologies pose complex, new problems for industrialised nations. Meanwhile, millions live in poverty in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Innovation
‘Internationalises’ social teaching by addressing, for the first time, the plight of non-industrialised nations.

4. Peace on Earth
Pacem In Terris, Encyclical Letter of Pope John XXIII, 1963

Major Areas of Concern
• Rights and Duties
• Role of Public Authorities
• Common Good
• Christian World Order
• International Relations
• Disarmament

Context
Follows two early Cold War events - the erection of the Berlin Wall (August 1961) and the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962)

Innovation
‘Its optimistic tone and development of a philosophy of rights made a significant impression on Catholics and non-Catholics alike,’ Henriot et al. (1985)
5. The Church in the Modern World  
*Gaudium et Spes, Second Vatican Council, 1965*

**Major Areas of Concern**
- Human Dignity
- Common Good
- ‘Signs of the Times’
- Public Responsibility
- Respect for Families
- Right of Culture
- Justice and Development
- Peace

**Context**
The Cold War and arms race still loom. Discussion of *Gaudium et Spes* was slotted after Belgium’s Cardinal Joseph Suenens spoke up after the first session of Vatican II asking that the council also address ‘external’ issues rather than liturgical change.

**Innovation**
First social teaching to represent the world’s bishops.

6. The Development of Peoples  
*Populorum Progressio, Encyclical Letter of Pope Paul VI, 1967*

**Major Areas of Concern**
- Human Aspirations
- Structural Injustice
- Church and Development
- New Humanism
- Common Good
- Economic Planning
- International Trade
- Peace

**Context**
The Vietnam War rages. African nations fighting wars of independence.

**Innovation**
First encyclical devoted specifically to the issues of international development.

7. A Call to Action  
*Octogesima Adveniens, Apostolic Letter of Pope Paul VI, 1971*

**Major Areas of Concern**
- Urbanisation
- Role of Local Churches
- Duties of Individual Christians
- Political Activity
- Worldwide Dimensions of Justice

**Context**
The world is verging on a recession, so the ‘new poor’ are especially vulnerable. In the US follows a decade of action on behalf of civil rights, led by Martin Luther King Jr; coincides with the women’s movement of the early 1970s and continuing student protests against the Vietnam War.

**Innovation**
The role of individual Christians in responding to injustice.

8. Justice in the World  
*Statement of the Synod of Bishops, 1971*

**Major Areas of Concern**
- Personal Conversion
- Church and Culture
- Justice and Liberation
- Universal and Individual Churches
- Gospel and Non-Christians

**Context**
Echoing not only the worldly political upheavals of the late ‘60s and the early ‘70s, this document is strongly influenced by the insights of Church leaders from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

**Innovation**
The first major example of post-Vatican II episcopal collegiality.

9. Evangelisation in the Modern World  
*Evangelii Nuntiandi, Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI, 1975*

**Major Areas of Concern**
- Personal Conversion
- Church and Culture
- Justice and Liberation
- Universal and Individual Churches
- Gospel and Non-Christians

**Context**
Document itself notes cultural problems of atheistic secularism, indifference, consumerism, focus on pleasure, discrimination and desire to dominate.

**Innovation**
Challenging injustice and preaching liberation are essential components of evangelisation.

10. Redeemer of Humankind  
*Redemptor Hominis, Encyclical of John Paul II, 1979*

In this his first encyclical in March 1979, John Paul II lays out the program for his entire pontificate. It offers a searching examination of man’s capacity for good and evil and asks the question, ‘Where do we go now?’
11. On Human Work
*Laborem Exercens, Encyclical of John Paul II, 1981*

**Major Areas of Concern**
- Dignity of Work
- Capitalism and Socialism
- Property
- Unions
- Employment
- Spirituality of Work

**Context**
On the 90th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, huge numbers of people are unemployed or underemployed. Migrant workers typically exploited.

**Innovation**
Concluding remarks contain a detailed ‘spirituality of work.’

12. The Social Concerns of the Church
*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, 1988*

**Major Areas of Concern**
- Authentic Development
- North/South Gap
- East/West Blocs
- Solidarity
- Option for the Poor
- Structures of Sin
- Ecological Concerns

**Context**
World economy is in flux - debt, unemployment and recession hitting affluent and poor nations alike.

**Innovation**
The ‘structures of sin’ insight

13. One Hundred Years
*Centesimus Annus, Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, 1991*

**Major Areas of Concern**
- Human Dignity
- Human Rights
- Justice
- Development
- Peace
- Economic Systems

**Context**
The collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe.

**Innovation**
While careful not to give a blanket endorsement, notes the benefits of capitalism as an economic system.

---

**Major Themes of Catholic Social Teaching**

The following summary highlights ten major themes from Catholic social teaching of the last century and more. It’s informed by various publications of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

1. **Dignity of the Human Person**
Belief in the intrinsic dignity of the human person is the basis of all Catholic social teaching. Human life is sacred and the dignity of the human person is the starting point for an ethical vision for society. This principle is grounded in the idea that the person is made in the image of God. The person is the clearest reflection of God among us.

2. **Common Good and Community**
The human person is both holy and social. We realise our dignity and human rights in relationship with others, in community. Human beings grow and achieve completion in community. Human dignity can only be realised and protected in the context of relationships with the wider society. How we arrange our society - in economics and politics, in law and policy - directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The obligation to ‘love our neighbour’ has an individual dimension, but it also requires a broader social obligation. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the good of the whole society, to the common good.

3. **Option for the Poor**
The moral test of a society is how it treats its most helpless members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor. The ‘option for the poor’ is not an adversarial slogan that pits one group or class against another. Rather it states that the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community. The option for the poor is an essential part of society’s effort to achieve the common good. A healthy community can be achieved only if its members give special consideration to those with special needs, to those who are poor and on the margins of society.

4. **Rights and Responsibilities**
Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Every person has a basic right to life and a right to those things required for human decency, starting with food, shelter and clothing, employment, health care and education. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities – to one another, to our families and to the larger society.
5. Role of Government and Subsidiarity
The state has a positive moral function. It is an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights and build the common good. All people have a right and a responsibility to participate in political institutions so that government can achieve its proper goals. The principle of subsidiarity holds that the functions of government should be performed at the lowest level possible, as long as they can be performed adequately. When the needs in question cannot adequately be met at the lower level, then it is not only necessary but crucial that higher levels of government intervene.

6. Economic Justice
The economy must serve the people, not the other way around. All workers have a right to productive work, to decent and fair wages and to safe working conditions. They have a fundamental right to organise and join unions. People have a right to economic initiative and private property, but these rights have limits. No one is allowed to accumulate excessive wealth when others lack the basic necessities of life.

7. Stewardship of God’s Creation
The goods of the earth are gifts from God and they are intended by God for the benefit of everyone. There is a ‘social mortgage’ that guides our use of the world’s goods, and we have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users. How we treat the environment is a measure of our stewardship, a sign of our respect for the Creator.

8. Promotion of Peace and Disarmament
Catholic teaching promotes peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. In the words of Pope John Paul II, ‘... peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements.’ There is a close relationship in Catholic teaching between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings.

9. Participation
All people have a right to participate in the economic, political and cultural life of society. It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured of a minimum level of participation in the community. It is wrong for a person to be excluded unfairly or to be unable to participate in society.

10. Global Solidarity and Development
We are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice. Authentic development must be fully human development. It must respect and promote personal, social, economic and political rights, including the rights of nations and of peoples. It must avoid the extremes of underdevelopment on the one hand and ‘super development’ on the other. Accumulating material goods and technical resources will be unsatisfactory and debasing if there is no respect for the moral, cultural and spiritual dimensions of the person.
References:


Australian Catholic Social Justice Council Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee Inquiry into the ASIO Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2002.


http://www.osjspm.org

http://www.stfoafrisco.org/Parish/Social/Ministry/thirteen_major_documents.htm

http://www3.sympatico.ca/maebern/glfour.htm

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/pope/encyclicals/

http://www.uscatholic.org/cstline/tline.html

http://www.uscatholic.org/cstline/tline2.html

http://www.nd.edu/~jashley/theo251/guides/socialteachings.html

http://www.diopitt.org/resource4.htm


THE WORLD WILL CRY
Rationale:

This chapter looks at the history and development of Catholic social teaching, post the Industrial Revolution. It gives a snapshot of the various papal encyclicals as well as the major themes of Catholic social teaching. Teachers may find that integrating this topic into the History learning area will also be a great support, allowing for greater informed discussion.

Catholic social teaching is deeply rooted in the Scriptures. This tradition is:

- *founded on the life and works of Jesus Christ*, who came ‘to bring glad tidings to the poor…liberty to captives…recovery of sight to the blind’ (Lk 4: 18–19), and who identified himself with ‘the least of these’, the hungry, the homeless, the stranger. (cf Mt. 25:45)
- *inspired by the passion for justice of the Hebrew prophets* and Scripture’s call to care for the weak.
- *articulated by the social teaching of the Church*, including papal encyclicals, conciliary documents and episcopal statements that have explored and expressed the social demands of our faith, especially over the last century. This tradition insists that the work for justice and peace and care for the poor and vulnerable are the responsibility of every Christian.
- *shaped by those who have come before us*, by St Vincent de Paul, Frederic Ozanam and countless others whose lives and work have been models of the Christian commitment to justice and peace.
- *lived by the People of God*, who seek to build the kingdom of God, to live our faith in the world, and to apply the values of the Scriptures and the teaching of the Church in our own families and parishes, in our work and service and in local communities, the nation and the world.

Outcomes:

By the end of this chapter it is hoped that students will be able to:

**Cognitive:**

- List the issues that affect people today.
- Research and explain the contribution of each papal encyclical to social teaching.
- Demonstrate an awareness and knowledge of the history of Catholic social teaching.
- Define the terms ‘rights’ and ‘duties’ and their relationship to each other.
- Acknowledge the contribution of Catholic social teaching to the development of social justice in our community.
- Compare and contrast social/working conditions of workers in the nineteenth century with those of today.
- Identify Scripture passages in which Catholic social teaching is founded.
Affective:
• Reflect on and show awareness of the issues of the world that affect people.
• Demonstrate how they protect and value their own dignity.
• Develop a sense of the necessity for social justice in the world.
• Appreciate the dignity of all people in society.
• Reflect on the challenges of Catholic social tradition.

Notes:

‘Pope John Paul II writes very forcefully in Centesimus Annus: “The ‘new evangelisation,’ which the modern world urgently needs and which I have emphasised many times, must include among its essential elements a proclamation of the Church’s social doctrine.” (#5) The Church has been proclaiming this doctrine in a rather clear way now for more than one hundred years. Are Catholics really well evangelised in this regard? Is this social doctrine part of their explicit consciousness?…As followers of Christ, the Evangeliser of the Poor, we must proclaim this aspect of the reign of God by our words and by our works. We must hold up before others the Church’s rich teaching, its vision of a kingdom of justice, its denunciation of unjust social structures, its proclamation that the poor must, in every era, occupy a central place in the consciousness of Christians. In our formation work, with both clergy and laity, we must present this social teaching with both clarity and urgency.’

‘Our mission will be truly prophetic today if we preach and teach the Church’s social doctrine clearly. And like many prophets, we may perhaps suffer as we do so.’

Robert P. Maloney C.M.

‘Catholic social teaching is both true doctrine and a framework for action. It is not optional or fringe; it is an integral part of the Christian message and Catholic education. Catholic schools, seminaries, religious education programs and universities or colleges are all called to make a serious effort to share the social mission of the Church. This is a recurring theme of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Sharing our social teaching is integral to the mission of Catholic education in all its forms.’
Teaching & Learning Activities

Jigsaw Discussion Groups (Expert groups)

This activity is designed so that all class members will become ‘instant’ experts about Catholic social teaching. It could be designed so that the class looks at some of the encyclicals in depth, or perhaps at the major themes of Catholic social teaching.

Process:

1. **Form Home Groups – number off from 1–6**  
(5 mins)

2. **Form Expert Groups**  
(10 mins)

All number ones congregate in a group and so on. Each group investigates/learns a different part of the topic from each of the other groups. Each person becomes an ‘expert’ and must teach his/her home group this information in 3 below.

3. **Re-form Home Groups**  
(15 mins)

Each home group’s ‘expert’ now teaches the group and has three minutes to present information.
De Bono Planner (six thinking hats)

The six thinking hats provide an excellent structure for students to think in different ways about an issue. It will help students become more logical in their thinking and more articulate in how they express these thoughts.

Select one of the encyclicals on social teaching e.g., *Centesimus Annus* - and use the following planner to develop thoughts and ideas about this letter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six Hats</th>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Hat</strong></td>
<td>What are the facts? What information is needed to help understand this predicament or idea?</td>
<td>What are the facts presented in and represented by Pope John Paul II in this encyclical?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting information/facts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yellow Hat</strong></td>
<td>What are the good things, strengths, positive aspects and advantages of the idea?</td>
<td>What good things are recognised by Pope John Paul II about each of the areas covered by this encyclical?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the positive or good things</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black Hat</strong></td>
<td>What are the negative features of the idea? What are its weaknesses, dangers or problems?</td>
<td>What negative aspects are presented by Pope John Paul II about each of the areas of concern?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the negative things or concerns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red Hat</strong></td>
<td>What are the foremost feelings about this idea?</td>
<td>What feelings do you associate with each of the areas of this encyclical?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional reactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Hat</strong></td>
<td>What are the possible ways that this idea/problem can be made better?</td>
<td>How could this encyclical be redeveloped to cover more recent developments in society?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blue Hat</strong></td>
<td>What strategies used in solving the problem were most effective? Which hat was best for this particular issue?</td>
<td>Which hat supported understanding of the encyclical the best? Which hat offered the best opportunity for designing action in our community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting on the process/thinking about the thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
De Bono ‘action shoes’

This strategy follows on from the thinking hats, where students take the discussion developed with the hats and move them into possible actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six shoes</th>
<th>Key behaviour</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal shoes</strong></td>
<td>Actions that cover routines and procedures.</td>
<td>What are the behaviours associated with each of the major areas of concern in this encyclical?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following routines and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workers boots</strong></td>
<td>Actions that cover sensible, practical and pragmatic behaviours.</td>
<td>What practical actions can you take to raise awareness of each of the major areas of concern in your community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking charge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slippers</strong></td>
<td>Actions that cover care, compassion and attention to human feelings and</td>
<td>What actions can you take to ensure that people in your community develop positive attitudes to understanding each of the major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding sensitively</td>
<td>sensitivities.</td>
<td>areas of concern in this encyclical?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sneakers</strong></td>
<td>Actions that cover exploration, investigation and the collection of</td>
<td>What actions can your class take now to support those in your community who are reflected in this encyclical?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reacting quickly</td>
<td>evidence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character Boots</strong></td>
<td>Actions that cover emergencies or safety considerations.</td>
<td>What actions can you take that will raise awareness in your community of the peace, justice, rights, dignity and economic situations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using initiative and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deck shoes</strong></td>
<td>Actions that involve playing out the ‘role’ given by virtue of a position</td>
<td>What actions would you take to support this encyclical if you were a politician?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collecting information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Questioning the Text**

Use the questions on the following worksheet to analyse and evaluate the message of an encyclical. Students can interrogate the text to uncover the meaning, reasons, viewpoints, etc. of the author of the encyclical.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Question</th>
<th>Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarifying Meaning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the author mean by…….?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the main point?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is an example of the issue?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How could you summarise this encyclical?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does ……….relate to…….?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Probing Assumptions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the author assuming?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are we assuming when we read this encyclical?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this assumption relevant in all communities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identifying Reasons</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What reasons does the author give or imply?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other information do we need to know?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would convince you of the opposite view?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establishing Viewpoint/Perspective</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why does this encyclical choose this perspective?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there an alternative to this viewpoint?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessing Implications or Consequences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What implications have followed the presentation of this encyclical?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has this letter had impact?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflective Journal

The reflective journal will help students to reflect on what they have learned and plan what they might learn next.

**Major aspects of this encyclical**

**Connections I can make with my society**

**Questions I still have**

Bumper Stickers

Students can create bumper stickers about the major aspects of an encyclical. Encourage students to create "catchy one-liners" for their bumper stickers. Use computer graphics. Develop a gallery of the various stickers.
Burning Issue

This strategy is designed for students to be able to show different perspectives of any issue.

**Process:**
- Select an area of Catholic social teaching for investigation - e.g. human equality, the dignity and rights of workers.
- Divide the class into four perspectives eg. gender, culture, futures, government, church, etc.
- Each group consider the issue from their allocated perspective.
- Use De Bono’s Thinking Hats to support the discussion and reporting aspects of this activity.
- Supply each student with a worksheet containing a square divided into four quadrants. Following each group report, students record a summary of the findings in the appropriate quadrant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Corners**
- After considering each of the issues as presented and summarised in the above activity, students then think about their own position on the issue being discussed.
- Divide the room into quadrants so that each corner represents one of the positions under consideration.
- Students move to one of the four corners as a way of stating their position on the issue being studied.
- Each group then prepares an oral justification of their position.
- After hearing each group’s presentation students are then given the choice to move again to another corner, or even to construct an imaginary diagonal or connecting line between corners, where students can also move to.
- Students then record in written/oral form a rationale for their decision.
## Eight Intelligences

Howard Gardner has described eight forms of intelligence that show a person’s abilities. The following table briefly describes each of these intelligences and offers some relevant activities related to the development of understanding for Catholic social tradition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligence</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Verbal-Linguistic       | • Conduct a debate about an issue in Catholic social teaching  
                          • Research Scripture passages where Jesus shows by example and words care for others.  
                          • Create a newspaper celebrating social teaching in practice.                          |
| Musical-Rhythmic        | • Create a song/rap related to an issue of Catholic social teaching.                         
                          • Rewrite the words to a popular song to express an idea taken from Catholic social teaching. |
| Interpersonal           | • Group discussion activities.  
                          • Debating.                                                                                 |
| Intrapersonal           | • Activities could include reflective writing and speaking about decisions related to debates or discussions about Catholic social teaching. Evaluate one’s own thinking and expressing various feeling about the topic. |
| Visual-Spatial          | • Create a photographic montage about a principle of Catholic social teaching.               
                          • Design/illustrate a concept map presenting the basic principles of Catholic social teaching. |
| Bodily-Kinesthetic       | • Choreograph a dance/mime to demonstrate an understanding of the development of a basic principle of Catholic social teaching. |
| Logical-Mathematical    | • Use Venn diagrams, concept webs, etc. to analyse Catholic social teaching.                
                          • Create a time-line of Papal encyclicals.                                                 
                          • Compare and contrast different eras and how these relate to the basic principles of Catholic social tradition. |
| Naturalist              | • Compare and contrast the effects of industrialisation on different environmental experiences - e.g. towns, sea, country.  
                          • Design ways we can respond to effects of industrialisation for the good of all, eg. pollution, transport issues, etc. |
SCAMPER

This strategy is an acronym referring to the thinking processes: **Substitute, Combine, Adopt, Modify-Magnify-Minify, Put to other uses, Eliminate, Reverse-Rearrange**.

It is a checklist to help plan and implement creative thinking and problem-solving processes – in this case, looking at the effects of technologies on workers in all communities and considering the place of Catholic Social Teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>S</strong> Substitute</td>
<td>Who/what else instead? Other elements, processes, place, etc.</td>
<td>• Consider the impact of technology on communities other than industrial based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> Combine</td>
<td>Combine ideas, people, purposes, etc.</td>
<td>• What new technologies can be of benefit to all members of society (industrialised or not), recognising the dignity of all persons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Adapt</td>
<td>Adjust for the purpose of suiting a particular situation. How else can this be used?</td>
<td>• How else can technology be adapted to suit the needs of workers as well as the needs of society?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong> Modify</td>
<td>Alter, change meaning, sound, new twist.</td>
<td>• How can technology be used to make life easier for community members, as well as respect the needs and rights of workers and their families?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnify</td>
<td>Enlarge, add time, duplicate, multiply.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minify</td>
<td>Make smaller, slower, less frequent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P</strong> Put to other uses</td>
<td>New ways to use other than the original use.</td>
<td>• What if Scripture were used as the basis for all industrial/social laws?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong> Eliminate</td>
<td>Remove or omit a part or whole</td>
<td>• What would happen if money was taken out of the equation – i.e. workers were ‘paid/supplied’ with all needs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong> Reverse</td>
<td>Transpose positive and negative. Reverse roles.</td>
<td>• Jesus is in charge of the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rearrange</td>
<td>Change order or adjust. Different layout.</td>
<td>• All workers equal. The managerial hierarchy is removed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Web quest

There are many websites which can help, support and enhance students’ and teachers’ research in this area:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p3sle2a3.htm
http://www.justpeace.org/romero4.htm
http://www.ojsspm.org/cst/themes.htm
http://www.ojsspm.org/cst/q_rights.htm

Fact fence/wall

In this activity, students select and classify facts and then make statements of generalisation and/or understanding.

**Process**
- Each student/group is given a piece of paper representing a brick shape.
- The students write facts about Catholic social tradition on these brick shapes.
- The facts are then shared with the rest of the class.
- The facts can then be organised into categories and pasted in a fence/wall pattern onto a larger sheet of paper.
- Students then study each category of facts and develop a statement or generalisation for each one.

**Alternatively**
- Students can be given generalisation/statement and then develop the facts and write them on brick shapes to develop a wall/fence.

Concept Spiral

This strategy can be used for students to show their understanding of the basic principles of Catholic social teaching. Choose six principles of Catholic social teaching. Each circle of the spiral is separate, with all four being joined together with a split pin so that each circle can move independently when completed.

**Inner Wedge:** draw a symbol representing the principle for that wedge.
**Second section:** name of principle of Catholic social teaching.
**Third section:** summarise what this principle is about.
**Fourth section:** write what this principle means to us today.

Praying over a dead child in the Darfur region of Sudan
Concept Spiral: (continued)

To construct the ‘spiral’:

- copy the following graphic design four times
- cut each circle separately
- layer each circle as shown in diagram
- join each layer of the spiral with a split pin so that each layer of the spiral is able to move independently.
In The Beginning

Vincent de Paul was born in 1581, the third child of six of an overworked, peasant farming couple in the village of Pouy, Gascony, in southwest France. His parents recognised his intellectual talent and directed him towards the priesthood. It was the only way they knew out of the drudgery of the land, and it might improve the family fortunes. At that time, the clergy was a highly respected class and were granted privileged positions in society and also given one tenth of all that was produced by farming peasants.

He attended the universities of Dax and Toulouse, where he studied humanities and theology. He was ordained a priest in 1600 at the age of 19, having concealed his age so as to overcome the Church’s rule at the time that priests had to be twenty-five before they could receive Holy Orders.

Slavery

Various biographers and historians who have studied and written about Vincent’s life disagree as to what happened to Vincent in the two years between 1605 and 1607. All the information we have for this period is deduced from two letters that Vincent wrote to a M. De Comet, who was later to become the young priest’s new patron. It is said that Vincent was seized by Turkish pirates while on a voyage by sea from Marseilles to Narbonne in 1605, and was sold into slavery in Tunisia. His captivity lasted about two years. As there is no apparent proof that Vincent was in any other part of France between these two years, we are left accepting Vincent’s own statements presented in his letters, that he was held captive as a slave in Tunis.

In 1607 Vincent found his way back to Rome, and it was here, while waiting to be placed in a new position, that he got to know the Confraternity of Charity in the Hospital of the Holy Spirit, an association that would later serve as a model for the first charitable association that he founded.

Vincent left Rome and journeyed to Paris, still searching for financial support and security. He was too poor to own his own house, so he shared a rented property with a minor judge, who came...
from the same southwest area of France as he did. It was here that Vincent was falsely accused of stealing from the judge and was forced to leave. It was six years before these accusations were proved to be false.

**Ministry**

During this time he was appointed as one of the chaplains to Margeurite, the first wife of Henry IV. His duties were to celebrate mass when it was his turn to do so and to distribute the generous supply of alms that the lady provided. Vincent was also provided with the little Abbey of Saint-Leonard-de-Chaume, which may sound grand, but was in actuality a church in ruins. Vincent was unable to pay the annual fee for this property and after six years got rid of it.

Eventually in May 1612, Vincent was appointed the Parish Priest of Clichy, then a small village near Paris, with about six hundred parishioners. His activities in his short time as parish priest were many and varied. The church was in bad condition and Vincent undertook to have it repaired. He got the necessary funds for this work from his friends in Paris. Vincent already had the gift of being able to inspire the rich to give generously towards the poor.

**Preaching Missions**

Towards the end of 1613, Vincent was invited to leave Clichy and become tutor to the children of the de Gondis, one of the most illustrious families in France. While working for this family, an incident took place which was to have a profound effect on the rest of Vincent’s life. With Mme de Gondi he travelled to visit a dying peasant on one of the family’s estates. On spending time with him, Vincent was shocked to discover that the dying man knew nothing about how to make a good confession. This experience led Vincent in 1617 to begin preaching about confession, repentance, forgiveness and the love of God to the ‘peasant missions’ on the de Gondi estates. He was amazed at the response he received, with the peasants standing in line for hours to speak in private with him. It was clear to Vincent that these unfortunate people needed good priests to minister to them, and soon several learned Paris priests, won by his example, joined him. Between the years of 1618 and 1625, missions were preached throughout the de Gondi estates, comprising a nucleus of thirty or forty key towns. Nearly everywhere after each of these missions, a Confraternity of Charity was established.

**Education**

These Confraternities of Charity were originally set up to channel the religious fervour and good will of pious ladies, but Vincent soon realised that men should also be included in these works of charity. The main difference between the two types of confraternity was that the ladies’ work was specifically to care for poor, sick people while the men worked with the able-bodied. One of the principal commitments of the men’s confraternities was the setting up of workshops. Here children and young people between the ages of eight and twenty lived together under ecclesiastical direction and learned a trade which they, in their turn, undertook to teach other apprentices gratis.

**Prison Ministry**

After the poor of the country, Vincent’s concern was directed towards France’s prisoners who had been condemned to the French warships. M. De Gondi was the General of these Galleys of France. Before being transported aboard the galleys, or when illness compelled them to disembark, the condemned convicts were crowded into damp dungeons with chains on their legs, their only food being black bread and water. They were covered with vermin and ulcers. Their moral state was still more frightful than their physical misery. Vincent began visiting the galley convicts of Paris, speaking kind words to them and offering them every manner of service, no matter how repulsive he found them. He then set about improving the conditions for inmates in prisons and hospitals.

**Formation of Priests and Retreats**

In 1625, on the insistence of Mme De Gondi, Vincent established his religious institute of priests to maintain and service the good work begun by his missions. The religious order was called 'The Congregation of Priests of the Mission'. This congregation is known today as the Vincentian Fathers.

Vincent also played an active role in the reform of the clergy. Setting up a community at Saint Lazare, he ran retreats for priests and offered education programs for the clergy. This also gave a growing number of people the opportunity to seek out Vincent for their own spiritual direction.

**Feeding the Poor**

Saint Lazare had been a home to mentally ill people, lepers and many others who needed care. Under Vincent’s direction it also became a major food and clothing distribution centre. The people of Paris soon came to know that those in need could go to Saint Lazare for help.
**Daughters of Charity Order**

In 1633, together with Louise de Marillac, Vincent helped to establish the Daughters of Charity. At first they were intended to assist the confraternities of charity. When these confraternities were established in Paris (1629), the ladies who joined them readily brought their alms and were willing to visit the poor, but it often happened that they did not know how to give them the care which their conditions demanded and they sent their servants to do what was needed in their stead. Vincent conceived the idea of enlisting good young ladies for this service of the poor. This was the first religious community of women to work in public outside a convent. Vincent helped train these people who, two hundred years later, in the person of Sr Rosalie Rendu, would guide Frederic Ozanam and his friends in caring for the poor.

**Summary**

Vincent de Paul’s priesthood began with the search for well-paid work. It grew into a search for a well-organised world. Vincent de Paul is remembered for his service to the poor. Among his most important works, which later became models for government institutions, were his efforts on behalf of abandoned children and the people of districts devastated by war. He organised retreats for lay people and clergy; for the benefit of foundlings he provided shelters, orphanages, education, apprenticeship and employment; for the dying he provided hospices. He visited those who were sick, prisoners, orphans, as well as the mentally ill and the homeless of Paris. By 1643 his Congregation of the Mission had established a house in Rome and soon spread across Europe and throughout the world.

Vincent de Paul died on 26 September, 1660. He had spent his life announcing the Good News to the poor, often reminding his followers of how fortunate they were to be doing what Jesus had done: spreading the Good News to the poor through both prayer and action.

Canonised in 1737, St Vincent de Paul was named universal patron of Catholic charities by Pope Leo XIII in 1885. His feast day is 27 September.

**References**


http://vincentians.ie/vincentstory.htm


http://www.parravinnies.org/stvincent.htm

http://www.svp.ie/background.html

http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15434c.htm


17th Century France: ‘They are our lords and masters’

A 17th Century French galley
Rationale:

This chapter aims to develop an understanding of the life of St Vincent de Paul who is the patron of and example for the St Vincent de Paul Society. Vincent de Paul’s priesthood began with the search for well-paid work. It grew into a search for a liberated world, where people’s talents and energies were released by the grace of God. He dedicated his priesthood to help many people find meaning in their lives.

‘It is our duty to prefer the service of the poor to everything else and to offer such service as quickly as possible. If a needy person requires medicine or other help during prayer time, do whatever has to be done with peace of mind. Offer the deed to God as your prayer … charity is certainly greater than any rule. Moreover, all rules must lead to charity.’ St Vincent de Paul

Outcomes:

By the end of this chapter it is hoped the students will be able to:

Cognitive:
• Recount some of the events from the life story of St Vincent de Paul.
• Identify the qualities that are modelled in the St Vincent de Paul Society.
• Evaluate in what ways the St Vincent de Paul Society lives out the qualities of St Vincent de Paul.

Affective:
• Reflect on the challenges St Vincent de Paul faced in his lifetime.
• Appreciate the qualities possessed by St Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

St Vincent de Paul devoted his life to the service of others. He is the apostle of charity for the universal Church. The 1991 edition of the Manual of the St Vincent de Paul Society says ‘… to give oneself to God and to serve him in the person of the poor were the strictly inseparable aims of religious groups which Vincent established in his own time. These too are objectives of the St Vincent de Paul Society, founded almost two centuries after the saint’s death but patterned upon his ideals and lifestyle.’
Using the above ‘map’ as a guide, analyse the character of St Vincent de Paul. After reading various sources of his life, students could try to imagine his world by trying ‘to stand in his shoes’. The ideas written here could then be developed into a written character sketch.
Advertising Campaign

Record the information gathered about the life and times of Vincent de Paul on the graphic outline below. Students can then design an advertising/media campaign to publicise Vincent de Paul and some of his achievements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief Biography</th>
<th>Part of Life to be Advertised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Media Campaign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mind map

This mind map worksheet provides a starting point graphic which students can complete after reading the story of the life of St Vincent de Paul. The information gathered for this mind map can be used to develop a project, Powerpoint display, dramatic production, etc.
Story Map

Using the following story map graphic, sequence the major events of St Vincent de Paul’s life. Present information gathered into a project, newspaper story, play or other kind of presentation.
Time Line

Select six (or more) significant and sequential events/years in Vincent de Paul’s life that were vital in his development (perhaps life-changing events) and record on the following graphic. How did these events change the way Vincent worked with and supported those in need in his community? How is his work now a model for charity groups worldwide? List his works, etc. that are reflected in the work of charity groups today.

Hot Seat Interview

This drama activity is a variation of role-play. After researching and gathering information about St Vincent de Paul’s life, a student is invited to sit on a seat in front of the class and become St Vincent de Paul. As in a press conference, the student is invited to present a brief introduction to himself as St Vincent de Paul as background, and then respond to questions and comments from the student audience.
‘What good is it for someone to say that he has his faith if his actions do not prove it?’

James 2:14

Goals
Inspired by the person of Jesus Christ and Gospel values, the St Vincent de Paul Society, a Catholic lay organisation, leads women and men to join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those suffering and in need, in the tradition of its founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam. Placed under the patronage of St Vincent de Paul, it derives its inspiration from his thinking and work in loving and caring for those discarded by society.

Rules
Following the inspiration of St Vincent de Paul, Ozanam modelled the Rule upon principles that were alive in the seventeenth century. The rules adopted were very simple: it was forbidden to discuss politics or personal concerns at the meetings, and it was settled that the work should be the service of God in the persons of the poor, whom the members were to visit in their own homes and assist by every means in their power. This service was to embrace the poor, the sick, the infirm and the unemployed, without distinction as to creed or race.

Growth
Between 1833 and 1860 the growth of the Society was rapid; not only young intellectuals but Christians of every class were eager to do something to improve the lot of people. After spreading throughout France, the Society reached Italy (Rome) in 1842; England in 1844; Belgium, Scotland and the United States in 1845; Germany, Holland, Greece, Turkey and Mexico in 1846; Canada and Switzerland in 1847; Austria and Spain in 1850 and Australia in 1854. From that time onward the Society was built on a solid foundation.

Aims
The aim of the Society is to provide a means whereby members can live out their Christianity by loving their neighbours in the person of those in need. Help may be in the form of material goods,
or in the form of counselling, moral support, relief from loneliness, or in referring people to other agencies or specialist organisations. Vincentians do not attempt to preach or convert, nor do they attach any conditions to their aid. Great care is taken to protect the dignity of the person helped.

Human Needs
As a result of the diversity of needs in different places, the members of the Society are faced with various forms of poverty and suffering. For example, in developing countries the major problems are hunger, thirst, epidemics, sanitation and illiteracy. The most urgent need is ‘to survive’. However, in developed countries with varying degrees of affluence, the activity of the Society is focused on loneliness, distress and anguish. People may have the means to live, but may have lost the ‘meaning’ for living.

Support and Friendship: Through person-to-person contact, the Society is committed to respecting the dignity of those they assist and thus fostering their self-respect. In the provision of material and other support, the Society ensures confidentiality at all times and endeavours to establish relationships based on friendship and trust.

Promoting Self-Sufficiency: The Society believes that it is not enough to provide short-term material support. Those whom the members serve should also be helped to achieve self-sufficiency in the longer term and the sense of self-worth that this provides. When the problems they encounter are beyond the competence of Society members, they build bridges of support with other more specialised organisations.

Working for Social Justice: The Society is committed to identifying the root causes of poverty and social injustice and, in solidarity with poor and disadvantaged people, to advocating and working for the changes required in order to create a more just society.

The mission of the StVincent de Paul Society is to enable social justice to flourish and the friendship of true charity to be experienced by all those in need. The services provided by the StVincent de Paul Society will always be provided wherever human beings are in distress.

The main objective of the Society is to respond to the Gospel in the way Frederic and Vincent did:

’I was hungry and you gave me food
I was thirsty and you gave me drink.
I was a stranger and you gave me friendship.
I was naked and you gave me clothes.
I was sick and you comforted me.
I was in prison and you visited me.’

As a reflection of the whole family of God, members who are known as Vincentians are drawn from every ethnic and cultural background, age group and economic level. Vincentians are united in an international society of charity by their spirit of poverty, humility and sharing, which is nourished by prayer and reflection, mutually supportive gatherings and adherence to a basic rule. Organised locally, Vincentians witness to God’s love by embracing all works of charity and justice. The Society collaborates with other people of good will in relieving need and addressing its causes, making no distinctions between those served, because in them Vincentians see the face of Christ.

In collaboration with them and with others the Society seeks to find a way forward together. In all the countries of the world, it appeals to men, women and young people, from every background and every level of society, who want to live out their faith in giving of themselves.

This is the framework within which all the operations of the St Vincent de Paul Society are carried out for the benefit of those whom the world wounds, oppresses, isolates, rejects, marginalises:

Help for children and young people:
• Health work – visiting the sick, the physically and mentally handicapped, the blind. Home care. Setting up hospitals, dispensaries, medical centres. Help for alcoholics, drug addicts, the seriously ill.
• Prison visiting and aftercare. Rehabilitating the marginalised.
• Help for seamen – seamen’s hostels.
• Cultural vibrancy – libraries, leisure activities, sports, holiday camps, legal, administrative and social consultations.
• Catechesis – liturgical animation, marriage preparation.

The common denominator of all these initiatives, activities and undertakings is the desire to help the
lost and the have-nots through listening, friendship, spiritual, moral and material support; to give them back their dignity, to ensure their personal development, to give them back hope and, if possible, a satisfaction in life.

**Lay Leadership**

This is one of the ways in which the St Vincent de Paul Society is innovative. The innovative element, which was daring in the time of Ozanam and his friends, was to insist that the destiny of their Society, essentially ecclesial and deeply attached to religious authority, should be in the hands of lay people who regarded themselves as totally mature and responsible.

The Vincentian vocation, then, sees itself in this time of science, technology and efficiency as a simple, practical, yet authentic witness to fraternal charity and social initiative.

It invites its members to service, to sharing and to the total giving of self: having, being, knowing, in order to better respond to the anguished appeal of so many sidelined today by a progress which easily forgets the weakest.

**Characteristics of the St Vincent de Paul Society**

- It is a lay Society, composed of men and women, young and old.
- It is a Society with a spirit of youth, which gives it a dynamism, enthusiasm, a generous acceptance of risk, a creative imagination and above all, the ability to adapt.
- It is a universal Society. This universality should not be confused with uniformity. The society remains one, even though its activities take many forms which are not restricted to the relief of material poverty.
- The Society is catholic, open to ecumenism in the universal church. It should bear witness to this apostolate of charity.
- The Society is traditionally poor. The spirit of poverty is opposed to all hoarding, and administrative expenses are kept to a minimum. The spirit of poverty is also the spirit of sharing: sharing money, knowledge, available time and the comfort that comes from personal contact.

It is a real school of learning, especially for the young, who by means of personal contact become aware of the poorest people and the gravest problems of our time. An act of one-to-one love does not in any way shut out reality but rather opens the heart and mind to the worldwide dimension of suffering, to the demands of justice, and the rights of human dignity.

‘Like St Vincent de Paul, Ozanam was responding to Jesus in the most radically simple way. They heard the word and then did it … That radical simplicity results in a whole new way of relating to other human beings.’

*Ozanam and Us: 25 Spiritual Readings*

‘Vincentians may not limit their vocation. I say the problem of justice belongs also to our vocation and that we have to deal with it.’

Joseph Rouast, President-General, St Vincent de Paul Society, 1975

**References:**


http://svpennis.ie.html

http://www.stwilliam.org/stvdep/society_of_saint_vincent_de_paul.htm

http://www.svp.ie/background.html

*Ozanam and Us: 25 Spiritual Readings, 1995, St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria.*
IT WILL GROW
Rationale:

This chapter aims to take account of the Society worldwide; looking at the essential characteristics of the Society and how these reflect Frederic Ozanam’s vision; the link between charity and justice and how the Gospel is at the heart of the work of all members of the Society.

Outcomes:

By the end of this chapter it is hoped the students will be able to:

**Cognitive:**
- Be familiar with the various areas of work carried out by the St Vincent de Paul Society.
- Develop understanding of the significance of Frederic Ozanam and the St Vincent de Paul Society in working with poor people in 19th century Paris.

**Affective:**
- Value the contribution of the St Vincent de Paul Society to communities throughout the world.

Notes:

Today the St Vincent de Paul Society has conferences in 130 countries and a membership totalling nearly one million people. Teachers can support their students in their comprehension of the size and impact of the Society and its work as a charity, run by lay people, worldwide.
WWW – Research Organiser

This Research Organiser can be used as assistance when designing any research project. (It encourages in
students independence and self-direction in their research development.) The central question needs to be
provocative and not have a simple or obvious answer, so that not only information and facts are researched and
developed, but so too are ideas and values related to the question – e.g. ‘Our help gives honour when the bread we
bring is offered during a visit which brings comfort, and with the kind of advice which proves helpful, and the handshake
which gives renewed encouragement.’ (Frederic Ozanam, 1848) How are these words of Frederic Ozanam lived out
by the St Vincent de Paul Society in communities around the world?

When?

Who?

What?

How?

Where?

Why?
Tic Tac Toe Tasks

Using the minimum of three tasks (selected in a row on the following grid – i.e. horizontally, vertically or diagonally) - students can develop a research project about the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society worldwide. After gathering information about the work of the Society, students and teachers together can decide on the question to be researched - e.g. How are the words of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels lived out in the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREDICT</th>
<th>CONSTRUCT</th>
<th>ILLUSTRATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPLY</td>
<td>EXPLAIN</td>
<td>COMPARE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEBATE</td>
<td>ADAPT</td>
<td>DESIGN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doughnut Strategy

This activity involves students sharing with each other what they know about the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society. It involves sorting out facts and then summarising what they have learned.

Procedure:
Students form two circles of eight to twelve students. One circle is inside the other, with students in the outer circle facing students in the inner circle. Students tell their ‘facing partner’ what they know about the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The outside circle then moves clockwise two or three people, to the next partner with whom they share information again.

Each student then summarises what they have learned and then share their information with the whole class. This can be further developed into a KWHL chart (see p13) supporting the research process for the class.
### Atlas Search & Web Quest

Using the search engine tool (e.g. Google, Yahoo, Alta Vista, Lycos), etc. students list the countries with ‘St Vincent de Paul Society’ sites. List the addresses and mark on a class map of the world where these conferences are based. As students visit each site they should complete the following research page, recording the information as presented on the site:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web Search Data Collection Sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>St Vincent de Paul Society around the World</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Web Site visited – address:

#### Information presented about St Vincent de Paul Society on this site:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**Mission Statement**: (copy)

**Logo** (cut and paste, or copy the logo of the Society presented on the page)
Advertising/designing

Design a poster or advertising campaign which promotes the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society around the world. Items to be displayed on the poster could include:

- Gospel quotes
- photos of those in need in our society (from magazines and newspapers)
- drawings (of the above or of Society members on visitation)
- members of the Society in a meeting
- aims of the Society
- community support of the Society.

Gospel Match/Debating

Further to the ideas of debate already presented in previous chapters, students could gather quotes from gospel stories and redevelop these in the light of the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society in every country of the world, e.g.

- In his treatment of those marginalised by his own society, Jesus presents a challenge to both the prejudice of his contemporaries and to the present society.
- Jesus’ stories/parables jolted the community listening to him out of a routine existence, forcing them to view reality in a new light. Do his stories speak to us today?
- Students list new ways of responding to peoples’ needs developed by the St Vincent de Paul Society in the last 10 years.
St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia

‘... the relief of the destitute in a manner, as much as possible permanently beneficial ...’
Fr Gerald Ward

‘Those who love the poor in life have no fear of death.’
Charles Gordon O’Neill

Founding the Society in Australia
The first conference (or local group) of St Vincent de Paul in Australia met at St Francis’ Church, Melbourne, on 5 March, 1854, only 6 months after Frederic Ozanam had died.

Here’s how the founder, Fr Gerald Ward, described its aims: ‘Its objects...comprise sundry works of charity, but more especially the relief of the destitute in a manner as much as possible permanently beneficial and the visitation of poor families...’

179 cases were responded to in the first year at a cost of 314 pounds.

Why Was it Founded?
Gerald Ward suggested the main reason was ‘for the protection of male and female orphans.’ Due to the gold rush the population of Melbourne had shot up from 20,000 to more than 100,000. Most able bodied men had gone to the goldfields in search of their fortune, some of them abandoning their families. Homeless children roamed the streets of Melbourne in packs and were a chronic problem in a society where prostitution, short-term relationships and illegitimacy flourished.

A Home for Homeless Children
Gerald Ward first rented a house in Prahran for homeless children and when it could no longer accommodate the numbers seeking refuge he was the driving force behind the building of the St Vincent de Paul orphanage in South Melbourne. His vision for the orphanage was an enlightened one.

When he died in 1858, aged 52, papers of the day remarked that he was one in whom ‘many a widow and an orphan had found a friend.’ His enduring legacy is founded in such friendships.

The first conference ceased its activity on the death of Fr Ward though its example lived on in a number of groups named after St Vincent de Paul, and the orphanage survives, much changed and relocated, as St Vincent’s School.
In the meantime conferences were founded in Western Australia in 1865 and then in Geelong, where the first ladies conference was established in 1874. It continued until 2001 when it merged with the men’s conference.

Charles Gordon O’Neill
In Sydney, in the early 1880s four conferences were formed by the engineer Charles Gordon O’Neill who had recently helped to found the St Vincent de Paul Society in New Zealand.

He’s an outstanding figure in the establishment of the Society in Australia. In 1884 the first regional council was founded in Sydney with O’Neill as its president, a position he resigned in 1891 in the midst of the 1890s depression and the failure of a bank he was nominally associated with. He lived in poverty for the rest of his life and was buried in a pauper’s grave. He once wrote that ‘those who love the poor in life have no fear of death’; and one newspaper noted that ‘…with the eyes of charity he saw differently to others.’ In Great Australian Catholics Edmund Campion suggests that Charles Gordon O’Neill is ‘a future candidate for canonisation.’

What sort of work did conferences do at this time?
‘Everywhere in city and country both men and women carried out home and hospital visitation and the traditional Society works of mercy. They comforted the bereaved, buried the destitute dead, fed hungry families, provided boots, clothes, firewood, fares up country and much else…’

In Melbourne at This Time
Meanwhile in Melbourne in 1885 Francis Healey had helped to re-establish the Society at St Patrick’s Cathedral. Other conferences quickly formed.

Here’s some of the work they were involved in
A night refuge for men was established. There was a soup van, and men were provided with bed and breakfast. Women members established a home for homeless women, held classes for disadvantaged children and put together a registry for unemployed women. Families were rescued from the streets.

And as Francis Healey said in a report to the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions, ‘distribution of funds is entirely unsectarian and recipients of charity are not asked what faith they hold.’

Other works were started by Society members then handed on, e.g. orphanages, work with seafarers and blind people and boys interested in the land, foundling homes and parish libraries, work with boys in the courts and a junior sports association.

The First College Conference
Australia’s first college conference was established in 1908 at Xavier College in Melbourne.

1921 – A Network of Care
By 1921 there were 43 conferences in Victoria many more in NSW, and in South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania the Society had long been established. The first National Congress was held in Sydney that year.

Op Shops
The first shop opened in Sydney in 1922 and in 1926 the first one opened in Melbourne. In Sydney they called it the waste collection depot and in Melbourne the waste products bureau.

Victorian state president Charles Fox gave evidence before a select committee on pensions and child endowment in October 1936
‘The Society has never received Government assistance, in fact never sought it. The ordinary revenue of the Society comes through members donations, poor boxes in churches and occasional bequests.’

The War and After
During World War II there were new faces of poverty. With fathers often away at the war there was quite a bit of delinquency. Some members became probation officers and there was more prison visitation. After the war had finished, refugees and immigrants were assisted to settle in Australia. There were new suburbs, new conferences, new demands.

In Victoria, to celebrate the centenary of the Society in Australia the first stage of the new Ozanam House – an overnight accommodation for men – was completed and opened on 4 September, 1955, by the Governor of Victoria and the building was blessed by Archbishop Mannix who spoke of his consistent support of the Society since his arrival in Australia in 1912.
Looking to Asia, Women and Men
From the early 1960s Australian conferences began to support the work of conferences in South East and East Asia, and the first Pan Asian Congress of members from Asia and the Pacific was held in Sydney in 1968.

In 1967 after the Second Vatican Council it was decided that men and women could join together in conferences. Previously there had been separate conferences for men and women though of course since Sr Rosalie Rendu's time women had always been a force in the Society. Nowadays there are equal number of men and women in the St Vincent de Paul Society.

The Soup Van
Anne O'Brien helped to set up the modern version of the soup van (or night patrol) in the 1970s. Here’s how she and her friends described what they were doing:

‘The Matthew Talbot conference aims to offer companionship care and genuine concern for those in need. Our main involvement is with homeless men in the inner-city area. When we make contact with them, they may be living day to day at various night shelters, sleeping out or in temporary accommodation in a boarding house. We're not concerned with meeting a great number of men, but rather in a small number with whom we develop a friendship of some quality. We're not in the numbers game!’

Refugees
From the 1970s on there was an influx into Australia of refugees from Vietnam, Lebanon, Cambodia, South America, Timor and the Horn of Africa. Many Society members were involved in helping them settle in Australia, working with other organizations to ensure this. ‘It was and is great work,’ said a member. And a Vietnamese responded, ‘you will always be a part of our story.’

New Ways of Doing Things
In the 1980s and 1990s the Society in Australia found itself having to respond to what Pope Paul VI called the new social questions. These new questions required new responses. There was a greater degree of professionalisation, particularly in homeless services, in order to respond to more complex needs. The Matt Talbot Hostel in Sydney and Ozanam House in Melbourne saw big changes designed to give a bit of dignity to homeless men.

The St Vincent de Paul voice was heard more often in public forums telling of what members were observing in their work. Social advocacy has become an integral part of the social justice emphasis of St Vincent de Paul in the 21st century. This is allied to a rethink of the Society’s core work of home visitation so that members might offer more of hand up than a handout. And, speaking of transformations, the Vinnies stores were being transformed into retail outlets.

Mini-Vinnies, School Conferences and Young Vinnies
There are conferences in primary schools, secondary colleges and tertiary institutions, as well as Young Vinnies conferences for young adults. Increasingly these are an important part of the Vinnies experience in Australia.

The Secret of St Vincent de Paul in Australia
St Vinnies has celebrated its 150th anniversary in Australia and is still going strong. Many other organisations that thrived up till the 1970s have fallen by the wayside, but not St Vinnies. Why so? What's the Vinnies secret? For starters, two things - simplicity and practicality. These virtues have always appealed to Australians many of whom have been enabled by the Society to do something for their neighbours who are doing it hard. And because of the network of local groups right across Australia there’s always been a Vinnies group close by.

In the St Vinnies experience simplicity and practicality become a practical spirituality and a radical simplicity. This is the way of Frederic Ozanam and Vincent de Paul in responding to the Gospel and to the person of Jesus Christ. It’s the Vinnies secret.

Finally, part of the simplicity and practicality of Vinnies is that it’s run by volunteers. The professionals come in to help them run the Society, not the other way round as in most charitable organisations.
References:


\*Ozam House, Melbourne, in the late 1950s\*
Rationale:

This chapter examines some of the history and development of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia. It aims to allow for students to enhance their understanding and appreciation of the work of the Society not only locally, at the parish level and throughout the Australian Catholic Church, but in the community at large. Scope is given for discussion to develop, as well as the opportunity to explore some historical issues in greater detail.

Outcomes:

By the end of this chapter it is hoped that students will be able to:

**Cognitive:**
- Be familiar with the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society in both their local area and Australia in general.
- Identify the areas in Australian society where the St Vincent de Paul Society is actively involved.

**Affective:**
- Appreciate the qualities possessed by volunteers working for the Society.
- Reflect on the contribution made by the St Vincent de Paul Society in the support of the poor in our society.
- Recognise the need to care for all individuals with care and dignity.

Notes:

When developing work related to this topic teachers should feel free to include other aspects in greater detail - e.g. the work of the local conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society in their parish. Guest speakers, personal interviews, etc. could be a feature of the activities in this chapter.
Fishbone Map

This activity allows students to think about the causes or interactions which may have led to St Vincent de Paul Society volunteers working with an individual or family. They will be led to ask questions about the phenomenon, such as details of the events which may have caused it and whether these are likely to persist/change – e.g. the phenomenon may be unemployment, accident, illness, etc. Students are also encouraged to think about possible support/solutions to the phenomenon. These can also be recorded on the following ‘map’.
News Report – Newspaper

In teams, students could recreate the 1854 newspaper recording the beginning of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Melbourne. What other events were happening in Australia at the same time? Research and record them as various newspaper articles – e.g. editorial, feature stories, sports page, international news, local stories. Design your masthead, illustrate stories, cartoons etc.

Parish Newsletter

You could also create a newsletter for your parish which would record the work of the local conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society e.g. a parish collection to support the Society, the running of the Opportunity Shop, the volunteer visitors, the meeting, youth work, etc.

Create a Crossword

After researching the history of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia and the work of the Society in the local community, students can show their learning by listing the relevant/important events to be recorded, formulating questions/clues, etc. All information can then be placed in a crossword puzzle.

Website: www.puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/chooseapuzzle is a great support with this activity.

Mission Statement

Mission Statement of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia

The Mission of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia is to deepen the Catholic faith of its members and to go out into our nation to heighten awareness of Jesus Christ.

We do this by sharing ourselves – who we are and what we have – with people in need on a person-to-person basis.

We seek to cooperate in shaping a more just and compassionate Australian community, and to share our resources with our twinned countries.

Our preferred option in this mission of service is to work with people in need in development, respecting their dignity, sharing our hope and encouraging them to take control of their own destiny.

After listening to guest speakers from the St Vincent de Paul Society and researching information about the local conference, list what evidence you have collected that shows faithfulness to this Mission Statement. Retell/write about a person in need and the support they received from the St Vincent de Paul Society, matching this story to the words of the Mission Statement.
**Symbol & Action**

Discuss the design of the present logo of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia as shown on p67 and what each section represents.

Design a new logo or series of logos for your local St Vincent de Paul Society - e.g. a separate logo could be designed for the youth section of the Society, another for the opportunity shop, another for those visiting people in need, etc.

**Investigation – Graphic Presentations**

Brainstorm the greatest areas of need in your local community or state. Present this graphically such as on the ‘webbing design’ below.
What other groups are there in Australian society that help people in need? Investigate these organisations under the following headings:

- name of the organisation.
- who founded the organisation.
- when and where did the organisation begin.
- the aims of the organisation.
- what services the organisation offers.
- are there any obvious differences in the nature of this organisation and the St Vincent de Paul Society? List these.

Again use graphic diagrams to present your information – e.g. for comparison, the Venn Diagram organiser could be used as a way of presenting the similarities and differences between other organisations and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Do these organisations ever work together? (e.g. when disasters strike, at Christmas, etc.)

Information gathered about the various societies could be presented on a concept map design, e.g:
FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER
In establishing the St Vincent de Paul Society, Frederic Ozanam and his companions were aware of the need not only to bring relief to those in need in their society but also to base their work on a solid spiritual foundation.

In Frederic Ozanam’s eyes, faith without charity had no meaning. He wrote:

“...The earth has become a chilly place. It is up to us Catholics to rekindle the flame of human warmth, which is going out. It is up to us to recommence the great work of regeneration even if it means another era of martyrs. Can we remain passive in the midst of a world which is suffering and groaning? And as for us, my dear friend, are we going to make no attempt to be like those saints whom we love? If we do not know how to love God, for it seems that we need to see in order to love and we can only see God with eyes of faith, and our faith is so weak! But men, the poor, we see them with our eyes of flesh! They are there before us, and we can place our finger and hand into their wounds and the marks of the Crown of Thorns are visible on their foreheads. Thus there is no possible room for unbelief and we should fall at their feet and say to them with the apostle: “My Lord and my God!” You are our master and we will be your servants. You are for us the sacred image of the God that we cannot see. Since we know not how to love him otherwise, we will love him in your persons.”

The Face of God

“To love another person is to see the face of God.” This arresting line from the end of the musical version of Les Misérables summarises rather well the spirituality of Vincent de Paul, who lived two centuries before the novel was written. In his life and work Vincent de Paul modelled a harmonious balance between prayer and activity; this was a foundational balance in the Vincentian commitment. It draws its inspiration, strength and fidelity from a life of faith in Jesus Christ, the image of God.
**Mission**

‘Vincentians seek, through prayer, meditation on the scriptures, the teachings of the church, through their daily lives and in their lived relationship with those in need to be a witness to the love of Christ.’ (The Rule: Part 1, Basic Principles)

Faced with the poor, how did Christ act?
Faced with the poor, how do I act?

In witnessing to the love of Christ, through service and visitation, Vincentians seek to find the face of Christ in those they serve.

‘When you first see the face of Christ you don’t forget it. She was a disabled teenage girl called Constanza who was unable to communicate except in grunts. Her joy at receiving a cake lit up her face; and I wept. I knew then that I had encountered the Lord.’

**Role Models**

The spiritual inspiration of the Society derives from three sources: Jesus Christ, Vincent de Paul and Frederic Ozanam. Their lives constantly challenge all of us to come alive.

**Jesus Christ** is the justice of God. He treated everyone with compassion and respect, regardless of their past record or present status. He sought out the company of the poor and the outcast, the physical and moral lepers. He affirmed and accepted them, he was moved with compassion for them, sat down at table with them, listened to them and called them his friends. He reached out to them and healed them. In doing so he reveals God’s action in the world. It’s this life which inspires members of the Society.

**Vincent de Paul** and **Frederic Ozanam** show us how we might respond to the Gospels – with radical simplicity, in simple practical ways, through prayer and action, each one sustaining the other. They heard the Word of God and then did it.

This radical simplicity results in a whole new way of relating to other human beings. No more them and us, or master and servant, we are all in this together.

They continually challenge us to look at Jesus and discover him in the most unexpected places.

‘Then the King will say to those on his right hand, “Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me”. Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, “Lord, when did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go and see you?” And the King will answer, “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least brothers of mine, you did it to me.”’

Matthew 25: 34 -40

**Vincent de Paul** encountered Jesus Christ most powerfully among sick, abandoned and hungry people – those locked out of our society. He acknowledged them as his masters through whom he glimpsed the presence of God in the world.

‘You will find charity a heavy burden to bear, heavier than the bowl of soup and full basket. But you will keep your gentleness and your smile. It is not enough to give bread and soup. This the rich can do. You are the servant of the poor. They are your masters. The more difficult they will be, the more unjust and insulting, the more you must love them. It is for your love alone that the poor will forgive you the bread you give them.’

To see God’s presence demands faith; faith that helps us see beyond clothes, sores, looks, attitude or feigned indifference. To see with the eyes of faith is to see differently.

**Frederic Ozanam**

Frederic understood from early on that the love of God and the love of those ground down by poverty were one. The one led to the other. Sr Rosalie Rendu, the Daughter of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, became Frederic’s mentor. She taught him how to minister to the poor with love, respecting their dignity as human beings, created in God’s image and likeness. She instructed him that above all he was not to judge the poor. It was Sr Rosalie who fostered Frederic’s knowledge of and devotion to St Vincent de Paul, and she who first exemplified for him Vincentian spirituality. Sixteen years after he first met her he wrote:

‘The knowledge of social well-being is learned, not from books, nor from public debate, but in climbing the stairs to the poor man’s garret, sitting by his bed-side, feeling the same cold that pierces him, sharing the secret of his lonely heart and troubled mind. When we know first hand the conditions of the poor in school, at work, in hospital, in the city, in the country, everywhere that God has place them, then and only then can we begin to grasp the elements of poverty and hope we may resolve it.’
This is what Frederic Ozanam had learnt: that poverty was never abstract, it was always personal, always social. When he visited someone, as he described it above, what did he do? He climbed the stairs, sat by the bedside, felt the piercing cold and shared the secrets of his lonely heart and mind. No word as yet of material assistance. The key is human contact, for it’s there that God is to be discovered.

**God Among Us**

Father Peter Stack (1993) tells us that we cannot talk of the Society without reference to a profound faith in the presence of God among us; without reference to Jesus Christ and the Gospel, which are the foundation of its work. The founder’s reason for forming a conference of charity was a religious one: to witness to a loving God in the world. Motivated by love, he says, expressed in a respect for the human person, the Society’s works will light a candle of hope in the world. Ours is a world grown heavy with selfishness and greed; a world in which too many have thought only of themselves, forgetting that, in the last analysis, humanity is but a steward of this world. We are not its owner. All people, whatever their race, colour or creed, have a right to live fully human lives.

**A Spirituality of Love and Justice**

‘While charity seems focussed on individuals and justice upon institutions and power arrangements, a love rooted in faith remains the underlying connector of both. More easily seen in charitable encounters, love is no less active or integral to the response of justice. Philip Land reminds us that love motivates all the other virtues, exists within and motivates them. The commitment to justice flows from the love of God and neighbour, and love transforms justice from within. In a memorable and powerful phrase the Latin American bishops proclaimed that love is the soul of justice. Conversely justice is the framework for love in the world beyond individual encounters; it is the enfleshment of love. The Vatican declared in 1986 that there is no gap between justice and love and to contrast the two is distort both justice and love.’

Fred Kammer, *Doing Faithjustice*

**Doing Justice to God**

Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, once had this to say to some magistrates: ‘St Augustine believed that justice in society was unthinkable without doing “justice” to God, returning God’s attentive, loving gaze in silence and praise. A society that doesn’t understand contemplation, won’t understand justice, because it will have forgotten how to look selflessly at what is other. It will take refuge in generalities, prejudices, self-serving clichés.’

**References:**


http://www.vincenter.org/tree/svdp/about.html


Forgiveness: from Images of Jubilee by John Perrett
Rationale:

‘Vincentians seek, through prayer, meditation on the scriptures, the teachings of the church, through their daily lives and in their lived relationship with those in need, to be a witness to the love of Christ.’ (The Rule: Part 1, Basic Principles) This chapter looks at ways to support the on-going development of spirituality through various opportunities of prayer, meditation and action. These opportunities are the means whereby we are able to prayerfully witness to the love of Jesus. In doing so we begin to answer the question, ‘Who is Jesus for me?’ and give shape to a spirituality that does justice to us all.

Outcomes:

By the end of this chapter it is hoped that students will be able to:

Cognitive:
• Understand that spirituality, like breathing, is an essential part of daily life.
• Identify spirituality in the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society.
• Demonstrate an understanding of spirituality as shown in daily life.

Affective:
• Recognise aspects of Vincentian spirituality that can be developed in their own lives.
• Value the growth and development of their own spirituality.

Notes:

‘The word spiritual comes from the Latin word “spirare” which means to breathe. The connection between breathing and spirituality is the idea of both being vital or essential aspects of life: breathing is the thing that gives life to the individual. Spirituality is a characteristic of all humans.’

Maurice Ryan and Patricia Malone, Exploring the Religion Classroom
Teaching & Learning Activities

Meditation

‘Meditation involves listening to the heart and getting in touch with one’s inner self. Meditation involves one’s imagination and emotions. It can take place in a variety of ways through imaginative prayer and the use of stories, poetry, scripture and art.’

Beth Nolen, *Prayer Strategies: A Teacher’s Manual*

‘Through guided reflection on everyday objects and events, the teacher can assist children to recognise and encounter God in their everyday lives in a personal and intimate manner.’

Barbara Bretherton, *Praying with Children*

Meditation supports us in seeking to bear witness to the love of Jesus Christ.

The following ideas are just a few ways to support students in developing their ‘inner selves’, focussing on ways they can develop themselves in supporting such groups as St Vincent de Paul Society.

The guided imagery which follows is a very strong experience of prayer, which allows people to move from a ‘thinking’ to an ‘imagining’ approach. In presenting the following ideas, Beth Nolen’s *Prayer Strategies: A Teacher’s Manual* has been used extensively.

Begin your meditation session with a gentle relaxation exercise such as the following:

Ask the students to sit in a comfortable position and allow themselves to relax. Preparing for meditation requires that time be allowed for students to relax, concentrate on stillness, listen and breathe and permit themselves to enter into a more relaxed state of mind.

**Gifts and Talents**

As presented on p53 of Beth Nolen’s book *Prayer Strategies: A Teacher’s Manual*, this meditation allows students to reflect on either a special gift they possess, or what they perceive as the special gifts of people they have been working with who are part of the St Vincent de Paul Society, that can be used as part of the work of the Society.

**God’s Love**

This Guided Meditation, as presented on p55 of *Prayer Strategies: A Teacher’s Manual*, allows students to identify the love of God in their lives. How can the acknowledgement of the presence of this love in their lives be seen as a part of the work of St Vincent de Paul Society? How can they show this love to others as well as to those in need?

**Being a Person like Jesus**

Again concentrating on the special qualities and talents we each have, this meditation (p56) allows students to see themselves as made in the image of God. By concentrating on the special qualities that Jesus modelled, students are offered the opportunity to see these qualities in themselves. Allow students to imagine how the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society might enable them to develop these qualities.

‘There are few sights so wonderful as a school hall with 300-400 children sitting in complete silence and learning the first steps in meditation. I have seen it and it can be done. They have been told… you have room just to sit and breathe in the presence of God. Their worthwhileness when at rest is being affirmed. And I suspect this sort of thing is much more fundamental in religious formation than any simple communicating of religious information.’

Rowan Williams, *Silence and Honey Cakes*
Prayer using Scripture

As Scripture enables students to acknowledge the presence of God in their own lives, this too could be used as a focus for prayer. Perhaps the story presented in Matthew 25: 34-40, could be used in providing insights into the ways in which the person of Jesus can be met in our own lives. Or the Exodus story could be used, revealing what God does, how God acts in the world, then and now, setting free those who are enslaved, defying the logic of Pharoah that says ‘once a slave, always a slave’.

Prayer using Stories

As in the above section, students could focus on some of the stories of Vincent de Paul or Frederic Ozanam. Students could also use the visitation stories of Society members who have come to speak to the class, or which have been researched during this unit of work. Or they might tell some of their own stories of meeting people who are struggling or in difficulty or homeless. That’s what Vinnies members do at their meetings. It’s another opportunity to hear of God’s action in our lives. Again the ideas modelled in Beth Nolen’s book, p61, are a great support here.

Prayer using Artwork

Any photographs, posters or artwork developed by students in previous sections of this book, can also be used to help students focus in prayer. These can be developed into formal or informal prayer or meditation sessions. On pp79 and 80 Beth Nolen links art and Gospel values. This could also be a starting point for developing individual and class prayer.

Prayer as Moving Meditation

Have students move and pray. Work out how you might do this. Various drama exercises might help. Use a line or two from various Scripture readings as chants, a range of music and whatever is in the room. Have them make a simple labyrinth and walk it. Do a stations of the cross using images and words and movement.

Bumper Stickers

Students can create bumper stickers in any of the following areas:

- to advertise the work of St Vincent de Paul Society;
- to reflect on scripture that has been studied;
- to present thoughts/ideas about social justice.

Computer graphics can be used to enhance the look of these stickers. A gallery display of stickers could be created to present these ideas to others. These could also be used as a focus for prayer and personal spirituality.

Reflective Thinking Journals

This is also a very powerful and helpful tool for prayer. This journal can be a separate exercise book, where students can write as much or as little as they wish. Students could reflect:

- on the work of the Society in general;
- on their own gifts and talents that could be used in service of those in need;
- on the model of Jesus in areas of social justice;
- on the work of the local conference in their parish.

They could have a go at writing prayers of petition, thanksgiving, wonder, love, etc.

Work as Prayer

Reaching out to other people is a prayer. It’s another form of moving meditation. To discover the face of God, of Jesus Christ with those who are struggling, is a prayer. It’s to discover again that ‘Christianity is simply meetings with Jesus.’
Drama Activities

Developing further the spirituality of the work of St Vincent de Paul Society can be approached using activities from the drama area. Some dramatic possibilities could be:

**Curtains Up, Curtains Down**

This activity could be used to develop ideas concerning the work of St Vincent de Paul Society or the story of the Society, or the like. Decide on the focus for this presentation. Groups of students then create a series of frozen ‘tableau’ images related to the focus. As the students place themselves for tableau presentation, the audience closes its eyes (Curtains Down). When ‘players’ are ready in their positions, the audience opens its eyes (Curtains Up). Depending on the story being presented, a narrator could possibly read the story as the players are enacting it.

**Imaginary Characters**

Students could imagine characters in a difficult situation being supported by the St Vincent de Paul Society, or being present at the founding of the Society in Australia, etc. In this activity students can develop and show the relationship between each of their characters; they could script all the dialogue between the characters, as well as script what happens to each of the characters. This could be acted out and presented either to the class or another class/assembly, etc.

**Where Are You?**

I turn around hoping
Someone will come.
No-one is there
Where is the sun?

No one is there.
I soon disappear
Into thin air.
I'm not here.

Where are you? I call
One to another.
Where are you? I call
Father and mother.

I reach out my hand,
I call to the sky;
I call to the earth,
Where are you? I cry.

Where are you? I call
One to another.
Where are you? I call
Sister and brother.

Where are you? I call.

*Song from the musical celebrating the 150th anniversary of St Vinnies in Australia*
Glossary of Key Words

**Conference**
In St Vincent de Paul Society terms it simply refers to a local group of people who get together on a regular basis to work out – to confer about – how they can assist their neighbours who are doing it hard.

**Charity**
Originally meant love. By the end of the 19th C and through the 20th C it was inevitably associated with the condescension of the better-off towards those who were struggling. Charity is simply an immediate response to people in need, a reaching out. It finds its fulfilment in seeking justice.

**Dignity**
The quality of being prized for who you are. The dignity of one who is prized, or loved, by God. The recognition that you have a contribution to make.

**Evangelisation**
Taking the Good News of God's freedom to those of us who are enslaved and diminished in all sorts of ways. Evangelisation is a response to this recognition and to the Gospels.

**Encyclical**
A papal statement which articulates the most important teachings of a pope. Catholics are encouraged to reflect on these statements.

**Humility**
A great Vincentian virtue. A quality which enables us to make room in our lives for others. It's not a means of making people feel small. It offers perspective, recognising that all good things come from God.

**Love and Justice**
‘Love is the soul of justice,’ said the Latin American bishops in 1968. They are inextricably linked as John Paul II said at the beatification mass for Frederic Ozanam.

**Marginalisation**
The effect of being sidelined and thought to have nothing to offer anyone.

**Mercy**
When all else fails, it's mercy we need. Pure gift.

**Poverty**
*Relative poverty:* more applicable to affluent countries where the emphasis is on economic disparity as the primary indicator of poverty. Wherever people are without real opportunities to change things.

*Absolute poverty:* wherever people don’t have the basic necessities of life e.g. food and shelter.

*Poverty of spirit:* ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit …’. Poverty is not to be disdained but embraced. It is the spirit of sharing, of giving away what we have been given that others may live.

**Self-denial**
Simply a means of being realistic about ourselves and our feelings. Not, of course, denying they exist. It offers another perspective than that of the self. Following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

**Social Justice**
Occurs when all members of a society have equal access to the opportunities offered by that society, and when all members of that society share equally the burden of sustaining that society.

**Social Injustice**
Occurs when some members of a society are denied or limited in access to the opportunities offered by that society, or some members of that society do not share equally in the burden of sustaining the society.

**Subsidiarity**
The principle that we don’t do at a higher level what can be done better at a more local level. The more local the better.

**Stewardship**
The world is not ours to own, or to do with what we will. The world and all its fruits come from, and belong to, God. We are its stewards.

**Solidarity**
The conviction that we are all brothers and sisters; that we are born into a network of relationships; that our humanity binds us to one another. In a word, it sums up our need to stand together.

**Simplicity**
We don’t have to become enslaved by things. ‘Living simply that others may simply live,’ as the old saying has it.

**Social Question**
According to Frederic Ozanam, it’s what needs to be addressed. In his day it was the effects of industrialisation on the mass of the people. In 1972 Pope Paul VI said it was necessary to address the ‘new social questions’. In our time the social upheavals associated with globalisation.

**Social Teaching**
A body of teaching and wisdom built up in a range of documents over the last 100 years and more in the Catholic Church. It builds on the foundation of the Gospels and the lives of countless generations of Christians. At its heart is the dignity of the human person.

**Spirituality**
It’s a waking up. You won’t find the word in the Gospels but it refers to the working of the Spirit in our lives. It’s whatever puts us in touch with the heart of the matter - with God.

**Zeal**
Love with a bit of fire in the belly. ‘Get up and go’. Vincent de Paul much admired this quality. It was one of his five virtues of the mission.
Index of Teaching Strategies

Academic Controversy, 32
Advertising Campaign, 61
Atlas Search & Web Quest, 72
Bloom's Taxonomy, 26
Bumper Stickers, 91
Bundling, 34
Burning Issue, 50
Character Map, 60
Concept Spiral, 53
Consequence Web, 25
Crossword, 81
De Bono – six hats, 46
De Bono – action shoes, 47
Discussion Web, 16
Drama Activities, 15
Drama Activities, 92
Doughnut Strategy, 71
Fact fence/wall, 53
Facts & Feelings, 34
Film/Cartoon/Powerpoint Presentation, 16
Fishbone Map, 80
Gospel Match/Debating, 73
Graphic Organisers, 83
Hot Seat Interview, 64
Jigsaw Discussion Groups (Expert Groups), 45
KWHL Strategy, 12
Meditation, 90
Mind Map, 62
Multiple Intelligences, 51
News Report, 81
Parish Newsletter, 81
Parnes Creative Problem Solving Process, 24
Perspective Spectacles, 22
Prayer Using Scripture, 91
Questioning the Text, 48
Reflective Journal, 49
SCAMPER, 52
Seven Strip Questions, 15
Story Map, 63
SWOT, 23
Symbol Design, 82
Tic Tac Toe Tasks Board, 71
Time Line Investigation, 12
Venn Diagram, 33
Webquest, 53
WWW WH Planner, 70
**Pickin’ Up the Pieces**

*Pickin’ up the pieces*
Day after day,
*It's simply what happens*
Whatever we say.

Is anyone pickin’ em up,
the people we leave behind?
In the rush for the prize,
Why not shut our eyes?
The blind are leading the blind.

*Pickin’ up the pieces*
Day after day,
*It's simply what happens*
Whatever we say.

We are the winners my friend,
The losers, leave ‘em behind,
Leave ‘em alone,
They’ll never come home,
You have to be cruel to be kind.

*Pickin’ up the pieces*
Day after day,
*It's simply what happens*
Whatever we say.

So many are blown away,
Some down the gurgler they say,
Fear not my friend,
No doubt in the end,
We all need a holiday.

*Pickin’ up the pieces*
Day after day,
*It's simply what happens*
Whatever we say.

Why are people poor?
What's going on in our town?
Why do people walk
endlessly round and round?

Don’t ask any questions,
Just do what we’re told.
Turn on the telly,
Dream on till we’re old

*Why Are People Poor?*
*Why are people poor?*
*What’s going on in our town?*
*Why do people walk endly round and round?*

We walk round and round.
We can’t all be winners.
We walk down to Centrelink,
Doing our best to be grinners.

It’s the social justice question,
The next step along the way,
Wondering what’s going on
Day after day after day.

*Why are people poor?*
*What’s going on in our town?*
*Why do people walk endly round and round?*

Songs from the musical celebrating the 150th anniversary of St Vinnies in Australia
THE HEART OF THE CHURCH’S MISSION

‘… in speaking about the spirituality of the Society I am in fact going to take you to the very heart of the Church and the blazing core of the revelation of which scripture is the enduring and living record. Because I am convinced that the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society is not just the work of one among many agencies in the Church. The work that you are involved in, and that you have been called into, lies right at the heart of the Church’s mission. You are in no way on the margin; you are right at the centre. So I’m not just talking about the St Vincent de Paul Society, I’m talking about the Church, the Church of God, founded by Jesus Christ.’

Bishop Mark Coleridge
Retreat for Vincentians 2002