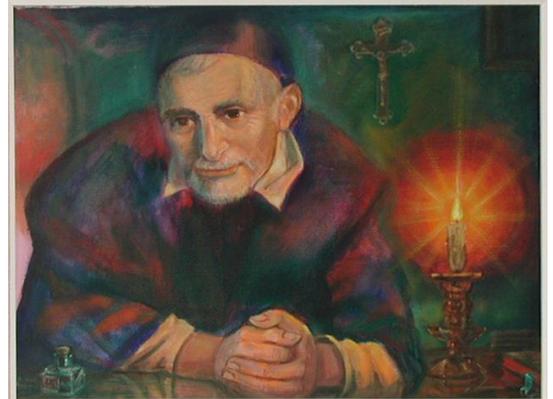


## REFLECTION

### Feast Day of St Vincent de Paul

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St Vincent de Paul as the patron of the Society is a great model who gives us a lot to reflect on and learn from. One virtue that Vincent spoke and wrote about frequently was what he called holy indifference. Indifference today is generally taken to mean lack of interest in something, however this is not what he meant. The definition of indifference, as he used it, was being detached from any particular outcome. It is perhaps best described as a sense of inner freedom.

Vincent tells us that

*Our Lord calls the observance of His maxims a yoke to tell us that it is a state of submission and a state difficult to bear for those who try to shake it off, but a gentle, light one for those who love Him and submit to it. (CCD Vol 7 589)*

This virtue is one that is necessary for the spiritual life and for being a servant.

If we are to be true to our call to be servants, then we need to have this virtue of indifference or detachment. We have an example in Vincent a man who grew in this virtue. He describes himself as young man as someone who was strong-willed, irritable and moody. He prayed for the grace to change and became calmer and much more affable later in life. He became less attached to having things the way that he wanted and gentler with others.

He consistently links gentleness and compassion as necessary for followers of Jesus and for those who serve the most vulnerable people. He told the Daughters of Charity

*Sisters, nurse those poor patients with great charity and gentleness so that they may see that you're assisting them with a heart filled with compassion for them. (CCD vol 10 445)*

Indifference or detachment from our own will is necessary to be able to truly be present to the person that we are serving. As we celebrate the feast of St Vincent may we reflect on where we are being called to detachment and holy indifference.

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