

REFLECTION

Serving in Hope

Sr Therese Haywood DC
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A key virtue that inspires Vincentians is hope. The Rule tells us that ‘Vincentians serve in hope.’ⁱ Hope is one of the theological virtues which we rely on because it reminds us that we can do nothing on our own but need the help of God.

We are reminded in the scripture that

And not only that: we too, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we are groaning inside ourselves, waiting with eagerness for our bodies to be set free. In hope, we already have salvation; in hope, not visibly present, or we should not be hoping -- nobody goes on hoping for something which is already visible. But having this hope for what we cannot yet see, we are able to wait for it with persevering confidence. (Rom 8:23-25)

So hope is that virtue which helps us look to a future that is not here yet.

Blessed Frederic Ozanam wrote in the early days of the Society

*I hope we shall succeed despite the ominous prophecies, not through secrecy, but through humility, not through numbers but through love, not through patronage but by the grace of God. There is good will, there must be zeal; there are families assisted, there must be many more of them; there is room for every possible work of charity, ...*ⁱⁱ

His hope was that what they were trying to do would continue to grow through the love that the members had for each other and the people they were helping and through the grace of God. That Society exists in so many countries around the world and that so many people are being helped each day are testament to the grace that God gave those early members and has continued to give the Society over the years. So many people who have faithfully followed in the footsteps of our founders and served people in all sorts of needs over these 186 years of the Society’s history have built on the fruits of the hope which each one has held. Today, we continue to build on this wonderful history of faith and hope.

In our work with people in need we are often called upon to be holders of hope for them because they come to us at times of great need when it can be hard to see the road ahead. Our gift to them is not

only the resources that we can provide for them but our care for them and the relationships that we build with them. We can say with St Vincent

I hope Our Lord will look upon the little we have attempted to do as proceeding from charityⁱⁱⁱ

How does hope sustain you in your service of others?

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ⁱ The Rule, 15.

ⁱⁱ Frederic Ozanam a Life in Letters, 85

ⁱⁱⁱ St Vincent Correspondence, Conferences, Documents, Vol 3, 33.