



Reflecting on social justice

April is the month of Easter. The Easter journey provides us a chance to reflect on Social Justice, which is at the heart of Christ's message and our Mission as the St Vincent de Paul Society and VincentCare.

We live in a world that is not always fair. The daily news cycle is filled with stories of challenges where the strong seem to prey on people who are vulnerable, where the rich get richer and people living in poverty become poorer.

The term 'social justice' is used a lot in our world. It can mean different things to different people. What does it mean for us in the work we do across the Society and VincentCare? We meet people every day who are excluded from the community for a number of reasons. Poverty, injustice, drugs, alcohol and gambling can all lead to people falling into a life that makes it difficult to fully participate in the wider community.

Through our work in the Society, we can build a more just and compassionate community by building equality through equity. What does this mean? People living with addictions need special care that might be different to what a refugee might need. By paying attention to these specific needs and delivering services and programs that address these, we can build equality for people.

The message in our Mission is to live out the Gospel to build a more just and compassionate world. At the heart of our Mission is the example of Jesus Christ who led His disciples to seek out those who were marginalised. He tended to their needs individually and healed them in their own special way. When Frederic Ozanam set up the first conferences of the St Vincent de Paul Society, he built a model based on this same concept, to go and meet people and understand their individual circumstances. This is what we still do today.

Question for Reflection and Discussion

What does the term 'social justice' mean to you?

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What different kinds of need do you see in the people you serve in your own work?

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What are the different ways you address these individual needs?

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How do you think we can deliver better services that help address those needs?

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