

REFLECTION FOR NOVEMBER:

*Fraternal Communities in every AIC
Group*

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Introduction: *Let us act and be like true sisters in Christ*

It is very important to highlight the importance of the fraternity, respect and trust that ought to exist in every AIC group or center. There is no doubt that we, as individual members of AIC, are different, that we think and act distinctly. Yes, we are different, but we must also be clear about the fact that we are bound together as Vincentian Volunteers. As such, we ought to do many things together and this implies collaboration, solidarity, love and accompanying one another. Indeed, it is precisely those qualities that will enable us to fulfill our commitment toward our brothers and sisters in need and will enable us to do this in an affective and effective manner. We have to live and act as brothers and sisters to one another... we have to be authentic fraternal communities.

Development of the Theme: *May respect, solidarity and warmth thrive in AIC groups*

Vincent de Paul, as well as Louise de Marillac, always acted with respect and love toward their brothers and sisters... not only those brothers and sisters who were suffering and/or in vulnerable situations, but also those brothers and sisters with whom they shared their life on a daily basis. Many letters that were written by these two saints and addressed to the Missionaries or the Daughters of Charity encouraged them to be concerned not only about their ministry (which had been entrusted to them) and their interior dispositions, their encounter with the Lord and their following of Jesus Christ, but also to be concerned about their health, their financial situation, their travels and the various missions on which

they were sent. Vincent often repeated the words: *take care brother; take care sister; take care of yourself*. Vincent and Louise exhorted their followers to rest and take care of their health. They respected the opinions and insights and decisions of their companions in community and were very aware of the pluralism that existed in those communities. Following the example of Vincent and Louise and also imitating the members of the early Christian community who were known as being of one heart and one mind, we must come to appreciate the fact that our differences are a treasure that should lead us to an unconditional commitment to our group and to the brothers and sisters whom we are called to serve.

There are many values that we have to make real in our life so that as a group we never lose sight of that which makes us who we are. We have to search for the common good of the group so that this in turn becomes the cornerstone of the service of our Association whose fundamental value ought to be solidarity. We ought to become ever more aware of the needs of others and promote unity among ourselves as well between ourselves and others. Indeed, that unity is transcendental because every individual has an irreplaceable value and, therefore, we are bound together with one another. We must always be mindful of our origins: we are a fraternal community and we promote a culture of love.

Personal and Community Reflection:

We have to cultivate other values, such as respect and tolerance, and we have to do this on a daily basis. We must not allow intolerance to become a reality in our midst, that is, we can never close the door on or reject those persons who think or act or live or believe in a way that is different from ourselves. We can affirm the fact that just as respect is the basis for life together as a society, so also intolerance, if it becomes rooted in our midst, will make our life together impossible.

Activities and Questions:

- ❖ Is there some dynamic that will help us to get to know one another on a deeper level?
- ❖ Do we treat our companions with respect?

- ❖ Do we believe that pluralism can be enriching?
- ❖ Do we accept others as they are?
- ❖ Discuss your answers to the questions above in groups.

Prayer:

*Jesus Christ, our Lord and Brother, place a lock on the door to our heart
so that we think no evil of anyone,
so that we do not prejudge or wish harm to others,
so that we do not suppose or interpret evil in the intentions of our brothers
and sisters.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, you are the unifying element of our life together.
Place a seal of silence on our lips so that the path of murmuring and discord
is closed off;*

*so that the words that are entrusted to us in confidence and all the
irregularities that we observe... may we guard all of these things zealously!*

*May we always be aware of the fact that the primary
and most concrete way to love is to remain silent!*

*Place in our hearts those seeds of kindness
and give us a spirit of civility
so that we reverence one another in the same way that we reverence you,
our Lord!*

*At the same time, give us the wisdom to combine that gift of civility
with a trust in our brothers and sisters.*

Lord Jesus, give us the grace of mutual respect.

Amen!! So be it!!

Hymn