

St. Vincent and the Incarnation -- December

Introduction We usually think of St. Vincent in the realm of deeds rather than ideas. But consequences must have ideas; effects must have causes.

At the time of St. Vincent, Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle was leading a school of thought, of spirituality that was going back to centering on God, away from a kind of selfish religion with preoccupation on self and individualism; on private devotions over liturgy. This group was emphasizing the Christian community, the Mystical Body, the worshipping of God in Christ, that perfection is not solely personal but communal.

St. Vincent – a man of this time – reaffirmed the social implications of perfection and put these ideas into action by insisting that God must be loved in Christ and that Christ must be loved in all people and all people loved in Christ.

Reading “[We] ought to love [our] neighbor as being the image of God and the object of his love and reciprocally [this will] cause [us] to love [our] most lovable Creator; that, by a return of love, [we] may be inflamed with love of God who has so loved [us] to deliver His own Son to death for [our] salvation.” St. Vincent de Paul

St. Vincent’s philosophy was INCARNATIONAL. Christ became flesh and dwelt among us. God dwells in each person -- those who are poor, lowly, distressed; those who are rich, saintly and sinful. In serving persons living in poverty, we serve Jesus Christ. In loving and serving one another, we love God. This is the basis of all St. Vincent’s works -- the Ladies of Charity, the Daughters of Charity, the Missions, etc.

Reflection As those who follow Jesus in the spirit of St. Vincent,
what do these words of Scripture mean in our lives today?

John 1: 14 “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

Matthew 25: 40 “I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of my brothers or sisters, you did it to me.”

Philippians 2: 6-7 “He did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave and became as [we] are.”

1 John 4: 20 “Anyone who says, ‘I love God’ and hates brother or sister is a liar.

Psalm 7: 14 “The Virgin shall be with child and bear a son and shall name him, Emmanuel, GOD WITH US.”

What implications does this have for us this Advent
as we prepare for Christmas –
a time of LOVE and GIFT-GIVING?

As we prepare our homes, our trees, our gifts,
how do we prepare our hearts?

How strong is our belief in the INCARNATION?

We need to awaken our spirits again to the greatest GIFT
any of us ever received – the GIFT of JESUS in our lives.



Christmas and Advent are times to open our hearts and hands, to look at the GIFT that Jesus is in our lives. And to look with greater intensity and honesty at the gift we are to BE for others in HIS NAME.

Reflection

What do I pray for this Advent?

What do I look for in my gift-giving?

What kind of heart am I giving these days?

What thoughts and motives mark my gift-giving?

What will I say to my Gift-Giver (the Father) and to my Gift (the Son)?

What will I have to offer Jesus on the day of His birth celebration?



Prayer ALL: It is Advent! Come, Lord Jesus!!

Gift my life! Gift my dear ones! Gift persons who are poor and unloved. Amen.

Happy reflecting! And may the real JOY of Christmas be yours!

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