

SPECIAL
EDITION:
VINCENTIAN
HOSPITALITY



VINCENTIAN HERITAGE

VOL. 33
NO. 1
2016



"The beggar-Christ and Vincent de Paul."
Icon by Meltem Aktas.

Commissioned by Rosati House residence,
DePaul University. Located in the chapel.

*Courtesy of the Vincentian Community, Rosati
House, DePaul University, Chicago, IL*

VINCENTIAN HERITAGE

SPECIAL EDITION

Featuring Articles on Vincentian Hospitality
Collected by Thomas A. Maier, Ph.D.,
and Marco Tavanti, Ph.D. School of
Management, University of San Francisco

Table of Contents

Contributors to this Issue

Foreword

DENNIS H. HOLTSCHNEIDER, C.M., Ed.D.

Preface: The Nature and Necessity of Hospitality

THOMAS A. MAIER, Ph.D.

Introduction

THOMAS A. MAIER, Ph.D. , AND MARCO TAVANTI, Ph.D.

SECTION I: THEORETICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONSTRUCTS OF VINCENTIAN HOSPITALITY

The Grace and Call of the Hospitable God

JOHN NAVONE, S.J.

Vincentian Pilgrimage Hospitality:
Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

EDWARD R. UDOVIC, C.M., Ph.D.

Vincent de Paul and Hospitality

JOHN E. RYBOLT, C.M., Ph.D.

Table of Contents (continued)

Hospitality Ethos with Justice and Dignity: Catholic, Vincentian, and Jesuit Perspectives on Global Migration

MARCO TAVANTI, Ph.D.

Brothers of Charity: Hospitality as a Community of Brothers

DR. RENÉ STOCKMAN, SUPERIOR GENERAL

You Were Told to Love the Immigrant, But What if the Story Never Happened—Hospitality and United States Immigration Law

CRAIG B. MOUSIN, J.D.

Hospitality on a Vincentian Campus:
Welcoming the Stranger Outside Our Tent

ANNELLE FITZPATRICK, CSJ, Ph.D.

Eucharistic Hospitality: A Bi-directional Dynamic

LEVI NKWOCHA, Ph.D. CANDIDATE, NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY

SECTION II: REFLECTIONS ON HOSPITALITY FROM THE FIELD

Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul:
Reflection on Hospitality

EVELYNE FRANC, D.C.

Table of Contents (continued)

Hospitality in the Manner of St. Vincent de Paul

J. PATRICK MURPHY, C.M., Ph.D.

A Reflection on Hospitality From DePaul Ireland

CHRISTINE LITTLEFIELD

Reflections from the Road: Vincentian Hospitality Principles in
Healthcare Education for the Indigent

JOHN M. CONRY, Pharm.D.

Would You Like Fries With Your Borscht?

KELLI MCGEE

Cultivating Interior Hospitality: Passing the Vincentian Legacy
through Immersion

JOYANA DVORAK

Reflections from the Field:
Table Grace and a Biblical Call to Hospitality

TIMOTHY GEORGE

About Vincentian Heritage

Contributors to this Issue

JOHN M. CONRY, Pharm.D., is a Clinical Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Assistant Dean for Service Programs at St. John's University, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, in Queens, New York. He earned both his Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy and Doctor of Pharmacy degrees from St. John's University. He subsequently completed a pharmacy residency at the VA Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland. In addition to his didactic teaching responsibilities, Dr. Conry maintains an active clinical practice for experiential teaching at Project Renewal in New York City. Here he provides pharmacy care for the homeless and urban indigent with a special emphasis on HIV, hypertension, diabetes, and health literacy issues. He has authored numerous publications in peer-reviewed professional journals/books and is frequently invited to provide presentations at the local, regional, and national levels. At the College of Pharmacy, Dr. Conry serves as Director of the Urban Pharmaceutical Care, Research and Education Institute and oversees academic service-learning initiatives.

JOYANA JACOBY DVORAK serves as the Coordinator for Mission Services in the DePaul University Office of Mission and Values. Here she collaborates with students, staff, and faculty to bring to life the Vincentian heritage and mission. Previously she served as the Service Immersion Coordinator in the DePaul Vincentian Community Service Office. In this role she accompanied students during winter and spring break service immersion experiences domestically and internationally. She also teaches in DePaul's Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies program. Joyana completed her Master's in Non-Profit Management from DePaul University in 2012 with research focused on community partner relationships. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Theology and Sociology from Marquette University in 2004. While at Marquette she also studied at the University of Central America in El Salvador. After graduation she served with the Good Shepherd Volunteers in Leon, Mexico, from 2004-2006 accompanying women and girls. Before joining DePaul, she worked in the Chicago Archdiocese Office for Peace and Justice and currently coordinates the Meet Me at the Mission: Vincentian Heritage Initiative which aims to deepen and connect DePaul student experiences with the values inherent in the university's Vincentian and Catholic identity. Joyana currently lives in the Logan Square neighborhood in Chicago with her husband, David, and son Theodore.

Continued

SR. ANNELLE FITZPATRICK, CSJ, Ph.D., is a Sister of Saint Joseph (Brentwood) and Associate Professor of Sociology at St. John's University. She is a popular speaker on issues related to Cultural Competency and has lectured throughout the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, and Australia.

SR. EVELYN FRANC, D.C., is the former Superioress General of the Daughters of Charity worldwide. The Daughters of Charity are called to serve Jesus Christ in the person of those who are poor and marginalized, with a spirit of humility, simplicity, and charity. In their work, they are motivated by the love of Christ and sustained by a deep prayer life, living together in community, supporting one another in a common mission of service addressing the person in all human and spiritual dimensions. Sr. Franc lead the Daughters of Charity in their work in places of social priority: hospitals, homes for troubled children, schools, day centers for the homeless, those with dependencies, or handicapping conditions.

TIMOTHY GEORGE has been the dean of Beeson Divinity School since its inception in 1988. As founding dean, he has been instrumental in shaping its character and mission. In addition to his administrative responsibilities, George teaches church history and doctrine. He chairs the Doctrine and Christian Unity Commission of the Baptist World Alliance, is a life advisory trustee of Wheaton College, and is active in Evangelical-Roman Catholic Church dialogue. He serves as senior theological advisor for *Christianity Today*, and is on the editorial advisory boards of *First Things* and *Books & Culture*. George is the general editor of the *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, a 28-volume series of sixteenth-century exegetical commentary. A prolific author, he has written more than 20 books and regularly contributes to scholarly journals.

CHRISTINE LITTLEFIELD has worked in the homeless sector since 2004. She joined Depaul Ireland in 2006 where she served as a Project Worker, Manager, and Senior Services Manager. In October of 2012 she began working in the Fundraising and Communications department, and now serves as Director of Fundraising and Communications. Christine studied politics and sociology at University College Dublin, and holds a Master's degree in Criminology from Queens University. She studied management and leadership in the homeless sector at Dublin City University, where she also earned a diploma in Fundraising Management.

Continued

THOMAS MAIER, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the School of Management at the University of San Francisco where he brings more than twenty years of industry experience, a wealth of current research, and a honed experiential teaching methodology. Prior to academia, Professor Maier was a senior-level executive in the international hotel, restaurant, and food and beverage industries. His research interests are centered around generational leadership, hospitality revenue management, and business analytics. He recently published a Food and Beverage generational leadership book, *Hospitality Leadership Lessons in French Gastronomy: The Story of Guy and Frank Savoy*, and he co-authored the textbook, *Welcome to Hospitality: An Introduction (3rd Edition)*.

KELLI McGEE currently serves as the Director of Operations for Depaul USA, a subsidiary of the Depaul International charity group (<http://depaulcharity.org>). She previously worked for the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Moldova and Romania. She holds an MBA (2011) and a BS in Economics (2001), both from DePaul University in Chicago, IL. As a management consultant with Depaul International and through other international work, Kelli has spent considerable time working to support homeless and marginalized people in Eastern Europe. She is fluent in Romanian and Russian and remains an expert on management and organization development.

REV. CRAIG B. MOUSIN has been the University Ombudsperson at DePaul University since 2001. He received his B.S. cum laude from Johns Hopkins University, his J.D. with honors from the University of Illinois, and his M. Div. from Chicago Theological Seminary. He joined the DePaul University College of Law faculty in 1990, and served as the Executive Director of the Center for Church/State Studies there until 2003, and co-director from 2004 to 2007. He co-founded both the Center's Interfaith Family Mediation Program and DePaul's Asylum and Immigration Legal Clinic. He has taught Asylum and Refugee Law and Immigration Law and Policy at DePaul College of Law. He has also taught Immigration Law and Policy as an adjunct law professor at the University of Illinois College of Law. Reverend Mousin began practicing labor law at Seyfarth, Shaw, Fairweather & Geraldson in 1978. In 1984, he founded and directed the Midwest Immigrant Rights Center (now the National Immigrant Justice Center), a provider of legal assistance to refugees. He also directed legal services for Travelers & Immigrants Aid between 1986 and 1990. Reverend Mousin was ordained by the United Church of Christ in 1989. He has served as an Associate Pastor at Wellington Avenue U.C.C., was one of the founding pastors of the DePaul Ecumenical Gathering (1996-2001), and serves as a Life Trustee on the Board of Directors of the Chicago Theological

Continued

Seminary. In addition, he is a board member of Eco-Justice Collaboratives and serves on the Leadership Councils of the National Immigrant Justice Center and the Marjorie Kovler Center, which assists individuals dealing with the complex consequences of torture by providing them with medical, mental health, and social services while also advocating for the end of torture worldwide.

REV. J. PATRICK MURPHY, C.M., Ph.D., a Vincentian priest, is Values Director of Depaul International, an organization serving the homeless in six countries. He received his doctorate in Higher Education Administration and an M.A. in Sociology from Stanford University. He earned an MBA from DePaul University, as well as a Master of Divinity and Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. At DePaul he directed the School of Public Service for eighteen years, building it into an internationally-recognized unit that offered five master's degrees to more than 700 professionals in government and nonprofit organizations. He is Emeritus Professor of Public Service and founder of Vincent on Leadership: The Hay Project, a research and training unit at the university. Fr. Murphy lectures internationally on leadership and values. His publications include four books and several articles on the visions and values of leaders. His most recent book, co-edited with Patricia Bombard, BVM, is *Fundraising Strategies—Stories from the Field Inspired by St. Vincent de Paul*. In 2009 *The Irish Times* named him one of the 100 most influential Irish Americans.

REV. JOHN J. NAVONE, S.J., is a Jesuit priest, theologian, philosopher, educator, author, raconteur, and Professor Emeritus of Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. Navone began teaching biblical theology at the Gregorian University in 1967, spending his career in that department. He also taught courses in theology of history, narrative theology, and the theology and spirituality of beauty. Of Navone's twenty-three books, five have been associated with the development of narrative theology and the work of Bernard Lonergan, his teacher and eventual colleague at the Pontifical Gregorian University. Two of his most recent books have won recognition in both Europe and the United States for his contribution to the theology and spirituality of beauty. In *Theological Aesthetics: A Reader* (London: SCM, 2004), Gesa E. Thiessen ranks Navone among 95 contributors to this field from the time of Justin Martyr in 165. Edward Farley of Vanderbilt University Divinity School calls attention to Navone's work in this field as one of the "five significant twentieth-century Catholic theologies of beauty" in his book *Faith and Beauty: A Theological Aesthetic* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 74–81.

Continued

REV. LEVI NKWOCHA, Ph.D. candidate, is a priest, ordained for the Catholic Archdiocese of Owerri, Nigeria. He obtained a master's degree in Systematic Theology, at the University of Notre Dame, and is presently a Ph.D. candidate in World Religion, World Church (WRWC) at the same university. His scholarship research concentrates on the engagement of the "Imperative Other" and the Surprise of Hospitality. "Eucharistic Hospitality: A Bi-directional Dynamic," marks his first published article in the United States.

REV. JOHN E. RYBOLT, C.M., Ph.D., completed his seminary studies at the Vincentian seminary in Perryville, Missouri, and at De Andreis Seminary in Lemont, Illinois. He received a doctorate in biblical studies from Saint Louis University. He has taught in Vincentian seminaries in Saint Louis, Lemont, and Denver. He worked for the provincial of the Midwest Province from 1979 to 1981. He joined the board of trustees of DePaul University in 1981 and is currently a life trustee. He also served as a delegate from the Midwest Province to the international general assemblies of the Congregation in 1980, 1986, and 1998, and managed the archives of the province from 1980 to 1989. Reverend Rybolt also served as the director of the International Formation Center, a program for ongoing Vincentian education and formation in Paris, France. Currently, he is serving as a Vincentian Scholar-in-Residence at DePaul University. Since 1979 he has been involved in the Vincentian Studies Institute, which he headed from 1982 to 1991. His many publications have covered fields of interest in language, biblical studies, and history, particularly Vincentian history, and currently he is focusing his work on the multi-volume series *The Vincentians: A General History of the Congregation of the Mission*.

BRO. DR. RENÉ STOCKMAN, SUPERIOR GENERAL, has been a member of the Congregation of the Brothers of Charity since 1973. After his religious studies and professional training as a doctor in the field of social health care, he was named director of Dr. Guislain, a psychiatric center in Ghent (Belgium), and of its School of Nursing. In 1988 he was made responsible for the apostolic activities of the Brothers of Charity in Belgium, and has served as provincial superior since 1994. He became the general superior of the congregation in 2000. Dr. Stockman has published widely on history, medical ethics, and spirituality. He is also founder of the Belgium Dr. Guislain museum for the history of mental health care.

Continued

MARCO TAVANTI, Ph.D., is President of Sustainable Capacity International Institute (SCII-ONLUS) and a Professor at the University of San Francisco's School of Management. He is Program Director of the Master of Nonprofit Administration (MNA). Previously he served as Degree Chair of the International Public Service (IPS) at DePaul University's School of Public Service (SPS). He is Associate Editor of *International Research and Review* (IRR) and Editor of the *International Journal of Sustainable Human Security* (IJSHS). With more than twenty-five years of experience in global poverty alleviation, he has founded and directed various programs and authored numerous systems-thinking studies for global ethics and social responsibility.

REV. EDWARD R. UDOVIC, C.M., Ph.D., is a Vincentian priest from the Western Province of the Congregation of the Mission. Ordained in 1984, he has a Doctorate in Church History from the Catholic University of America. He presently serves as the Secretary, Senior Executive for University Mission, and Vice President for Teaching and Learning Resources at DePaul University in Chicago, the largest Catholic University in the United States. He is also an associate professor in the Department of History. He has written extensively in the area of Vincentian history, and has given presentations throughout the United States and internationally on Vincentian history, spirituality, and leadership.

We offer special thanks to Meagan VanderWeele, a DePaul University graduate, for her research support and assistance in compiling all of the articles for this special edition.

Foreword

DENNIS H. HOLTSCHNEIDER, C.M., Ed.D.

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[preface](#)

Foreword

I have long thought that the primary purpose of grandparents is to be utterly delighted when their grandchildren enter the room. Parents have the unenviable task of conveying unconditional love while communicating any number of behavioral expectations. Teachers must convey complete confidence in the child's aptitude, while signaling the consequences if standards and deportment are not met. Even coaches and dance teachers push students beyond their comfort zones. But grandparents, their contribution is to be delighted. To spoil, perhaps; but at the heart of it is an adult figure who is just so immediately and obviously happy that this child has entered the room.

And so the heart of hospitality: to make someone feel special, cared for, and safe. St. Benedict and his sister, St. Scholastica, have long "owned the brand" for hospitality in the Roman Catholic tradition. They created a Rule of Life for their followers based on hospitality to the stranger, a sharp departure from the desert fathers who left the world in order to experience the divine in silence. Benedictine hospitality suggested that God was to be found in the human interaction, and particularly in the habit of happily setting aside one's plans when another person arrived without notice.¹

St. Vincent de Paul has no claim to pioneering the notion of welcoming the stranger, but he and St. Louise de Marillac did show the world what it meant to do so for the most vulnerable in society, and how to grow this to a scale that could serve hordes of displaced war victims pouring into Paris over multiple decades. Scalability, that was the challenge. Creating a multi-national system of charity, where professionalism combined with love. Shaping a response that fed, clothed, healed, housed, trained and employed them, but in a way where each person—literally each person—felt that someone knew them by name and would care for them, even if the world seemed to have abandoned them to their own devices.

If it is the stranger's fear of abandonment that so appreciates being welcomed, then it is this interruption that defines the act of hospitality. Followers of St. Vincent and St. Louise were instructed to leave prayer if someone in need rang the doorbell, with the assurance that they would find God in the exchange with the other as surely as they would find God in prayer.²

The hospitality industry has long known this, even if religious language was not used, and even if a profit margin was sought from the exchange. "It has been and continues to be our responsibility to fill the earth with the light and warmth of hospitality," spoke Conrad

¹ "Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ, for He is going to say, 'I came as a guest, and you received Me.'" Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, Leonard Doyle, trans. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 116.

² See, for example, Pierre Coste, C.M., *The Life and Works of St. Vincent de Paul*, Joseph Leonard, C.M., trans., 3 vols. (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1987), 1:353.

Hilton, who received an honorary degree from DePaul University in 1954. In the end, hospitality is about feeling the delight, the immediate attention and the competent concern of others when you have arrived, and about finding a way to reproduce that thousands of times a day, across every interaction in a multinational organization.

The articles that fill this edition of *Vincentian Heritage*, therefore, are far more than mere tracings of the lines of thought within a religious tradition on a given topic of interest to a particular industry. This is spiritual reading masquerading as management advice. It is an invitation into the heart of human interaction, a way of growing our own hearts because we attended to the needs of someone else and, particularly, took delight that they entered our lives.

Preface: The Nature and Necessity of Hospitality

THOMAS A. MAIER, PH.D.

[foreword](#)

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[intro](#)

The Nature of hospitality

The idea of hospitality dates back to evidence found at the first centers of civilization such as Mesopotamia in present-day Iraq, to biblical references of washing of guests' feet, to later accounts of English innkeepers receiving weary travelers over a mug of ale. The provision of hospitality services has spanned across geographical and cultural boundaries for several thousand years.¹ Historians have traced the practice of providing shelter and food for weary merchants and travelers in China, Egypt, and later in other parts of the world, opening hospitality establishments across the globe as more trade routes emerged.

Today, the concept of hospitality has remained the same, to welcome, satisfy, and serve others. It is also manifested in an openness and charitable spirit: a willingness to receive others when they are in need, an authentic desire to lead and serve others with a specific orientation towards the common good. With hospitality in mind, the metaphor of God as host is evoked in the biblical story of the Exodus. With the people of Israel utterly dependent on God for their survival in the wilderness, God provided both protection and food.² God's hospitality in the wilderness prepared his people for life in the Promised Land, which is described as flowing with "milk and honey." Hardly limited to an abundance of cattle, goats, and bees, this phrase pictures life in the Promised Land as if eating a rich banquet from God's own table.³

Moreover, hospitality explores the nature, meaning, and commonality of practices exemplified in the Judeo-Christian tradition beginning with the singular hospitality event of Abraham's welcoming and hosting traveling visitors.⁴ Such hospitality entails more than food and drink. The communion, community, and communication of this biblical event revealed that hospitality is primarily an occasion of spiritual reciprocity, of mutual recognition, acceptance and delight. It implies the look of love that is contemplation, our being glad to see one another, our capacity to enjoy one another's company and surroundings. Genuine hospitality is possible only when persons know who they are, having a self to give, and are happy to share that self with others. The humanizing and personalizing power of hospitality is limitless, and hospitality is relevant to individuals, organizations, groups, and societies at large.⁵

The Necessity of hospitality

In order to offer and express hospitality towards others we must first take a look around and ask ourselves: Who is in need and what do they need? Who among us are

¹ Kaye Chon, Thomas A. Maier, *Welcome to Hospitality: An Introduction* (Delmar Cengage Learning, 2009), 512pp.

² Ex 15:24-25, 27; 23:20-23.

³ Deut. 6:3.

⁴ Gn 18:1-8. See also, Gn 19:1-3, Gn 29:13, Ex 2:20, and Ruth 2:2-17.

⁵ John J. Navone, S.J., Professor Emeritus of Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. Personal interview (2010).



Engraving of a marble statue by Émilien Cabuchet, located in Saint-Sulpice church, Paris. Originally published in Arthur Loth, *Saint Vincent de Paul et sa Mission Sociale*.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online
<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



excluded? How can they be welcomed? Who among us are unheard and how do we help them to be heard? How does one personalize one's own hospitality and align it with a sense of purpose in life that is in collaboration with others for the benefit of others? The answers to these questions and the necessity of hospitality are evident in the post-apostolic era wherein hospitality can serve as the conduit for the reappearance of grace in graceless times. Hampton Morgan Jr. argues a post-modern era of individualism and an ethic of self-accomplishment over the common good of others have seized the day.⁶ Moreover, John J. Navone, S.J., contends, "the value of hospitality may be found in the promotion of the solidarity of a loving communion, community, and communication; Of civic friendship under the sovereignty of God's love, overcoming the gaps between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, strong and weak, successful and unsuccessful."⁷ Such hospitality promotes equality that grounds the equalizing friendship among diverse individuals within institutions, communities, and societies.

Accordingly, hospitality offers a charitable component both unique and applicable to individuals, groups, societies, and nations. Throughout time Vincentian practitioners have promoted and delivered said hospitality by serving and valuing others among and within diverse communities, societies, and nations at large. Vincent de Paul himself took on the pain of others through companionship and compassion for those left without hospitality in their lives.

The Centered and hospitable leader

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges facing leaders in today's global society is their

⁶ Hampton Morgan Jr., "Remember to Show Hospitality: A Sign of Grace in Graceless Times," *International Journal of Mission* 87 (1998), 535-539.

⁷ Navone, Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, Italy. Personal interview.

ability to operate in complex institutional, societal, and cultural environments with true motives and a sense of hospitableness towards others. Seeking positions of leadership and influence are honorable quests if the motivation is true service. The issue at hand is the motive, nature, and ambition behind one's desire to lead. Is the desire to lead motivated by the glory of God and for the good of others? Is it motivated by the desire to develop in others a genuine sense of hospitality in a godly way? If so, then these are the motives of transformational leaders reflected in today's churches, institutions, and secular organizations of merit.⁸ Christ's approach to leadership, and the approach he asked of his disciples, is one that glorifies God and serves the welfare of others. It does not seek personal glory for acts of service or manipulation of others to achieve one's own self-interests.

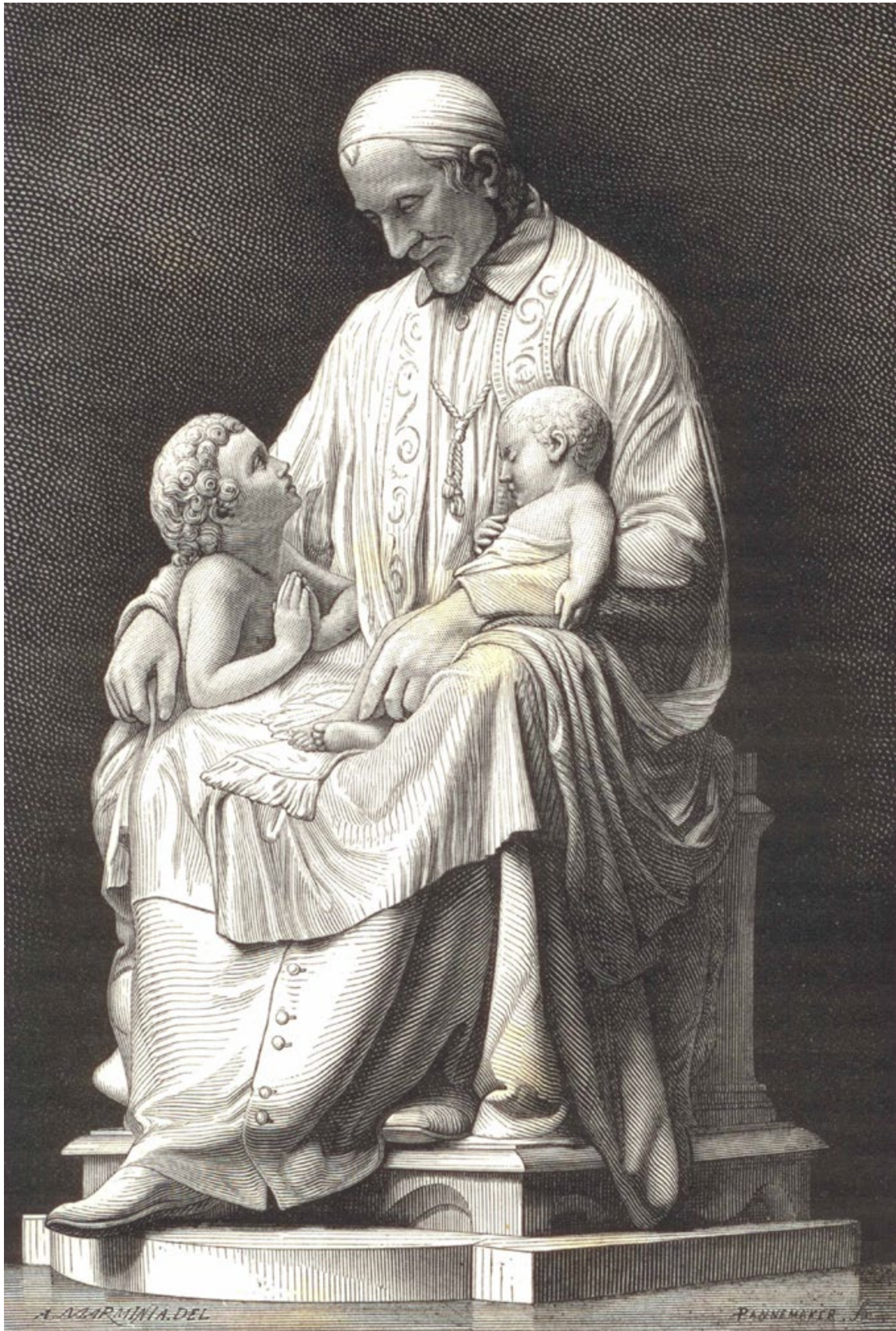
The legacy of Vincent de Paul and the contemporary practice of Vincentian stakeholders worldwide provide us with extraordinary examples of transformational leaders who are grounded in the daily practice and delivery of hospitality. Vincentian hospitality praxis provides us with examples of the use of godly means for the pursuit of excellence in leadership. It reflects a results oriented approach toward serving others. Vincent is a perfect example of Christ's teachings concerning persons in positions of authority: "whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant."⁹ Vincent was not interested in personal glory for his heroic and unending acts of service; rather, he was a well-intended hospitality practitioner. He acted in the interest of God as host, relying on God's blessings, strength, protection and rewards to serve the most cherished and needy among us.¹⁰ There are no signs in Vincent's leadership of manipulation or coercion but only of a desire to do what is in the best interests of God's people. In the face of numerous obstacles, Vincent provided leadership spanning vision, competence, planning, motivation, encouragement, optimism, and the nourishing spirit needed to create and sustain the Vincentian mission of unconditionally serving and caring for others.



⁸ Joseph Maciariello, "Lessons in Leadership and Management from Nehemiah," *Theology Today* 60 (2002), 397-407.

⁹ Mark 10:43.

¹⁰ Louis Abelly, *The Life of the Venerable Servant of God: Vincent de Paul*, 3 vols. (New Rochelle, N.Y.: New City Press, 1993), 1:187-88.



Engraving of a marble statue by Émilien Cabuchet, located in Saint-Sulpice church, Paris. Originally published in Arthur Loth, *Saint Vincent de Paul et sa Mission Sociale*.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online
<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Introduction

Sacred Hospitality Leadership: Values Centered Perspectives and Practices

THOMAS A. MAIER, PH.D., AND MARCO TAVANTI, PH.D.

[preface](#)

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[section
I](#)

Hospitality is a gesture rooted in values and leadership. Being ‘hospitable’ toward ‘others’ is much more than a simple act of kindness and much more than a profit oriented service industry. It is rooted in our Christian faith and helps us as a society face the moral challenges for our global societies on the move. Its message is embedded through the biblical messages and is clearly exemplified by the Catholic Church and other religious traditions. Indeed, hospitality is a practice emanating from many religious traditions based on the practices and moral obligation of ‘welcoming the stranger.’

Unfortunately the depth of its significance for our human relations across diverse peoples, institutions, and borders is often limited by interpersonal and international relations skills. Social and faith-based values of hospitality are left outside the controversial and politicized topic between restrictive and inclusive views of migration. Yet, hospitality is intimately connected to the migratory nature of humankind and the progress of humanity. The future of our global societies with intensified and multilayered interactions requires a re-focusing on the rights and responsibilities connected to hospitality’s principled practices.

The purpose of this volume is to offer academic perspectives and practical reflections to rediscover hospitality as a ‘sacred’ experience. The articles and reflections of this collection remind us that hospitality-as-charity is not enough. It is an invitation to rediscover the sacred (enhanced) values of hospitality practices as expressed by many religious meanings, traditions, and daily work. The practices of hospitality, following the Christian tradition in general, and the Vincentian, Jesuit, and Benedictine traditions in particular, need to be centered in the values and practices of altruism, empowerment, justice, and dignity. In short, hospitality in Catholic religious traditions and other Abrahamic religions is one of the primary expressions of faith among the faithful and is to be extended toward non-faithful people.

In its own way, hospitality as expressed by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, is a manifestation of God’s omni-benevolence, love, and mercy. The Catholic religious traditions of hospitality in the Benedictine Monastery, in Vincentian organized charities, and in the Jesuit services for social justice, are a further manifestation of God’s self-less love, unconditional care, and restorative justice. These manifestations of ‘religious’ hospitality are not separate from ‘secular’ hospitality practice. Instead, they aim to provide a higher benchmark in quality services, social justice, and respect for humankind and their rights. These ‘religious’ based expressions in hospitality service and hospitality justice provide some powerful and inspiring messages to revise our attitudes, priorities, and methods in hospitality.

Hospitality Leadership is about Morality

The first message these analyses of hospitality leadership offer has to do with morality and sacredness. Leadership ethics, and even more so moral leadership, are dimensions of the ‘sacred’ meaning of hospitality. The moral values of a leader need to be re-centered in her/



Engraved portrait of Vincent de Paul by Pierre Van Schuppen, 1663;

Engraved portrait of Louise de Marillac by Desrochers, undated.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



his identity as human being, religious person, citizen, and member of society. Although as a society we make distinctions between a person's socioeconomic status, political affiliation, and educational level, it is the moral element which brings (or should bring) us to the true self which makes us all 'children of God.' Morality should help us to distinguish between 'rights' and 'wrongs' and orient our decision-making toward benevolent behavior. Ethics goes a step further, helping us to make concrete decisions when faced with the complexity of society and intricacy of organizations. In the context of hospitality, ethical leadership is more than 'being good to others.' It is about providing the necessary support for people on the move, those arriving, departing, and transiting. In a sense we are all in transit during this life on earth, all migrating from one place to another. The expression of hospitality is therefore a 'sacrament,' a symbolic action in the natural world that expresses deeper spiritual meaning. In this sense, 'sacred' hospitality leadership does not mean to 'separate' and 'isolate' from the non-sacred (mundane). Instead, it is 'sacred' for its connection to the 'divine' — the 'spiritual' associated with life, creation, and love, the highest aspirations of human relations.

God is love (1 John 4:8), and the action of love for one another is the essence of the Christian message. Hence, the studies and reflections on hospitality leadership illustrated in these pages are essentially a message of love for one another just as Jesus Christ has loved us (John 13:34). They represent more than simply 'do no harm' and 'being compliant' (as in some narrow definitions of ethical behavior). They are about being good and doing good to others (in a true moral sense) beyond self-interests or aspiring to being followed. The moral aspect of hospitality leadership is therefore about serving others, developing the capacity of others, sharing your resources with others in recognition of their inner dignity as human beings and children of God. In other words, sacred hospitality is about the manifestation of the 'goodness' that God has manifested and continues to manifest, the generous bounty of creation, freedom, and love. Indeed, this level of understanding the moral obligations of hospitality leadership has important consequences at the organizational and societal levels.

Hospitality Leadership is about Quality Services

St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac became leaders in the sacred practice of hospitality. They were simply concerned about responding to the needs of the many urban migrants, orphans, widows, homeless, sick and poor people of Paris and the French countryside. Their faith-based aspiration to provide sustainable quality services emerged from their deep sense of faith in a God who wants us to live in dignity, health, company, and recognition. Their experiment of centralizing various services at Saint-Lazare in Paris was a large management commitment to provide quality health, social and other hospitality services to disenfranchised people and marginalized populations. Despite the many needs and their limited resources, Vincent and Louise did not settle for mediocre service. “It is not enough to do good, it must be done well” they probably repeated to each other.

Why such attention to quality services? Because they had an established benchmark, found in their faith of a ‘sacred heart’ that emanates from “Love for all and to the end.” Their charity works had to be of the highest quality possible and convey the best attitudes of respect and dedication representative of God’s manifestation of love because:

[The poor] are our brothers, whom God commands us to help, but let us do so through Him and in the way He intends... Let us no longer say: “I am the one who did this good work,” for anything good must be done in the name of O[ur] L[ord] Jesus Christ....¹

The model of Vincentian hospitality is based on ‘charity’ not as detached alms to the needy, but as an expression of God’s love that makes us equal as children of God. No matter our origins, social status, health conditions, etc., we are all ‘deserving’ of the best care. This ‘charity’ is actually a manifestation of selfless love and that is the true biblical meaning of ‘sacred’ hospitality. In commercial hospitality leadership we say “What can you do for me if I am nice to you?” Instead, ‘sacred’ hospitality leadership asks for “selfless and generous welcoming of people who cannot give back.”

It is a ‘transformational’ event because we are engaging in new relations and opening ourselves to deep change. It is not ‘transactional’ because biblical hospitality is based on the reverence that the action itself is a manifestation of God. The biblical message is, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35b), and “Do not neglect hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2). In the faith-based and charity-as-God’s-love model of hospitality in the Vincentian tradition there is a deeper message. Welcoming the stranger is actually an action of community love (*agape*) as there are no strangers in the family of God’s children, only sisters and brothers we have not met before. The contemporary meaning of quality care

¹ Letter 2546, “To Firmin Get, Superior, In Marseilles,” 8 March 1658, in *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, ed. and trans. by Jacqueline Kilar, D.C., Marie Poole, D.C., et al, 1-14 (New York: New City Press, 1985-2014), 7:115-116.

in hospitals run with the values and legacy of Saints Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, or Elizabeth Ann Seton has translated these ‘sacred’ understandings of hospitality into practices of human dignity, respect toward the patient, and quality care.²

Hospitality Leadership is about Social Justice

As Pope Francis visited Centro Astalli, a refugee center in Rome, he said, “Hospitality in itself isn’t enough. It’s not enough to give a sandwich if it isn’t accompanied by the possibility of learning to stand on one’s own feet. Charity that does not change the situation of the poor isn’t enough. True mercy, which God gives and teaches us, calls for justice, so that the poor can find a way out of poverty.”³ Hospitality with justice is what best describes the works of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), an organization founded in 1980 by Rev. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., the twenty-eighth Superior General of the Society of Jesus. To accompany, to serve, and to advocate are the specialties defining JRS’s mission to defend the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons in light of Jesus’s compassion and love for the poor and excluded.⁴ A justice centered hospitality leadership requires moral decision-making and it implies quality service, but it is more than that. It looks at the systemic issues behind people on the move due to economic disparities, unequal opportunities, violence, hunger, diseases, discrimination, and chronic poverty.

In organizations, hospitality leaders concerned with structural issues may need to do a critical and objective examination of their roles and responsibility to alleviate the root causes of discrimination, injustice, and difficult relations. They also need to address the economic, political, social, and environmental factors that prevent people from properly developing in their careers, capacities, production, and services. In this case, the systemic level of hospitality leadership is much more than ‘being nice to others’ and ‘actively listening’ to her/his employees. It is about being actively engaged in the process of changing the structural issues that prevent workforce relations based upon fairness, respect, and collaboration. At the political level, hospitality leaders with systemic concerns would have to look at the policies and structures that allow ‘toxic’ behaviors and prevent people from being happy. For centuries the Jesuit religious tradition has been associated with social justice. Vincentian organizations as well have embraced the values of social

² See, for example, the religious origins and mission of Ascension Health, the United State’s largest Catholic and nonprofit health system. “The Daughters of Charity National Health System (DCNHS) was established in St. Louis in 1986, but its roots extend back to 1633, when St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac founded the Daughters of Charity in France. When Pope Clement IX granted permission for the Daughters to live outside the cloister in 1668, the tone for their ministry was set: They would go where they were needed, putting their mission to work in the real world.” Read more at: <http://www.ascensionhealth.org>

³ Pope Francis at *Centro Astalli* Refugee Centre, Rome, 12 September 2013. Access the full speech in Italian here: <http://www.news.va/it/news/discorso-del-santo-padre-francesco-al-centro-astal>; Read the report of the visit in English here: <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/the-vatican/detail/articolo/27751/>

⁴ Read more about the works and mission of JRS at <http://en.jrs.net>. Read about their methods at: <https://www.jrs.net/assets/Publications/File/SideBySide.pdf>



Vincent, Louise, and the Sisters of Charity with the foundlings.

Artist and date unknown.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



justice and integrated it into their values leadership models and their poverty alleviation efforts rooted in systemic change.⁵

No matter what an individual, organization, or institution recognizes as their priority in this configuration of hospitality leadership, challenges remain to successful integration. Morality cannot compromise on quality and vice versa. In addition, ‘sacred’ and ‘good’ hospitality cannot avoid the question: “Is this just?” Justice is a prerequisite of charity. Hence, hospitality in the biblical and religious traditions of ‘charity’ is unconditional and self-less love based upon justice. Pope Benedict XVI explained the relation and integration of justice with love:

Charity goes beyond justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is ‘mine’ to the other... I cannot ‘give’ what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice. If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them. Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it. Justice is the primary way of charity... ‘the minimum measure’ of it.⁶

In particular, this special issue of *Vincentian Heritage* is inspired by the aspiration of developing values-based leaders, quality organizational services, and improved care for

⁵ For an overview of the role of social justice with the values of service (servant leadership) and accompaniment, see the Vincent on Leadership—the Hay Project at <http://leadership.depaul.edu>. For a review of the Vincentian Family development works on poverty reduction through systemic change see: <http://vinformation.famvin.org/vincentian-information-resources/systemic-change-resources/>

⁶ Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 6.

others. Specifically, the compilation of these articles provides a multilayered message of hospitality and illustrates both past and present benefits of values-centered Vincentian leadership practices throughout the world. You will find the compiled articles are both grounded in applied practice and theoretical consideration.

The first section of the issue is a compilation of scholarly articles surrounding the topic of hospitality. We begin with “The Grace and Call of the Hospitable God” by John Navone, S.J., and his discussion surrounding the grace and call of God finding expression in the many biblical hospitality narratives. He believes God as Host provides a garden for Adam and Eve, and walks with them in that garden. The primordial hospitality of paradise is a paradigm for human hospitality. Abraham and Sarah reflect God’s primordial hospitality in hosting their guests. “Vincentian Pilgrimage Hospitality: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives” by Edward R. Udovic, C.M., illuminates the history of pilgrimage and pilgrimage hospitality having deep living roots within Christianity and Catholicism. Within the Vincentian tradition there is also a long tradition of this hospitality found within pilgrimage visits to sites in Paris and throughout France linked especially with the relics of Vincent de Paul and the places intimately associated with his life and works. “Vincent de Paul and Hospitality” by John E. Rybolt, C.M., shares the many day-to-day practices and the leadership practicality and system processes of St. Vincent as he provided hospitality for the poor and homebound, often specifying hospitality service and quality standards. Marco Tavanti, Ph.D., artfully articulates the higher calling of hospitality to human kind and serving others in his article, “Hospitality Ethos with Justice and Dignity: Catholic, Vincentian, and Jesuit Perspectives on Global Migration.” Brother of Charity Dr. Rene Stockman shares the importance of values and the role hospitality can play in lovingly practicing hospitality in the spirit of Saint Vincent in, “Brothers of Charity: Hospitality as a Community of Brothers.” On the matter of immigration and law, Rev. Craig B. Mousin, J.D., authors a compelling argument as to the welcoming nature of hospitality and immigration with, “You Were Told to Love the Immigrant, But What if the Story Never Happened—Hospitality and United States Immigration Law.” In “Hospitality on a Vincentian Campus: Welcoming the Stranger Outside Our Tent,” Annelle Fitzpatrick, CSJ, Ph.D., articulates her belief that we might be losing sight of a unique opportunity to expand our sense of “hospitality” (enthusiastic welcoming of the stranger) to non-Christian students and parents that might be totally unfamiliar with our Catholic culture. Levi Nkwocha contends in “Eucharistic Hospitality: Two-Way Traffic” that Eucharistic hospitality is a coming (communion), and a going (sharing), so long as the going is intrinsically understood as a demand to share that which we have become (“Christs”).

The second part of this issue celebrates the many stories and applied hospitality practices of Vincentian family members throughout the world. These daily reflections were compiled from various international Vincentian stakeholders continuing the call to charity made centuries ago by Vincent de Paul. Evelyne Franc, D.C., former Superioress General of the Daughters of Charity, opens this section with “Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul: Reflection on Hospitality,” articulating what hospitality means to that

community. For her hospitality reflects a manner of being with those who are poor, as well as collaborating with those who share a similar desire to serve. J. Patrick Murphy, C.M., shares what it takes to be a successful leader in the likeness of St. Vincent himself in “Hospitality in the Manner of St. Vincent de Paul.” Both historical and contemporary leadership constructs are eloquently described in his reflection. “A Reflection on Hospitality from DePaul Ireland” by Christine Littlefield is a heart-warming piece on the core values which have formed the foundation of their hospitality praxis: 1) celebrating the potential of people; 2) putting words into action; 3) aiming to take a wider role in civil society; and 4) believing in rights and responsibilities. “Reflections from the Road: Vincentian Hospitality Principles in Healthcare Education for the Indigent” by John M. Conry, Pharm.D., sets forth the important role hospitality plays in healthcare-social justice. He feels it is important that those who work in healthcare understand and remain committed to Vincentian and hospitality-based health care, particularly for the indigent and marginalized. “Would You Like Fries With Your Borscht?” by Kelli McGee, Director of Operations, Depaul USA, illustrates the integrated nature of hospitality in building community and culture in the Ukraine. Joyana Dvorak’s “Cultivating Interior Hospitality: Passing the Vincentian Legacy through Immersion” is a poignant example of immersion experiences offering college students a taste and glimpse of how to live Vincentian hospitality in their daily lives. Lastly, “Reflections from the Field: Table Grace and a Biblical Call to Hospitality” by Timothy George, Beeson Divinity School, leaves us with the message that hospitality can be sentimentalized as the art of courtly manners or reduced to rules of how to hold a nice dinner party. However, although the art of being friendly, nice, and welcoming in social situations certainly has its place, hospitality in the Bible is much, much deeper than that.





Engraved portrait of Vincent de Paul by Pierre Van Schuppen, 1663;

Engraved portrait of Louise de Marillac by Desrochers, undated.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Vincent, Louise, and the Sisters of Charity with the foundlings.

Artist and date unknown.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Section I

THEORETICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONSTRUCTS OF VINCENTIAN HOSPITALITY

[intro](#)

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[next
article](#)

The Grace and Call of the Hospitable God

JOHN J. NAVONE, S.J.

section
I

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[next
article](#)

Introduction

The transforming meaning of Jesus' life and mission can be understood in terms of the divine hospitality. Jesus encounters inhospitality from the time of his birth when there was no room for him at the inn,¹ to when Herod tries to do away with him,² and he continues to encounter it throughout his entire life. He came to his own people and even they did not accept him.³ Jesus counters this inhospitality of the human heart with the hospitality of his heavenly Father. In the light of the crucified and risen Christ, the community of Christian faith proclaims that God the Host of the world has given us his Son and Spirit to transform humankind into hospitable selves in his own hospitable image and likeness. The Triune God of Jesus Christ is the hospitable God of three eternally self-giving persons, open to one another without forfeiting particularity or identity.

The grace and call of God finds expression in the many biblical hospitality narratives. God as Host provides a garden for Adam and Eve, and walks with them in that garden.⁴ The primordial hospitality of paradise is a paradigm for human hospitality. Abraham and Sarah reflect God's primordial hospitality in hosting their guests.⁵

Jesus reveals God's call to hospitality when he summons his hearers to extend God's hospitality, which we can never repay, to others who cannot repay us.⁶ God's hospitality is not given on a *quid pro quo* basis. God offers it even to the inhospitable. He is not hospitable because he is lonely and in need of festive company, it is not out of necessity; rather, his hospitality expresses the goodness, joy, and happiness that he *is*.

The Communion of the Eternal Three: The Hospitality that Saves the World

The God of Christians is interpersonal; consequently, our being in the image of the Christian God is our being interpersonal or relational as opposed to being a solitary monad. Hospitable persons image the interpersonal/relational Triune God of Christians. Unlike the God of Jews and Muslims, the Christian God is not a divine person alone, but tri-personal, interpersonal, three-in-one, the originating love of the Father, the welcoming love of the Son deriving from that love, and the concomitant reciprocal love of the Spirit of the Father/originating love and of the Son/welcoming love. Human hospitality entails the originating love of the host (image of Father), the welcoming love of the guest (Son) in the communion-community-communication of reciprocal love (Holy Spirit of Father and Son). It images the tri-personal God of Christians who is love. There is no hospitality without a host/giver, without a guest (welcoming recipient), and the resulting reciprocity of communion-community-communication-friendship.

¹ Luke 2:7. *The Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966).

² Matt 2:13.

³ John 1:11.

⁴ GN 3:8.

⁵ GN 18:1-5.

⁶ Luke 14.



Christ the Savior (Pantokrator).

Sixth-century encaustic icon from Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai.

Public Domain



Parables of Hospitality

Jesus, teller of banquet parables, is the universal integrator, the 'Catholic' par excellence in that he is the One who includes and unites the many. Vertically Jesus unites humankind to his Father; horizontally he unites himself to everyone. He is 'the second Adam' as also the eternal Son. He is the one 'through whom all things are made'⁷ and re-made so that 'all things hold together in him.'⁸ In fact, "there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things come and through whom we exist."⁹ He is the mediator of unity in all directions. Through him, the Word made flesh, we have access to the Father in the Holy Spirit and come to share in the divine nature.¹⁰ St. Irenaeus was in the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit, the outstretched arms of the Father calling and enfolding his children. The eschatological banquet community, to which all humankind is invited, is a participation in the Trinitarian relations at the core of the Christian life. "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts by which we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"¹¹

Jesus' parable of the talents¹² tells us of a generous God who shares his abundance that we might enjoy life abundantly. It implies that our God-given abundance should enable us to become hospitable sources of abundance for others. The parable extends the divine imperative of Genesis to increase and multiply beyond the limits of demography. The abundance of hospitable children evidences the life/spirit that they have received from their hospitable Creator. They are the true image and likeness of God as host. The servant who buried his two talents is indicted for his failure to enjoy and employ his God-given

⁷ John 1:3.

⁸ Colossians 1:17.

⁹ 1 Corinthians 8:6.

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:18; 2 Peter 1:4.

¹¹ Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6.

¹² Matthew 25:14-30.

abundance as God himself did. This servant recalls the warning of Jesus that the fearful person who tries to save his life will lose it. Such fear and insecurity reflects the absence of God's abundantly self-giving spirit/life.¹³

The banquet parables imply the communion, community, and communication of both the host and his guests in freedom.¹⁴ The host freely prepares his banquet and freely invites his guests. All who are invited may freely accept or decline the invitation. Always an act of freedom, love is never violent. God forces no one to love him. The banquet parables tell of both the freedom of God's grace and call, and of the freedom of our accepting or declining God's invitation to the communion, community, and communication of the banquet—divine and human hospitality express divine and human love and freedom.¹⁵

Matthew 25 associates hospitality with the joy of eternal life. Persons who, even though unwittingly, had been hospitable to the Son of Man are welcomed into the Kingdom of God.¹⁶ Jesus' parables of banquets and wedding feasts associate God's hospitality with joy. Invitations to banquets are a call to share the joy and festivity of the host. The elder son in the parable of the prodigal son is the resentful refuter of festivity. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins associates participation in the hospitality of the bridegroom's wedding feast with wisdom. It is an eschatological festivity and hospitality that eludes the foolish.

The Beauty of God's Saving Hospitality

The Fathers, from Justin (165 a.d.) onwards, were convinced that the beauty and attractiveness of the faith are the best evidence for its truth. We are drawn to Christ, according to Augustine, when we delight in truth, in blessedness, in holiness, and in eternal

¹³ The central liturgies of Jews and Christians are participations in the hospitality of a self-giving, generous, saving, and merciful God, who so loved the world that he gave his only Son. The Eucharistic words, "take my body and eat it, take my blood and drink it," express the self-giving hospitality of the Incarnate Son of God inviting all humankind to life in the family of God. The Mass is the divine banquet table that even now presages the eschatological banquet feast of the world to come. For the Christian community, the messianic banquet that Isaiah prophesied (25:6-10) has begun with the self-giving hospitality of the Crucified and Risen Christ. If God is Spirit, and those who worship God worship him in spirit and truth, we may also say that God is the Spirit whose self-giving hospitality in his crucified and risen Son is the Gift that saves the world.

¹⁴ The Mass is the extension throughout human history of the Father's self-giving hospitality in his incarnate Son to communion, community, and communication under the sovereignty of his love. The banquet motif of many of Jesus' parables is a hospitality theme in which God, the Host of the World, invites everyone to share in his hospitality. The Father, Host of all humankind, sends his Son to call everyone to his universal banquet community. When Jesus attends a banquet (Luke 14), he underscores the universality of his Father's hospitality when he teaches that we, like our heavenly Father, should be hospitable/welcoming/self-giving/generous towards all persons, and not merely to those who can repay us.

¹⁵ Freedom is linked to God's hospitality: We should, like our heavenly Father, be free to be welcoming and generous towards everyone. We must learn to freely give what we have freely received. God wills to free us from an attitude which limits our freedom to the small circle of persons from whom we can draw profit. Divine love is never profiteering. The true children of God, those whose life is from God, share his universal, disinterested, non-profiteering love.

¹⁶ The basis for predicating sacred of hospitality is the biblical revelation of God's acceptance of and reward for the hospitality of Abraham and Sarah. They, like the blessed in the Last Judgment scene of Matthew 25, were unaware of their having hosted the Host of the World/God. The blessed in Matthew 25 were defined by the godly spirit of hospitality, giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and clothing to the naked. They were generous, not selfish; they were givers, not takers; they were thoughtful, not thoughtless; they were godly, not godless.

life. Beauty is the unerring pointer to truth and the good. “Something that has existed since the beginning, something that we have heard, and have seen with our eyes; that we have watched and touched with our hands: the Word, who is life—this is our subject. We are writing this to you to make your joy complete.”¹⁷ God has let his glory-beauty radiate on the face of his beloved incarnate Son and from there into the hearts of believers.¹⁸

Without the beautiful, the good loses its attractiveness and its true cogency. The beautiful, its revealed equivalent found in glory, is the most ‘influential’ of the transcendental. Christ came not only to teach the truth and to bring about the good but, above all, to radiate the splendor of the love that saves the world. His intention is that we might forever participate in “what no eye has ever seen, nor ear ever heard, nor the heart of man ever imagined,” namely to experience, “all God has in store for those who love him.”¹⁹ He is the Son who allows us to see his glory as of the only begotten Son who is nearest the Father’s heart and is full of grace and truth.²⁰ Hospitality is associated with beauty. The Greek word for beauty derives from the verb “to beckon.” Beauty beckons or attracts us. The hospitable banquet giver of the parables invites guests to his festivities. Beauty is the inviting quality of the self-giving host. The adjective *kalos* means both “good” and “beautiful”; hence, the Beautiful Shepherd is the Good Shepherd whose beauty consists in the love that lays down his life for others and draws them to him. The Eucharistic hospitality of bread and wine in communion celebrates the self-sacrificing love of the Beautiful Shepherd whose beauty draws us to him.

The transforming power of messianic hospitality in Isaiah 25 liberates us from sadness and death. The hospitality of God’s messiah makes us joyfully hospitable persons (the sacramental effect of the Eucharist) just as God’s love makes us lovely, and his friendship makes us friendly: “See how they love one another.”²¹ We are all God’s guests on planet earth, much like an airport hotel. It is here God hosts us until the next flight to the mansions where he will host those who love their divine host. Each day, flights arrive with all God’s newly-created persons to whom he has given free tickets as his guests on planet earth. None of the new arrivals paid for their ticket. And God not only hosts everyone on planet earth, but he also knocks on our doors looking for hospitality. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”²² Our generous Host (*gratia operans*) has provided us with all the resources for becoming reciprocally hospitable (*gratia cooperans*). Beginning with Adam and Eve in paradise, God hosts all persons within his creation.

¹⁷ 1 John 1:1-4.

¹⁸ John 2:11; 2 Corinthians 4:6.

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:9-10.

²⁰ John 1:14, 18.

²¹ John 13:35.

²² Revelation 3:20.



Abraham and the Angels by Aert de Gelder (1645-1727).

Oil on canvas circa 1680–85.

Public Domain



Abraham is the paradigm of human reciprocity in hosting the three angel guests, unwittingly hosting his divine Host who rewards this hospitality with the promise of which Jesus Christ is the fulfillment.²³ Abraham's hospitality is that of the welcoming human heart that hears the Lord knocking at the door and opens it for communion with him.²⁴ Mary's "Let it be" is that of the welcoming human heart of the new creation. The hospitality of Abraham achieves its fulfillment in the hospitality of Mary's welcoming heart, hearing the Lord who stands and knocks at her door, and welcomes him into her life. Mary's hospitality participates in that of the Triune God, whose Son became man that all humankind might enjoy God's eternal hospitality in the mansions that his crucified and risen Son has prepared for those who open their doors in hospitality to him.

Three Key Moments of Divine and Human Hospitality in Salvation History

The Abraham pattern of divine and human hospitality recurs throughout the Bible. From the time of the promise to Abraham, to its fulfillment in Christ and at the Last Judgment, the Host of the world and all humankind is welcomed and shown hospitality in three key moments of salvation history by persons who had no idea who they were hosting. Abraham hosted his three visitors; the Samaritan woman at the well is asked to host Jesus with the water he had requested; and the blessed of the Father had no idea they had hosted the hungry and thirsty Son of Man:

- Abraham: At the time of the promise (Genesis), Abraham unknowingly hosts the Host of the World.

²³ We predicate "sacred" of hospitality on the basis of the historical biblical revelation's account of the hospitality that Abraham and Sarah showed to their three visitors, the foundational event of the world's three great monotheistic religions. Abraham and Sarah did not realize that they were being hospitable to the Host of the World, the God of Israel who would eventually liberate Abraham's people from Egypt under the leadership of Moses in the Exodus.

The table fellowship of the Jewish Seder was the central liturgical commemoration of the Exodus at which an empty seat was left for the promised Messiah. Jewish Christians believe it was eventually occupied by Jesus at the Last Supper, the table fellowship of God, Host of the World, and humankind.

²⁴ See Revelation 3:20.

- Samaritan woman: At the fulfillment of the promise in Christ the messiah (John 4), the Host asks for hospitality.
- The just at the Last Judgment, at the end of time (Matthew 25), unknowingly hosted the Host of the World.

The scriptures of the Christian community of faith tell us in these three key moments of salvation history that we encounter the Other in our hospitality to others—we encounter God in our hospitality towards strangers. In all three stories, there is an implicitly theocentric self-transcendence, transcending ourselves, our families and our nations, in welcoming the transcendent Ultimate Reality that is the Origin, Ground, and Destiny of all humankind. In hosting those whom the Host of humankind is hosting, we are hosting the Host.

That the hospitable persons in the above three instances were unwittingly hosting the Host of the world implies that their hospitality was not calculated on a *quid pro quo* basis. Their hospitality had all the freedom and sheer gratuity of divine hospitality, what we mean by “grace.” By the grace of God we are what we are. Our worth is a gift given to us from the moment of our creation. The marvel of our life in Christ is not in getting something from outside to inside by achieving. Instead the marvel is in coming to recognize what is *already* inside by the grace of creation and learning to bring this outside, through sharing and serving, divine and human hospitality. It consists of seeing the first thing that happened to us—our birth—in the way God sees it, and regarding it with God as something “very, very good.”

The abundance of the Generous One is the ultimate source and resource of our Christian hope in the face of death, grounding our conviction that after death there is more. There is an artesian well in everyone, and its Source is the abundance of the Generous One, the Host of the world. We are what we are because of who our Parent is, and once this identity becomes deeply rooted in us, then an unself-conscious giving of self will become our way of life. This is another way of saying that we “inherit the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world.”²⁵ Our creation is, at end, an act of generosity—God sharing his bounty. We have been created in the image of the Generous One for generosity. Our Creator’s magnanimity lies at the root of our being the kind of creatures that we are meant to be. Just as there is delight in our recognizing how much we have that we do not deserve or create, so there is a godly delight in seeing our hospitality bless and energize others.

The Hospitable City of God

The City of God is the community that welcomes and enjoys the hospitality of God. Its hospitality implies a real relationship among those who are different, and the willingness to be moved out of our comfort zone to be transformed in the encounter. The German word for hospitality, *Gastfreundschaft*, which means friendship for the guest, captures the meaning of this transformation with its implication that hospitality creates a free space

²⁵ Matthew 25:34.

where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an alien. The Christian community of faith believes that God extends to all humankind a divine and inexhaustible welcome in the transforming experience of hospitality, where the door is always open, the table always set, the arms flung wide, outstretched.

The hospitable spirit of the City of God transcends mere tolerance, or passive magnanimity of the powerful towards the less favored. The Rule of St. Benedict (Chapter 53) contributes to our understanding of Christian hospitality, when it affirms that “All guests who arrive are to be received as Christ.... for he himself will say, I was the stranger and you took me in.” That Christ is the stranger implies more than merely giving food and board to a passing guest. “All guests” implies and emphasizes the importance of inclusiveness and its particular link to strangeness or otherness, in contrast to the familiarity of only those who are like us. The second phrase, those “who arrive,” underscores this point even more. It suggests the unexpected, not merely those who did not communicate in advance, but those who are a surprise to us in broader terms. Christian disciples are not to be choosy about the company they keep. The nicely ambiguous Latin word *hospes* can be translated as ‘stranger’ as well as ‘guest.’ The former sense is reinforced by the Rule’s reference to Matthew 25:35. And finally, *suscipiantur* is literally ‘to be received,’ but its deeper meaning is ‘to be cherished.’

The spirit of hospitality in the City of God can be identified with the concept of solidarity, the moral imperative based on a belief in the fundamental unity of the human family rooted in the doctrines of the Trinity and the Communion of Saints, and demanding a profound conversion of heart and a conscious commitment to the quest for the common good as an essential ethical virtue. With the spirit of hospitality, the City of God sees the world with the vision of God—as a mixture of good and bad—but most importantly it realizes that from all eternity the gaze of God is redemptive, transforming, and enlivening.

Closing Scriptural Readings on Hospitality

The Sunday preface 8 in Ordinary Time proclaims the unifying power of the Triune God operative in the Eucharistic liturgy:

It is truly right and just, our duty and salvation, always and everywhere to give you things, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God. For when your children were scattered afar by sin, through the blood of your Son and power of your Spirit, you gathered them together again to yourself, that a people formed as one by the unity of the Trinity, made the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, might, to the praise of your manifold wisdom, be manifest as the Church. And so, in company with the choirs of angels, we praise you, and with joy we acclaim: Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts.

Hebrews 13:2 (New International Version [NIV])

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Romans 12:13 (Jerusalem Bible)

Be joyful in hope, persevere in hardship; keep praying regularly; share with any of God's holy people who are in need; look for opportunities to be hospitable.

Romans 12:13 (NIV)

¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Isaiah 25:6-9 (NIV)

The Messianic Banquet Prophecy of God's Universal Hospitality Creating the Communion, Community, and Communication of all Humankind under the Sovereignty of God's Love.

⁶ On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare
a feast of rich food for all peoples,
a banquet of aged wine—
the best of meats and the finest of wines.

⁷ On this mountain he will destroy
the shroud that enfolds all peoples,
the sheet that covers all nations;

⁸ he will swallow up death forever.

The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears
from all faces;
he will remove his people's disgrace
from all the earth.

⁹ In that day they will say,
"Surely this is our God;
we trusted in him, and he saved us.

This is the Lord, we trusted in him;
let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

The Lord has spoken.





Christ the Savior (Pantokrator).

Sixth-century encaustic icon from Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai.

Public Domain





Abraham and the Angels by Aert de Gelder (1645-1727).

Oil on canvas circa 1680–85.

Public Domain



Vincentian Pilgrimage Hospitality: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

EDWARD R. UDOVIC, C.M., PH.D.



[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)



Introduction

The history of pilgrimage and pilgrimage hospitality has deep living roots within Christianity and Catholicism. Within the Vincentian tradition there is also a long tradition of this hospitality with pilgrimage visits to sites in Paris and France linked especially with the relics of Saint Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) and the places intimately associated with his life and works. This article will present an overview of the history of these Vincentian pilgrimages, and present a contemporary case study of how DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, uses pilgrimages (or Heritage Tours) as a tool to enhance mission engagement among its core constituencies.

When the elderly Vincent de Paul died early in the morning of 27 September 1660 preparations were made for his requiem mass and burial to take place the next day. He was laid to rest in a specially-prepared crypt in the choir of the chapel at the mother house of the Congregation of the Mission, located on the rue faubourg Saint-Denis just outside the city gates of Paris. The church was filled to overflowing for these obsequies.¹ Later in November, a formal memorial service for Vincent was held at the church of Saint Germain-le-Auxerrois located across from the Louvre Palace in Paris. An epic two-hour long *oraison funèbre* was offered on the occasion by Henri de Maupas du Tour the bishop of Le Puy.² This commemoration also received great publicity, and attracted a large and distinguished audience.

The founder of the Congregation of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity, the Ladies of Charity and the Confraternities of Charity had died as a revered religious figure. Vincent de Paul had not only become an iconic symbol of the successful Tridentine reform of the French Church, but also the beloved “*pater pauperum*”; the so-called “apostle of charity.”³

Monsieur Vincent’s tomb immediately became the site of pious visits not only by his followers, but by all those who considered the recently-deceased priest to have been a “saint”: that is to say a heroic example of a disciple of Christ. These visits were welcomed by the Lazarists. Such unsolicited and spontaneous visits demonstrated the deceased’s reputation for holiness among the faithful.⁴ These proto-pilgrims sought a comforting proximity to the earthly remains of Vincent, resting within the hallowed walls of the church where he had worshipped, within the priory of Saint-Lazare (where he had first taken-up residence in January 1632), and within the city of Paris (where he had lived for fifty years). Paris, of course, was the capital of a very Catholic kingdom whose faith and its traditions were firmly embedded in public consciousness and in all aspects of daily life.

¹ For more information on the events surrounding the death and canonization of Vincent de Paul see, Edward R. Udovic, C.M., *Henri de Maupas du Tour: The Funeral Oration for Vincent de Paul* (Chicago: DePaul University Vincentian Studies Institute, 2015). Hereafter cited as *Maupas du Tour*.

² For more information on Maupas du Tour see, *Maupas du Tour*, Chapter 1: “The Panegyrist,” pp. 13-32.

³ Two popular devotional titles traditionally used to describe Vincent de Paul.

⁴ See the text of the bull of canonization *Superna Hierusalem* in: “Circular of Mr. Couty,” *Circulars of the Superiors-General and the Superioresses to the Daughters of Charity: and notices upon the deceased Sisters of the Community* (Emmitsburg, Md.: St. Joseph’s, 1870), 62-63. Hereafter, *Superna Hierusalem*.



The death of Vincent de Paul; receiving Viaticum.

Period etching.

Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute



In early 1661, the Lazarists commissioned an official biography of their late founder. Written by the well-known theologian Louis Abelly and published in 1664, this three volume work documented the life and works of the “venerable servant of God.”⁵ This was done in preparation for what was presumed to be the eventual introduction of his canonization cause, which would require just such an historical account.⁶ The canonization rules then in effect typically required a fifty year waiting period before the Holy See would even consider a candidate for sainthood. This delay was designed as a “cooling off” period to see if the candidate’s public reputation for holiness would hold up for a long period after his/her death. These rules also required that there be no premature public claim of sanctity for the candidate since this judgment belonged to the Church, and indeed to the pope alone. In fact, the Church’s working presumption was that the candidate *was not* worthy of canonization. The Church’s representative (officially known as the “Promoter of the Faith”) in this juridical process was popularly known as the “devil’s advocate.” It was this official’s job to use a fine-toothed comb to look for *any* reason for the Church *not* to canonize. Guilty until proven innocent was the presumption. The reason for this caution on the part of the Church and the subsequent length, complexity, and cost of the canonization process was because, in the end, the pope would be certifying by the conferral of the title “saint” that the candidate had led a life of heroic sanctity and discipleship. Further, it would also signify beyond any doubt that God had deigned to confirm that

⁵ See Louis Abelly, *Life of the Venerable Servant of God: Vincent de Paul*, trans. by William Quinn, F.S.C., and ed. by John E. Rybolt, C.M., 3 vols. (New York: New City Press, 1987). See also, Pierre Coste, C.M., *The Life & Works of St. Vincent de Paul*, 3 vols. (New York: New City Press, 1987). For a contemporary one volume biography see, Bernard Pujo, *Vincent de Paul: The Trailblazer*, trans. by Gertrude Graubert Champe (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003).

⁶ For a brief discussion of the history of canonization in the Catholic Church see, Kenneth L Woodward, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn’t, and Why* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

heroic sanctity by effecting miracles (almost always inexplicable healings) prayed for by the faithful asking the intercession of the person from his/her presumed place among the blessed souls in heaven.⁷

According to this theology, God in his providence granted these “miracles” so that the faith of believers would be strengthened; thus enabling them to follow the example of the saints in living out their own Christian discipleship. In the early modern-era, the canonization of a saint was a relatively rare event highlighting by its rarity the importance of these revered figures in the communion of saints, and their continuing role in salvation history.⁸

“Saint” Vincent de Paul

In 1697, the Lazarists began the necessary preparations for introducing the cause of Vincent de Paul.⁹ Because of these efforts, the cause was ready to be introduced in Rome at the earliest possible moment: October 1709. Louis XIV, nearing the end of his long reign, enthusiastically endorsed the effort. After all, the canonization of this loyal servant of the Bourbon dynasty and the Gallican Church was also a matter of great national pride for France. The headquarters of the tireless efforts to promote Vincent de Paul for canonization was the mother-house of the Lazarists in Paris. Here the memory of the founder decades after his death was still palpable through the presence of his tomb, his treasured personal possessions, letters and archival records, and also the carefully preserved room in which he had died. The ecclesial memory of Vincent de Paul also continued to be preserved in the works of the communities he founded, which were now woven into the fabric of *Ancien Régime* Catholicism in France and elsewhere in Catholic Europe.

Once the Vatican decree recognizing the heroism of Vincent’s virtues was issued in 1727, the further progress of the cause depended on the identification, documentation, and papal acceptance of miracles attributed to his intercession.¹⁰ Three authenticated miracles were needed for a decree of beatification to be issued. By 1729, four from among the numerous accounts of proposed miracles that had been presented were accepted.¹¹ Benedict XIII therefore beatified Vincent de Paul in Rome at the Vatican basilica on 21 August of that year. A minimum of two additional authenticated miracles were then needed for a decree of canonization to be issued. Furthermore, these miracles had to have taken place since the beatification. As a matter of fact, it took very little time for a number of these “miracles” to be documented and submitted to Rome for judgment. Among these, the necessary minimum of two miracles were accepted and approved by the pope on 24

⁷ *Superna Hierusalem*, 44.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ For a comprehensive review of the canonization process for Vincent de Paul see, *Maupas du Tour*, Chapter 3: “The Canonization of Vincent de Paul: ‘*Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum*,’” pp. 59-81.

¹⁰ *Superna Hierusalem*, 63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

June 1636.¹² The canonization of Vincent de Paul by Clement XII took place in Rome at the basilica of Saint John Lateran on 16 June 1737, the Feast of the Holy Trinity.¹³

Vincent de Paul had been dead for a little less than seventy-seven years. By Roman standards, this was a relatively short time to elapse from death to halo. Vincent's beatification and canonization also brought with them the official sanction for his public veneration throughout the universal Church by the insertion of his feast day (then July 19th) into the liturgical calendar, with accompanying texts for the celebration of festal and votive masses as well as the various hours of the Divine Office.¹⁴

Both the beatification and canonization were celebrated with great solemnity and festivity back in France, especially at the Lazarists' *maison-mère* in Paris.¹⁵ These magnificent octaves of ceremonies were attended by countless pilgrims and the highest figures of Church and State. They established a new public image and re-definition of purpose for the church which necessitated a remodeling of the space. The pilgrimage focus of the chapel was Vincent's skeletal remains (now first-class relics), exhumed from their original resting place in the choir crypt and publicly displayed (encased within a life-like wax figure of the saint). These relics were placed within a magnificent silver and glass reliquary, and set above the altar in one of the church's side chapels. In the decree of canonization, the pope granted indulgences in perpetuity to pilgrims who visited Vincent's tomb, and a special indulgence for those who visited on his feast day.¹⁶ The Lazarists commissioned a series of epic-paintings of the life, work, and miracles of the new saint from some of the most prominent artists of the day. These also were put on display in the chapel to highlight its new public role as a place of pilgrimage now fully dedicated to the sainted memory and thaumaturgic remains of "Saint" Vincent de Paul. Engravings of these paintings were available for purchase by pilgrims in a gift shop located in the church sacristy, presumably along with other devotional items branded with the image of the new saint. Hospitality, devotion AND commerce have always been close partners in the pilgrimage experience.

These first artistic expressions of public devotion were immediately followed by masses of widely-diffused reliquaries (containing "first," "second," or "third" class relics), statues (of all sizes, shapes, and materials), stained glass windows for churches, engravings, paintings, and an infinite variety of inexpensive holy cards. These items were produced in a supply and demand market response to the public devotion to the new saint. For those who could not come on pilgrimage to Vincent de Paul in Paris, Vincent de Paul could easily come to them. But, in the end, these items were a poor substitute for a pilgrimage made to Saint-Lazare, and actual access to the saint's remains. Of course Saint-Lazare was not alone as a Parisian pilgrimage site. Just a twenty-minute walk away was another venerable and

¹² *Ibid.*, 65.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

popular site housing Jesus' "crown of thorns." This relic, and other relics of the Passion, had been purchased and brought back from the Holy Land by the crusader-king Saint Louis IX. From 1248 they were kept in a breathtaking gothic rayonnant reliquary-chapel (the famed "Sainte-Chapelle"),¹⁷ located in the center of the *île de la cité* not far from the cathedral of Notre Dame, itself a traditional site of pilgrimage.

Another famous Parisian pilgrimage destination was the relics of the city's patron Sainte-Geneviève.¹⁸ These were housed at the abbaye Sainte-Geneviève located on Mont Sainte-Geneviève in the Latin Quarter. Saint-Lazare now joined these oft-visited sites on well-known and well-publicized pilgrimage itineraries. The fame of these shrines was always measured by the number of pilgrims welcomed through their doors.

An Old Shrine Unexpectedly Disappears and a New One Eventually Emerges

At the end of August 1792, the Lazarists handed over the keys for Saint-Lazare to officials of the revolutionary government. The legislative decree dissolving all of the remaining religious communities in France and confiscating all their land, possessions, and other wealth went into effect. The revolutionary officials sealed the archives and undertook an inventory of the contents of all the buildings.¹⁹ However, the former Lazarists somehow were able to quietly spirit away the remains of their sainted founder. These were held by the community's lawyer throughout the revolutionary period, kept safely hidden in a non-descript wooden box. They were so well-hidden, in fact, that the public presumption was they had been lost like so many of the other relics destroyed during the anti-Christian phase of the revolution. Vincent's great silver chasse was confiscated and melted down along with many of the gold and silver objects seized from the nobility and the church. The revolution had to be defended and paid for after all. The works of art in the chapel became property of the state and were carefully inventoried and warehoused. The once bustling chapel and pilgrimage site now stood stripped, abandoned, and forlorn.²⁰

The Bourbon monarchy, the nobility, and the Church fell together, and fell quickly. In fact, the first act of revolutionary violence preceding the fall of the Bastille on 14 July 1789 had been the sacking of Saint-Lazare's granaries the previous day.²¹ The monarchy came to a bloody end with the executions of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette in 1793. The French Church entered an era of tumult, danger, and previously unimaginable change. There were worse things to come, however, as the Reign of Terror and its accompanying

¹⁷ For a brief description of Sainte-Chapelle please see, Fred J. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Concise Global History* (Stamford, Connecticut: Cengage Learning, 2008), 198.

¹⁸ See, Moshe Sluhovsky, *Patroness of Paris: Rituals of Devotion in Early Modern France* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Academic Press, 1997).

¹⁹ For the history of the Congregation of the Mission from its revolutionary suppression in 1792 to its re-foundation in the nineteenth century see, Edward R. Udovic, C.M., *Jean-Baptiste Étienne and the Vincentian Revival* (Chicago: Vincentian Studies Institute, 2001). Hereafter cited as *Étienne*.

²⁰ *Étienne*, 19.

²¹ For an account of the sack of Saint-Lazare see, *Ibid.*, 7-15.



The reliquary shrine enclosing the remains of Vincent de Paul. His face and hands are covered in a wax mask. Installed in the Vincentian *maison-mère* in 1830.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



violence dawned. The first massacres of the clergy began in early September 1792.²² Over the next three decades, France would go through all the dizzying phases of its revolution, enter and exit the Napoleonic imperial era, and finally emerge with the backwards-looking restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in the person of Louis XVI's oldest brother who would reign as Louis XVIII. In 1825, Louis XVIII in turn was succeeded by his brother who became Charles X.

On 24 April 1830, the remains of Vincent de Paul were carried in a long solemn procession (or "translation") through the streets of Paris from the cathedral of Notre Dame.²³ Led by the archbishop of Paris, Hyacinthe-Louis de Quélen, this was the first public religious procession allowed to take place in Paris since the Revolution. After the fall of Napoleon, the Bourbon Restoration was dedicated to a return to the pre-revolutionary conservative religious and political status quo of the union of altar and throne.²⁴ It seemed as if Vincent de Paul and the Catholic Church were destined to return to their old roles as well. Vincent's remains (once more encased within a very life-like wax effigy) now rested in a magnificent new silver and glass casket created by the great Parisian silversmith Jean-Baptiste Claude Odiot, donated by the archdiocese of Paris. The destination of this procession was the chapel of the *maison-mère* of the Lazarists; the "new" Saint-Lazare located at 95 rue de Sèvres. The purpose of the procession was to restore the relics of Vincent de Paul to public devotion and pilgrimage for the first time in almost four decades.

The Lazarists themselves had been legally restored as a religious community by the Emperor Napoleon.²⁵ This restoration had been confirmed by Louis XVIII in 1816.²⁶ The

²² For a survey of the impact of the Revolution on the Catholic Church see, for example, Michelle Vovelle, *La Révolution contre l'église: De raison à l'être supreme* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1988).

²³ Hyacinthe-Louis de Quélen, *Mandement de Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Paris, qui ordonne que le Te Deum sera chanté dans toutes les églises de son Diocèse, en actions de grâces de la Translation solennelle du Corps de saint Vincent de Paul, et qui publié les Procès-Verbaux dressés à l'occasion de cette Solennité* (Paris: Adrien Le Clere, 1830).

²⁴ For a history of the Restoration in France, see, for example, Benôit Yvert, *La Restauration. Les idées et les hommes* (Paris: CNRS editions, 2013).

²⁵ See, John W. Carven, C.M., *Napoleon and the Lazarists* (Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

²⁶ *Actes du Gouvernement Français concernant la Congrégation de la Mission dite de Saint-Lazare, fondée par Saint Vincent de Paul* (Paris: Congrégation de la Mission, 1902), 113-114.

community had been quick to remind the restored king of their long record of loyalty to the traditional monarchy as the “*prêtres des Bourbons*.” The monarch granted the Congregation of the Mission a new headquarters and an annual subsidy in 1817.²⁷ The building was the former *hôtel particulier* of the Ducs des Lorge. This location had the added advantage of being very near to the new *maison-mère* of the Daughters of Charity, situated just around the corner at 140 rue du Bac. Napoleon had restored the legal recognition of the Daughters in 1800 because of the indispensable social utility of their works of mercy.²⁸

The old clos Saint-Lazare and its complex of buildings on the rue Saint-Denis, though still extant, had been turned into a women’s prison in 1794.²⁹ The government could not now afford to return this facility and land to the Lazarists. This led to the king’s gift to them of the new house, at a new location, at a much lower cost. In 1823, as part of a prison expansion, the old chapel on the rue Saint-Denis finally was torn down. There was no going back.

Since the Lazarists could not regain possession of their former property and the buildings on the rue Saint-Denis, they were determined that the new reliquary chapel and mother house on the rue de Sèvres would make a public impression on pilgrims that was every bit as indelible as the original. Forty years of careful design and construction would follow (at great expense) to achieve this goal. The centerpiece of the “new” Saint-Lazare would be a public chapel (the first church to be built in Paris since the Revolution) accessible to pilgrims directly from the bustling rue de Sèvres on the left bank of the Seine. Unlike the original shrine at old Saint-Lazare which had to be retro-fitted into a side chapel of an already existing church; at the new Saint-Lazare, the entire chapel was built and lavishly decorated in the classical revival style and became a building-sized reliquary reminiscent of the effect previously achieved at the medieval Sainte-Chapelle.

With a very tight urban building site and the need for direct street access, the chapel could not be a free-standing edifice. Rather, it had to be embedded within the rest of the large mother-house complex whose many buildings (located from 93 to 97 rue de Sèvres) also served as the international headquarters for the Congregation of the Mission. The facility housed numerous priests, brothers, seminarians, and novices. The eventual addition of two side aisles, with tribunes above, expanded the original chapel to its present dimensions.

From the moment a pilgrim entered the new edifice from the entrance on the rue de Sèvres, every interior architectural element and decoration created sight lines whose sole purpose was to focus one’s full attention on the remains of Vincent de Paul, elevated in an architectural setting at the summit above the main altar. The intended effect was to draw the pilgrim physically into the chapel, led by the riveting lode-star of Vincent’s reliquary. The remains themselves were directly accessible to pilgrims via an enclosed

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 113-116.

²⁸ *Étienne*, 51.

²⁹ For more information on the history of Saint-Lazare as a women’s prison see: <https://vincentiancollections.depaul.edu/saintlazare/pages/default.aspx>

marble staircase built into the rear of the altar/shrine structure. These stairs delivered pilgrims to an unexpected intimacy with the saint's luxurious chasse, ultra-realistic wax effigy, and most importantly his relics. The carefully planned iconography of the chapel, especially the brilliant *trompe l'oeil* mural of the apotheosis of Vincent de Paul filling the vault directly above the reliquary, invited pilgrims not only to visit the remains of the Saint of Charity but also to be reminded of his characteristic virtues and legacy. This was an invitation to the pilgrim to be moved to adopt those same virtues and imitate that same charity towards the poor in the good works of their own lives as Christ's disciples. The Latin scriptural quotation framing the mural reads "*pertransit benefaciendo*," or "He went about doing good."³⁰

The restoration of the political and religious status quo of the *Ancien Régime* was an abject failure. The Bourbon monarchy was easily overthrown in just a few days by the July revolution of 1830, only a few months after the translation of Vincent's relics. The succeeding July monarchy of the Orleanist, Louis-Philippe, lasted only eighteen years.³¹ The age of political revolution was accompanied by the scientific and industrial revolutions, with the accompanying cultural, economic, social, and religious transformations that ushered modernity in with a rush.³²

The original re-foundation of the Lazarists and the Daughters of Charity by their elderly revolutionary survivors in the first decades of the nineteenth century had also been backwards looking and largely unsuccessful. A new Vincentian generation gradually emerged, however, whose members and whose leaders looked forward to meeting the challenges of their rapidly changing world.³³ This generation also established a vibrant new international lay organization of charity, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, founded in 1833 in Paris by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and his companions.³⁴ These nineteenth-century men and women around the world saw in their patron Vincent de Paul a timeless example of faith, values, and sanctity. Saint Vincent provided a model for how they as Christians could best respond to the challenges of charity of their own age, as he had responded to the challenges of his time.

One of the leaders of this new Vincentian generation was Jean-Baptiste Étienne, C.M.³⁵ Étienne served as the fourteenth superior general of the Congregation of the Mission and

³⁰ Acts 10:28; See John E. Rybolt, C.M., *In the Footsteps of Vincent de Paul. A Guide to Vincentian France* (Chicago: Vincentian Studies Institute, 2007), 6-10. Hereafter cited as *Footsteps*.

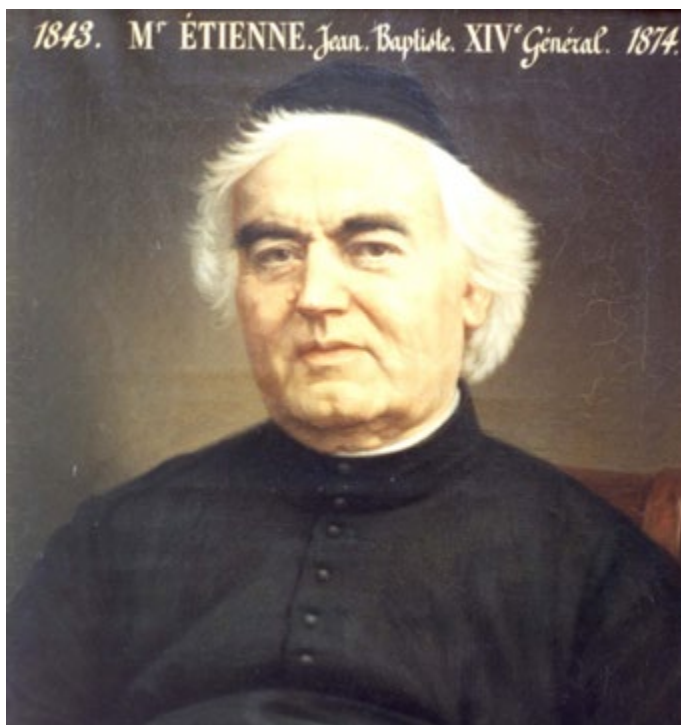
³¹ For an overview of the July Monarchy see, for example, Pierre de la Gorce, *Louis-Phillipe (1830-1848)* (Paris: Editions Frédéric Patat, 2014).

³² For an overview of the revolutionary era see, for example, Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (New York: Vintage, 1996).

³³ See Étienne throughout.

³⁴ See, for example, Raymond L. Sickinger, "Frédéric Ozanam: Systemic Thinking and Systemic Change," *Vincentian Heritage* 32:1 (2014): pp. 136-164.

³⁵ For a contemporary biography of Étienne see, Edouard Rosset, C.M., *Vie de M. Etienne, XIVe, supérieur général de la Congrégation de la Mission et la Compagnie des Filles de la Charité* (Paris: Gaume, 1881).



The official portrait of Jean-Baptiste Étienne, C.M.
Fourteenth Superior General of the Congregation
of the Mission.

Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute



the Company of the Daughters of Charity from his election in 1843 to his death in 1874.³⁶ It was Étienne who was ultimately responsible for the establishment of the reliquary shrine and chapel at rue de Sèvres. He also was responsible for establishing a parallel shrine complex, the so-called “Berceau,”³⁷ at the saint’s birthplace near Dax in the southwest of France in 1864.³⁸ These Vincent pilgrimage sites would be linked with the contemporary transformation of the Daughters’ chapel on the rue du Bac into a famed pilgrimage chapel commemorating the Marian apparitions and the revelation of the “Miraculous Medal” there to Sister Catherine Labouré from April to November 1830.³⁹ This chapel⁴⁰ would also house the remains of Vincent de Paul’s friend, collaborator, and co-founder of the Daughters of Charity, Saint Louise de Marillac, Mademoiselle Le Gras.⁴¹ These two Parisian sites became, and remain, the international focus of Vincentian religiosity, spirituality, and pilgrimage.

In addition, during the nineteenth century many of the other sites in France closely associated with Vincent de Paul, i.e., the churches at Folleville in the department of the Somme,⁴² at Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne in the department of the Ain,⁴³ at Château l’êveque in the Department of the Dordogne,⁴⁴ at St. Vincent de Paul in the department of the

³⁶ For an account of Étienne’s role in the nineteenth-century re-foundation of the Daughters of Charity see, Edward R. Udovic, C.M., “Jean-Baptiste Étienne, C.M., and the Re-foundation of the Daughters of Charity,” *Vincentian Heritage* 31:2 (2012): pp. 9-23.

³⁷ See, n.a., *Compte-Rendu de la cérémonie du 24 avril 1864 et des Solennités Religieuses qui ont suivi l’inauguration des monuments élevés à la mémoire de saint Vincent de Paul* (Dax: Reveil des Landes, 1864).

³⁸ *Footsteps*, 283-293.

³⁹ For an overview of Catherine Labouré and the Miraculous Medal see, René Laurentin, *La vie authentique de Catherine Labouré* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1986).

⁴⁰ The chapel at rue du Bac also houses the reliquary containing Vincent de Paul’s heart. See, *Footsteps*, 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 15-17.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 204-216.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 410-417.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 319-322.

Landes,⁴⁵ and at Buzet-sur-Tarn in the Department of the Haut-Garonne⁴⁶ established site commemorations for pilgrims linking these places with the life of the saint. With the growth of the middle classes and the invention and rapid introduction of the railroad and steamships beginning in the mid-nineteenth century the world began to shrink. What had once been long, difficult, or even impossible pilgrimage journeys now became doable and even common-place.⁴⁷ All of the Vincentian pilgrimage sites in France were ready and eager to extend hospitality welcoming new generations of pilgrims. They remain so today.

21st century Vincentian pilgrimages: A DePaul University Case Study in Mission Effectiveness

Founded in Chicago in 1898 by the members of Vincent de Paul's Congregation of the Mission, DePaul University has for some years been the largest Catholic university in the United States. It is also one of the largest private, teaching universities in the nation. The university has approximately 25,000 students, 1,000 full-time faculty members (serving in ten schools and colleges with more than 350 degree programs), 1,400 full-time staff members, and more than 160,000 living alumni. The university's two large urban campuses are in Chicago's Loop and the Lincoln Park neighborhood on the city's near-north side. It has several suburban campuses, international study sites, and also delivers a growing percentage of its courses online. Its budget is in excess of a half-billion dollars, and its endowment hovers around a half-billion dollars. In June 2014 it completed a successful four year capital campaign raising a record 326 million dollars.⁴⁸

The university serves a very diverse urban community, and by choice and effort reflects this diversity to a remarkable degree. Presently thirty-three percent of its students are students of color.⁴⁹ Many students are also first generation college-attendeess, and come from traditionally under-represented and often under-prepared educational populations. A large number of these students also come from economically distressed backgrounds.

At DePaul University the ultimate measure of our success is in maintaining accessibility, affordability, and attainment. We cannot provide accessibility without providing affordability, and access without attainment is access to nothing. Attainment means our students receive the prized degree for which they entered, and are sent out into the world with that degree as empowered life-long learners.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 285.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 336-338.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Suzanne K. Kaufman, "Selling Lourdes: Pilgrimage, Tourism, and the Mass-Marketing of the Sacred in Nineteenth-Century France," in *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe*, Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, eds. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 63-88.

⁴⁸ For DePaul University's key facts, rankings, and academic distinctions see:

<http://www.depaul.edu/about/Pages/key-facts.aspx>

<http://www.depaul.edu/about/Pages/rankings.aspx>

<http://resources.depaul.edu/distinctions/Pages/default.aspx>

⁴⁹ For more information on diversity at DePaul see: <http://offices.depaul.edu/diversity/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁰ For more information on DePaul's commitment to access and attainment see: <http://resources.depaul.edu/caa/Pages/default.aspx>

The university's current president, the Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., has noted: "DePaul University is not its buildings; those change. DePaul is not any specific program; those change too. DePaul is the collective body of men and women who believe in an idea: that an extraordinary education should not only be available to those with great means, but to all those with great dreams."⁵¹ The official Latin title of the Congregation of the Mission is "*Congregatio Missionis*." A literal translation of this title into English would be "a gathering of people coming together for the sake of the Mission." Thus the "Vincentian" identity of DePaul University is not, should not and cannot be limited to the handful of aging Vincentian priests and brothers who serve at the university. In the truest sense of the word, everyone who works at DePaul University and who is motivated and even captivated by its educational mission can truly claim to be a "Vincentian." We are all gathered together for the sake of our mission; for the sake of our students. This would, of course, include the large numbers of members of the university community who are not Catholic, Christian, or even professed believers in any organized religion.

From its foundation as a Catholic and Vincentian university, DePaul has chosen to define itself by offering hospitality designed to build and sustain a vibrant academic community around the highest common denominator which unites ALL faculty, staff, and students: their shared humanity. This welcome always respects community members' God-given dignity as individual human persons on the terms of their own unique set of self-definitions. This inclusivity invites community members, in turn, to accept the diversities of other members of the community with the same respect that their diversities have been welcomed and honored. Since this community is an academic community, this value is also designed to be the curricular and co-curricular basis of an ongoing critical study, reflection, and free debate on the human experience in all of its complexity and mystery. It is also the basis for the dedication of the academic enterprise at DePaul to applying knowledge in ways that serve the common good and lead to systemic change, justice, and sustainability especially through preferential efforts on behalf of poverty-stricken, marginalized, and vulnerable populations.⁵²

There are presently more than 4,000 degree-granting institutions of higher education in the United States; these include public and private colleges and universities, public and private community colleges, and new online "for-profit" entities. These schools currently enroll more than 21 million students.⁵³ No two of these institutions are exactly alike. There is something distinctive about each one of them. This gives each institution a challenge to offer a brand-promise which distinguishes it from its competitors. This also gives prospective college students in the United States an unparalleled access to higher educational choices.

The distinctive characteristics of DePaul University are captured by the proverbial "name above the door." Since 1898, DePaul University has looked to its "patron" Vincent de

⁵¹ Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., *Inauguration: Celebrating DePaul at its Best*, 20 November 2004: <http://offices.depaul.edu/president/speeches-and-communications/2005/Pages/celebrating-depaul-at-its-best.aspx>

⁵² See, Edward R. Udovic, C.M., *About Saint Vincent de Paul and DePaul University's Catholic, Vincentian and Urban Identity* (Chicago: DePaul University, 2001).

⁵³ For current U.S. higher education statistics see: <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=98>



Vincent's Circle, located at the Lincoln Park campus of DePaul University, Chicago, IL.

Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute



Paul and to his faith, values, vision and mission as the source of its own distinctive identity as a Catholic institution of higher education in the United States. What the university does, and how, when, where and why it does it, is always focused on our students and their success. These efforts align our institutional mission statement,⁵⁴ strategic plans,⁵⁵ and budgets to our historic identity and brand-promise as a Vincentian and Catholic university, with Vincent de Paul's "name above the door." Within DePaul University, the overall responsibility for institutional mission effectiveness rests with the Office of Mission and Values.⁵⁶ The Office is headed by the Senior Executive for University Mission, who serves as the institution's Chief Mission Officer and who reports directly to the president. The "mission" of this office is stated in its present strategic plan:

Guided by the university's 2018 strategic plan and its mission statement, the Office of Mission and Values collaborates with university departments and constituencies in ways that measurably enhance their understanding and support of DePaul University's distinctive Catholic, Vincentian, and urban identity. Together we provide the leadership that enables the university to achieve excellence in its educational mission, serve its diverse student body, and maximize its strategic capacities. As the premier international resource for Vincentian studies, the Office also serves a wide range of external constituencies who seek to deepen their engagement with Vincentian history, spirituality, and service.

Over the last two decades, this office has coordinated the university's efforts to become, and remain, a "mission-driven" institution. At the governance level, these efforts have

⁵⁴ To access the DePaul University mission statement see: <https://offices.depaul.edu/mission-and-values/about/Pages/MissionStatement.aspx>

⁵⁵ To access the DePaul University strategic plan "Vision 2018" see: <http://offices.depaul.edu/president/strategic-directions/vision-2018/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁶ For more information on the activities of the university's Office of Mission and Values see: <https://mission.depaul.edu/Pages/default.aspx>

been overseen by a Mission Committee of the university's Board of Trustees. These efforts have always been integrated within the goals of successive university strategic plans.⁵⁷ They have been largely successful. This "mission-driven" identity has been repeatedly confirmed by numerous accrediting agencies in their visits, by the university's own ongoing evaluation and assessment efforts, and by the testimonies and stories told and re-told by community members themselves. This signal achievement has taken place within the context of the university's rapid growth from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, and the changes that continue to take place within the institution given the rapid and stressed evolution of higher education in the United States.

The strategic planning model that has guided the efforts of the Office of Mission and Values and its institutional collaborators over the decades is one of patient, sustained organic growth symbolized by the use of the metaphor of a "ladder of engagement." This model has one goal: to invite and empower all members of the university community to understand, support, and shape the institution's defining Vincentian and Catholic identity from the moment they first join the community. The model then takes carefully planned and carefully assessed steps in six areas to invite engaged members of the community to higher levels of understanding, engagement, and leadership. These areas include:

- Introducing and Orienting
- Building Community
- Educating and Enriching
- Developing Leadership Capacities
- Promoting Research
- Serving the Community⁵⁸

These efforts must take into account the continual churn of generations of students, and the natural rate of replacement and augmentation of the number of faculty, staff, administrators and trustees that serve the institution. In the long run, the success of these efforts rests upon institutional buy-in, planning, assessment, leadership AND funding.

The "Ladder of Engagement" and Vincentian Heritage Tours to France

Since the year 2000 the university has offered regularly-scheduled Vincentian Heritage Trip opportunities to students, faculty, staff, senior leadership, and trustees.⁵⁹ While these tours to the traditional Vincentian sites in Paris and across France have never been marketed as "pilgrimages," it is accurate to understand their purpose within this traditional model as broadly defined. Not using the word "pilgrimage" has been an intentional choice. The **highest common denominator** among our trip participants is not a particular religious faith, but rather a shared commitment to a values-based institutional mission within

⁵⁷ To consult the university's strategic planning documents for their mission foci visit: <http://offices.depaul.edu/president/strategic-directions/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁸ See: <https://offices.depaul.edu/mission-and-values/about/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁹ For more information on the various Vincentian Heritage Tours offered by DePaul's Office of Mission and Values see: <https://offices.depaul.edu/mission-and-values/Programs/Tours/Pages/default.aspx>

an academic community. Thus, these trips are described and marketed as “heritage” or “study” tours. The study tour model, however, **does encourage** participants to find an anchor for their personal support of the university’s mission and values and its Vincentian Heritage within their own religious or values tradition. However, the Heritage tours also operate on the unapologetic premise that the institutional hospitality offered through a Vincentian lens is rooted in the Roman Catholic Church’s long and rich tradition of pilgrim hospitality and inclusivity. After all Vincent de Paul was not primarily an educator, or a social worker, or a politician, but rather a zealous Roman Catholic priest.

The Heritage trips are very selective and seek out members of the university community who have demonstrated high levels of engagement with the university’s mission and identity. By bringing these already engaged members to even higher levels of engagement together with like-minded colleagues (or fellow students), the strengthening of this identity takes place not only for an individual but also for the community. To demonstrate its commitment to the continuing education and Vincentian formation for members of the community, the university provides significant levels of funding, infrastructure, and personnel to support these trips. For example, on the bi-annual faculty/staff trip the university pays one-third of the trip’s costs, in order to guarantee departmental buy-in the individual’s department contributes one-third, and to encourage an individual’s full commitment they are asked to contribute one-third. However, no qualified faculty or staff member is ever turned away from the trip because of an inability to afford even the modest one-third of the trips costs. Also, the time that a staff member devotes to preparing for the trip, and the time spent on the trip, is release time. No one need use any vacation, or other personal time, in order to participate. Student leaders receive an even more generous subsidy to support their participation. Also, no student is ever turned away from the trip because of an inability to pay.

All of these tours are preceded by the delivery of extensive Vincentian historical and spiritual content designed to meet the following four learning goals for trip participants:

- To separate the Vincent of “myth” from the Vincent of “history”; Vincent de Paul the “person” from Vincent de Paul the “saint.”
- To contextualize Vincent de Paul fully within his own seventeenth-century world.
- To recover the role of Louise de Marillac and women in founding the Vincentian tradition.
- To suggest the contemporary relevance of the Vincentian tradition in the first quarter of the twenty-first century in general, and at DePaul University in particular.

For example, the trip for student leaders is preceded by a required ten week Winter Quarter course (with four hours of academic credit) entitled: “The Life and Times of Vincent de Paul.” A week-long Vincentian Heritage trip to France follows over spring break. The Faculty/Staff trip participants meet for monthly one hour sessions for six months preceding the late summer trip. There are also sessions that prepare the participants for travel, and



Pictures taken of the group on a recent Vincentian Heritage Trip to France.

*Courtesy of the Office of Mission and Values,
DePaul University, Chicago, IL*



which set clear ground rules and expectations for behavior to enhance the experience for all group members.

“Well-planned, well-prepared, and well-led”

From the perspective of hospitality, in order for any guided tour or pilgrimage to be deemed successful it must fulfill its promises to its participants. No trip, however, can be successful without also being enjoyable. In turn, no trip can be enjoyable unless it is well-planned and well-led. In order for these Vincentian Heritage trips to be successful in helping their participants, as promised, climb up a few steps on the “ladder of engagement” as members of the DePaul University community they must be enjoyable. This goal is not as easy to achieve as one may think. To begin with, the Vincentian content delivered before and during the trip must be delivered by someone who is an expert on the life and times of Vincent de Paul and Vincentian history, spirituality, and praxis broadly considered. In addition, the presenter must be a good teacher and especially adept at concise and informative presentations at a level appropriate to the group both in the classroom, and “on the road.” The content must also be planned keeping in mind the specific sites which are going to be on the itinerary. This means that the itinerary itself must be comprised of carefully chosen Vincentian sites selected in light of the purposes and length of the specific trip.

We use a “whisper” system for the delivery of content on the road. These systems provide the presenter with a headset and transmitter and each participant with a light-weight receiver and ear phones. This system allows the presenter to preserve his/her voice and to speak clearly over the ocean of background noises that naturally surround tours while on the road, and especially out in the open. They also allow the participants to

hear the presenter clearly at a variety of distances. This is a major enhancement, and is now standard equipment for any high-quality guided tours. Given the number of trips sponsored by DePaul we have invested in our own whisper system.

The hospitality of a successful Vincentian Heritage trip demands that the experience be **humane**. This means that the pace must be reasonable, and must take into account the needs of the participants for clean, comfortable, and safe accommodations, adequate rest, frequent humanity breaks, good meals, hydration needs, shopping opportunities, and adequate personal time. A trip which does not recognize or honor these participant needs, or which makes them secondary to the content to be delivered, or the sites to be visited, will not be an enjoyable experience for the participants, nor make for a successful trip.

On one of our first Heritage Trips sponsored for DePaul's Board of Trustees, a wife of a trustee uttered the memorable observation: "Thank God Saint Vincent was from Paris, and not Peoria." On these Heritage Trips there is a real danger of "Vincent overload," and this overload is carefully avoided by the opportunities that the trip provides for the participants to also take advantage of all that Paris and France can offer a visitor: from sights, to food, wine, shopping, museums, art, music and culture. Another important aspect of hospitality that makes a trip such as this successful is adequate staffing. On our trips, in addition to the presenter, and the bus driver provided by our travel agency (who serves as the liaison with the hotels and restaurants on our itinerary), there is another staff person who is primarily responsible for the whisper system and the perpetual "counting" of participants. Significant staff time is also devoted to working with participants before the trip begins to obtain copies of travel documents, identify food restrictions, make arrangements for payments or payroll deductions, or plan. This staff person also spends substantial time communicating with our partner travel agency.

Our Heritage Trips would be impossible without a partnership with a top-notch, full-service travel agency. We have been very fortunate to find just such a firm in Witte Travel and Tours of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Not all travel agencies are created equal, and the success of a Heritage trip such as DePaul's depends on the agency's familiarity with the unique needs of a heritage or pilgrimage journey. Witte's "Spiritual Journeys" department led by Jane Larson is our indispensable partner in ensuring the success of all our trips from beginning to end. The best laid travel plans of an individual, or group, are no guarantee against unforeseen events ranging from personal medical emergencies, deaths in the family, wildcat strikes, or natural disasters. At these times the ready and efficient back-up assistance of a travel agency is indispensable.

Conclusion: "Walking in his footsteps...."

Since they first began in 2000 the Office of Mission and Values has offered more than thirty Vincentian Heritage Tours for over 700 faculty, staff, students, senior leaders, and trustees. The evaluations of participants have always been overwhelmingly positive. Participants have remarked on the great value of learning much more about Vincent de

Paul: his life and times and his faith and values. They also are touchingly eloquent in describing the powerful impact of walking in his footsteps, of visiting his birthplace, the church in Folleville, the church in Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne, and above all his reliquary shrine in Paris. In addition, these participants are quite articulate in describing the direct impact of this experience in bringing a greater depth of meaning to their day-to-day work at the university, serving our students in the spirit of Vincent de Paul. In short, they are drawn through this experience to climb even higher on the “ladder of engagement.”

Since I have led each of these Heritage trips, I am often asked if I ever get tired of the experience. My honest response is no. As a historian I have spent my career studying Vincent de Paul, his life and times, and four subsequent centuries of Vincentian history. As DePaul’s Senior Executive for University Mission I have spent almost twenty years in mission effectiveness work striving with my colleagues to maintain our precious identity as a “mission-driven” institution. Each group I lead is a new experience, a new opportunity to share the fruits of my research; a new opportunity to share my passion for the Vincentian and Catholic mission of DePaul University in service to the students whom God in his providence has entrusted to us. Without fail, on each tour I am asked questions that I have never been asked before. I ask myself questions, I haven’t asked before, and I am reminded that with each of these Heritage trips I am also climbing higher and higher on the “ladder of engagement.”



1^{er} Aumônes de Vincent de Paul.

Challamel edit 4 R. de l'Abbay. F. S^t G.^{re}

1841-3367

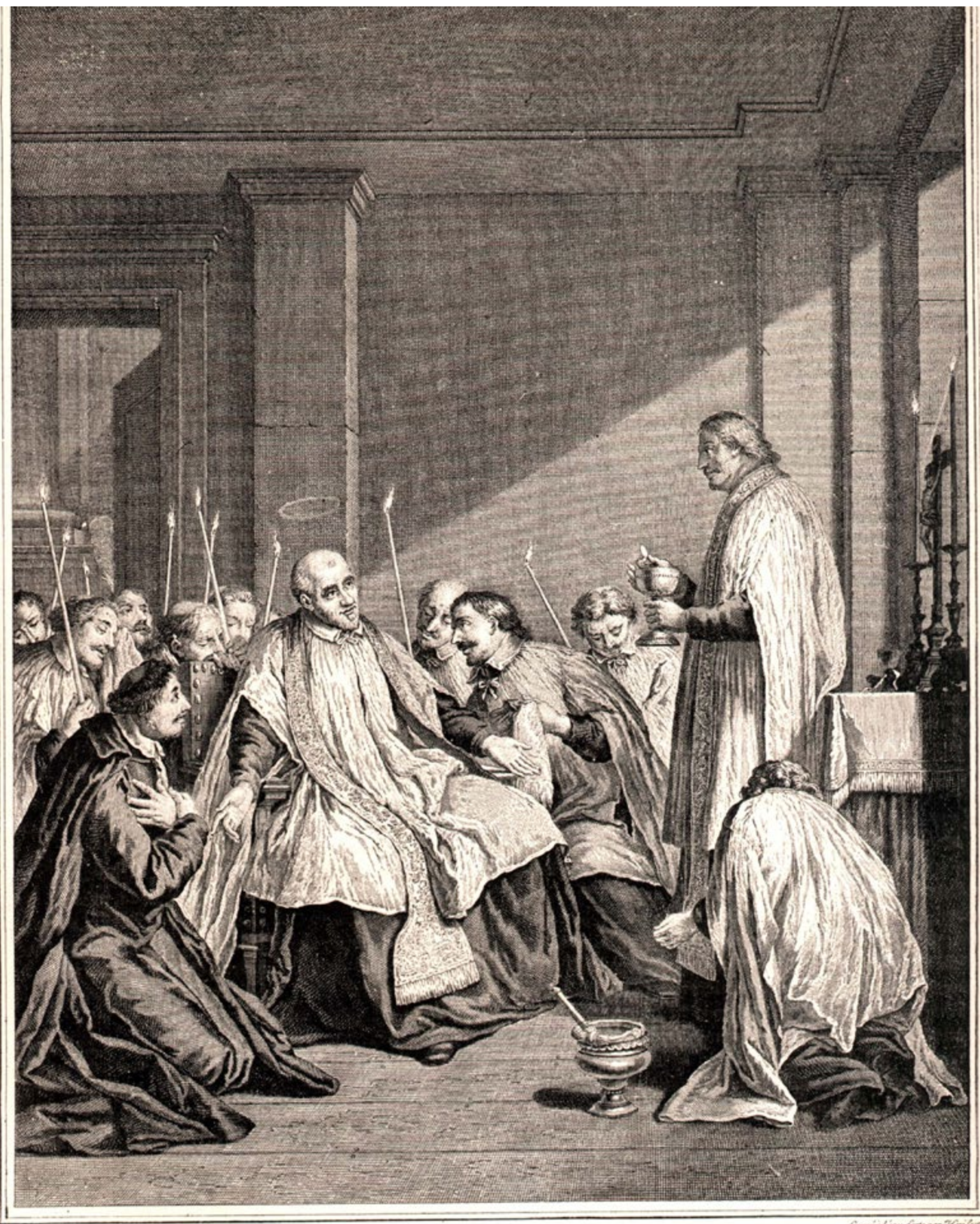
Vincent de Paul as a boy, giving alms to the poor.

From a series of engravings in Augustin Challamel, *Saint-Vincent de Paul* (1841).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





*B. Vincentius in extremis positus, sacrâ
Communionem reficitur.*

*Gravé à l'eau forte par H. Goussier
et gravé au burin par J. J. J.*

The death of Vincent de Paul; receiving Viaticum.

Period etching.

Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute



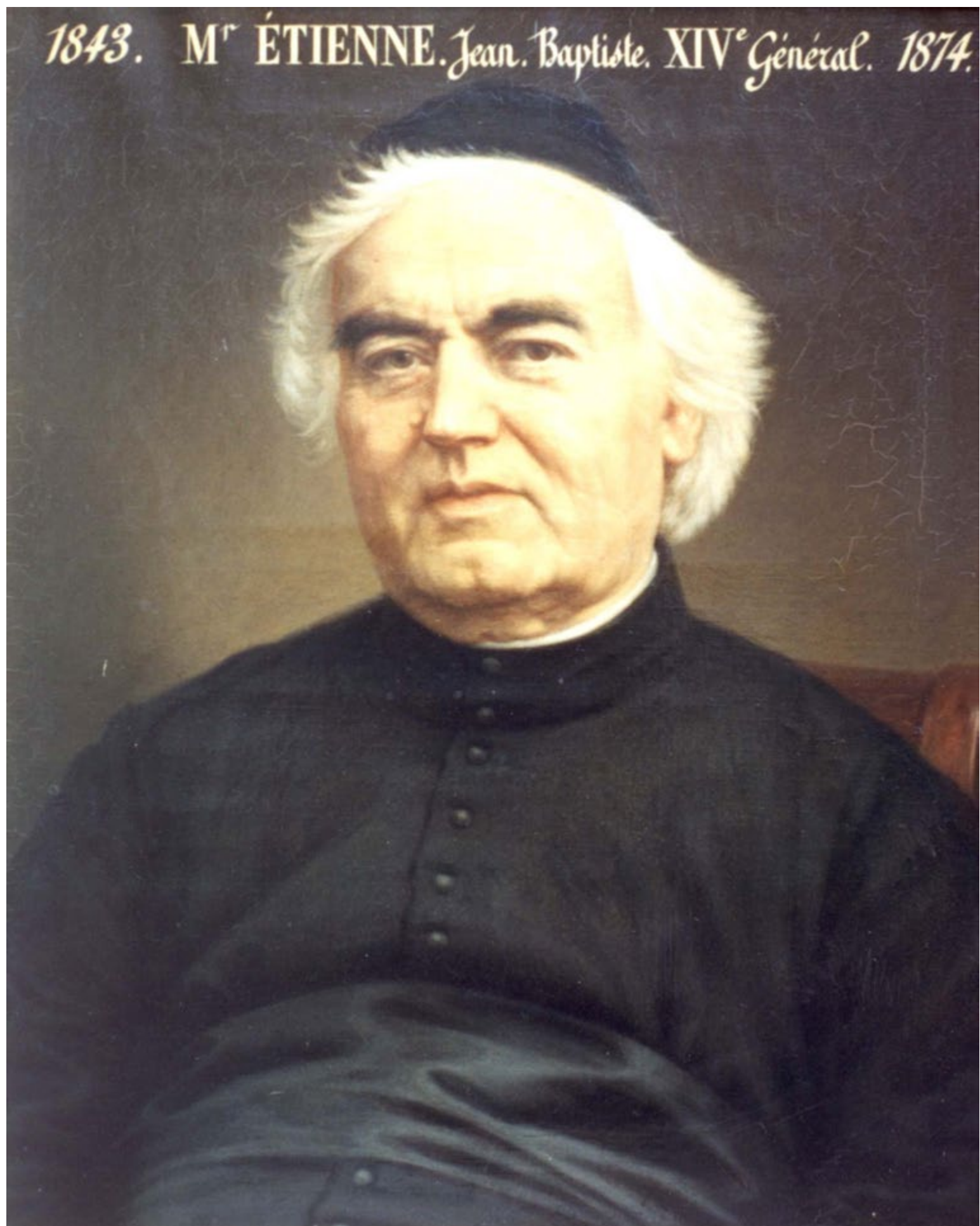


The reliquary shrine enclosing the remains of Vincent de Paul. His face and hands are covered in a wax mask. Installed in the Vincentian *maison-mère* in 1830.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





The official portrait of Jean-Baptiste Étienne, C.M.
Fourteenth Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission.
Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute





Vincent's Circle, located at the Lincoln Park campus of DePaul University, Chicago, IL.

Images Collected by the Vincentian Studies Institute





Pictures taken of the group on a recent
Vincentian Heritage Trip to France.

*Courtesy of the Office of Mission and Values,
DePaul University, Chicago, IL*





Picture taken of the group on a recent
Vincentian Heritage Trip to France.

*Courtesy of the Office of Mission and Values,
DePaul University, Chicago, IL*



Vincent de Paul and Hospitality

JOHN E. RYBOLT, C.M., PH.D.



[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)





Engraving of the chapel exterior of Saint-Lazare, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Vincent de Paul bequeathed to his two communities, the Congregation of the Mission (the Vincentians) and the Daughters of Charity, a tradition of hospitality. This should not be a surprise, given his attention to individuals, particularly the poor. His welcoming spirit made the Paris mother house of the Congregation, called Saint-Lazare, a center where guests of all sorts were welcomed for shorter or longer periods. This study will outline certain aspects of this quality, beginning with Saint-Lazare and then moving out to other foundations.

Welcoming the poor

Paris in the founder's period—he died in 1660—was itself a place of refuge for victims of civil wars. The city, of course, also attracted others in search of a better life. Vincent de Paul himself is an example: he left his home diocese, Dax, and moved to the capital around 1607, where he began to make contacts among the ecclesiastical and even social elite. Being surrounded with refugees, the poor, and the marginalized, his attention gradually shifted away from his personal advancement toward service given to his needy sisters and brothers.

When he received the enormous Parisian property of Saint-Lazare in 1632, he discovered that he had the largest ecclesiastical property in the city (second only, probably, to Saint-Germain-des-Prés). Saint-Lazare had its own buildings and gardens, a working farm, windmills to grind grain, and a quarry for building stone. He also inherited whole streets and their houses leased to tenants. Besides these properties in Paris, he likewise received farm properties. Vincent regarded all of this as part of the patrimony of the poor, for which he and his congregation were responsible. As a result, the poor could come to Saint-Lazare, often styled the Headquarters of Charity.

Saint-Lazare attracted numerous individuals living in poverty, especially those who needed food. The institution gradually extended its reach and organized its approach—Vincent was a master at organizing charity—so that his confreres were daily serving meals

to hundreds. One of the ways he nourished the hungry poor was to assemble them for catechism lessons before mealtime, thus ministering to their souls as well as their bodies. This practice reflected his style of giving missions, when he always had lessons on the faith for groups of children in the morning and adults in the evening. He wanted them to know and practice their faith. In both cases (the rural missions and Saint-Lazare), he assigned his priests and even the students and novices preparing for priesthood to prepare the catechism lessons and manage the distribution of food. On this last point, the rules for the novices show Vincent's care for details:

He [the novice] will finish at 12:15 when he hears the bell ringing for the Obedience [a house meeting], or for the second table on fast days, and he will then have someone say the blessing and the Our Father before the meal [*potage*] is distributed to anyone. He will recommend that they always say this before their meal, as well as thanksgiving afterward.¹

The custom grew of inviting one or two poor men to join the community for a meal, presumably their main daily meal. In this, Vincent was following the injunction of Jesus in Luke 14:13 to invite the poor to attend a festive meal. The founder's successors continued the practice at Saint-Lazare, but it was often interrupted and eventually became symbolic since the same poor man was regularly invited. Nonetheless, Vincent's very presence was a lesson to the other diners.

For those who came to the house to ask for financial help, the brother at the main door had explicit policies to follow:

When there are some poor persons at the door, he will listen to them and speak to them kindly and humbly; and if the superior has instructed him to give them something as an alms, he will do so promptly and cordially, without ever making them wait, unless it is for the meal that is given them at a certain hour.²

The homebound

While Vincent was pastor in 1617 at Châtillon-lès-Dombes, a small town north of Lyons, his heart was awakened to the condition of the poor in his parish. One August Sunday, a woman in the parish asked him to recommend to the parishioners the case of a sick man (or perhaps his entire family). He had no one to help him and was hungry. The parishioners followed their pastor's exhortation so faithfully that he commented that it was like a procession of people bringing food and supplies. The eventual waste of the food troubled him, however, since the poor man would be unable to keep the food fresh. Vincent's organizational sense came into play and in the next few months—he left Châtillon

¹ "Règles du Séminaire Interne, Avis pour celui qui va faire le Catéchisme," art. 8, in Archives de la Congrégation de la Mission, Paris (ACMP).

² "Règles du frère portier," undated ms., but before 1789, art. 10, in ACMP.

in December—he drew up rules for a group of charitable persons in the parish that would allow them to better reach out to their needy fellow parishioners. What is particularly charming in these rules for what he called the Confraternity of Charity is his attention given to the care of the sick poor.

When the person whose turn it is has received from the Treasurer whatever is needed on her day for the food of the poor persons, she will prepare the dinner and take it to the patients, greeting them cheerfully and kindly. She will set up the tray on the bed, place on it a napkin [or “white cloth”] a cup, a spoon, and some bread, wash the patient’s hands, and then say grace.... She will do all this as lovingly as if she were serving her own son—or rather God, who considers as done to Himself the good she does for persons who are poor.³

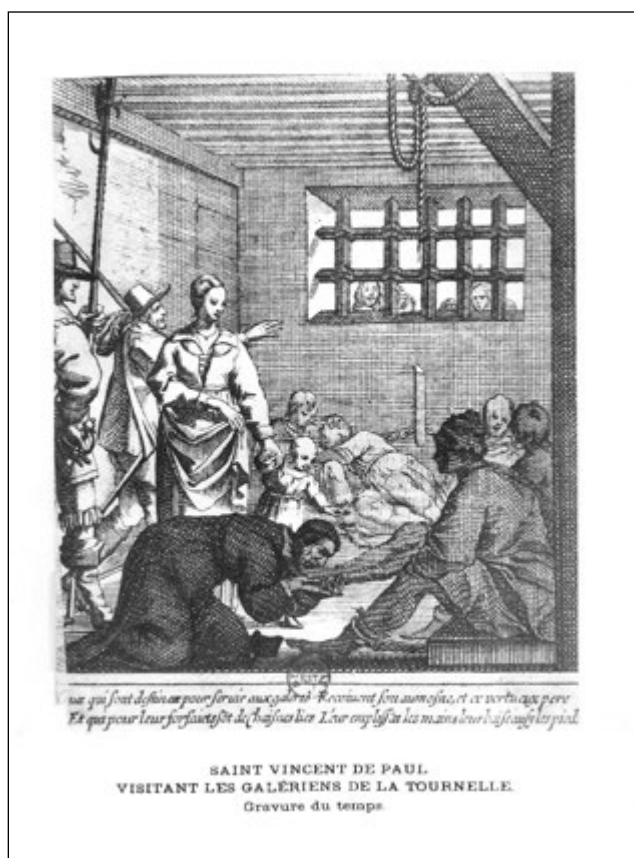
This paragraph illustrates how Vincent, drawing his inspiration from the Bible, developed his hospitable care for the needy.

The prisoners

The penal system in France in the seventeenth century utilized monasteries and convents for certain kinds of confinement. Their purpose is evident in the word penitentiary, a place where prisoners would forcibly do penance for their sins. Reformatory is another such term, although not much in use today. In the seventeenth century, large religious institutions were paid to care for persons in need of reform, such as priests in difficulty, young men from upper-class families who had fallen away from the obligations of their station, and others whose confinement suited the king. Regrettably, among the inmates were also patients with mental and emotional problems. It was hoped that for all of them, a regular round of whippings (such as students commonly received in schools), bad food, numerous religious exercises, and conversations with their keepers would result in reform.

Vincent inherited this system when he received Saint-Lazare, and for this reason he had to develop practices to conform to his view of ministry. The same rules for the novices cited above also have a section entitled “Advice for those who go to visit the afflicted.” Vincent again based his approach on the Gospels, in this case Matthew 25:36: “I was in prison and you came to visit me.” The novices were instructed to spend half-an-hour visiting the prisoners on Tuesdays and Thursdays, speaking to each one as the occasion demanded. Their conversations were supposed to be on spiritual topics, or even on the catechism for those who were ignorant of the truths of faith. In addition, “it is also good to sometimes have them hope that their captivity... will not last long, but if God permits it, it will be good to conform themselves to his holy will.” On a less theological level, he wrote: “If they discuss with us their individual cases or the reason for their detention, it will be

³ Document 126, “Charity of Women (Châtillon-lès-Dombes),” in *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, ed. and trans. by Jacqueline Kilar, D.C., Marie Poole, D.C., et al, 1-14 (New York: New City Press, 1985-2014), 13b:12-13. Hereafter CCD.



Vincent de Paul visits the galley prisoners at La Tournelle.

One of the earliest engravings of Vincent.

Reproduced in Henri Lavedan, *The Heroic Life of Saint Vincent de Paul* (1929).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



good to listen to them charitably, to have compassion for them, and to console them, but without ever telling them anything that their relatives are saying about them.”⁴

Welcoming guests

Since our houses are almost always open to externs who come there either to make a retreat or as residents, the great cleanliness with which they will be served in the dining room can contribute greatly to their edification. Consequently, the person responsible for this office should give himself completely to God to fulfill his office with the greatest exactitude.

This article of the rule for the person in charge of the dining room is one of several that speak of the regular practice of welcoming guests and attentively treating them with respect. The basis of this respect, as has been seen above, is rooted in the Sacred Scriptures, especially by seeing the Lord Jesus in the person of the one being welcomed. One of the many rules mentioning this deals with a mundane task such as changing the sheets and blankets for guests and making up their rooms:

He will go to the laundry to ask for [sheets and blankets] as soon as needed, and will put them in the empty room, and, as soon as the bell for the particular examination of conscience has sounded and these gentlemen have come downstairs, he will enter their rooms to make the bed, but not in a rush, as if it was done for Our Lord himself; he will keep the chamber pots clean and sweep the room if any straw [from the mattress] has fallen out.

⁴ “Règles du Séminaire Interne, Avis pour ceux qui vont visiter les affligés,” arts. 6, 13, in ACMP.

Troubled priests

Vincent's ministry extended not only to the poor but also to those who served the poor, particularly the clergy. For this reason, those confreres sent out to conduct parish missions in rural areas were also to offer their help to the local clergy through days of prayer or retreats. In his day, as well as afterwards, clergy sometimes found themselves in trouble. To care for them, bishops established what can easily be deemed "clerical prisons," devoted exclusively to the care and reformation of the inmates. In the history of the Congregation, various provinces staffed these institutions. Often, the problem priests were confined to a portion of a Vincentian house. They had their own director and daily schedule, concentrating on prayer and penance.

Although little is known about these institutions as a group, they served a purpose in the life of the Church, and the Vincentians were called to devote themselves to their troubled colleagues, much as Vincent himself did in his time.

Foreigners

From the earliest years of the Congregation, Vincent de Paul, responding to calls from the Church, assigned his men to non-French mission posts. He occasionally mentioned his willingness to go far afield in service of the Gospel, but he probably did not work out all the details and challenges that would face his confreres in the future.

Nonetheless, he knew that his men would have to study and master other languages, and he insisted on it. He made an amusing comment about one of the students sent to Turin to learn Italian: "I am greatly consoled that Brother Demortier has already made such progress in the language that he now knows how to say 'Signor, si.'"⁵ Three months previously, Vincent had believed that his student would "soon learn the language."⁶

Besides language, the founder also came to appreciate the need to understand and respect different cultures. Like educated persons of his time, he knew many details about Muslims and Islamic practice. This was particularly important for the men he sent to Algeria and Tunis to care for enslaved Christian hostages being held there for ransom. He instructed his confreres carefully to observe the laws and customs of the native peoples. The same was true for the men he sent on the ill-starred mission to Madagascar—ill-starred since the French colonists and entrepreneurs there were uninterested in religion, and the native Malagasy people had their own faith and culture. Still, the founder believed that God had called him and his Missioners to undertake the conversion of the island. The first work in the Malagasy language, apart from a manuscript bilingual dictionary, was a French-Malagasy catechism.⁷ As this was standard mission practice, the Vincentians were no different than their colleagues elsewhere.

⁵ Letter 2290, "To Jean Martin, Superior, In Turin," 22 June 1657, CCD, 6:351.

⁶ Letter 2255, "To Jean Martin, Superior, In Turin," 28 April 1657, CCD, 6:308.

⁷ Ludvig Munthe, Elie Rajaonarison, and Désiré Ranaivosoa, *Le catéchisme malgache de 1657: essai de présentation du premier livre en langue malgache : approche théologique, historique, linguistique et conceptuelle* (Oslo: Egede Instituttet, 1987).



Vincent de Paul welcoming pilgrims to lodge.

Engraving by Abraham Bosse.

Printed in Arthur Loth, *Saint Vincent de Paul et sa Mission Sociale* (1880).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Returning confreres

Vincent's hospitality included a warm welcome to confreres returning from their missions. The work was difficult and tiring, and transportation was equally problematic. When some returned, they were so weak that they had to go directly to the infirmary to recover. Otherwise, Vincent was so delighted to have his brothers back home that he instructed the brothers to ring the bells and his confreres to come to the main door to welcome them back.⁸ Vincent described their practice:

When one of our confreres returns from the country, we each go in turn to welcome him with a cheerful expression, taking great care to bring him what he needs; and if his legs have to be bathed to refresh him, we do it.⁹

The welcome had a very human side as well, and sometimes featured something Vincent did not like:

Whenever someone comes back from the country, he's taken to the infirmary or to a bedroom, and dinner or supper is brought to him.... One man will say, "Drink to my health," and the other does it. Too much wine is brought in, and this can cause a great deal of harm. They chat and talk about silly things there. In a word, this is shameful.¹⁰

In the house

Hospitality can even be understood in extending to care for the confreres living in the house itself, any house, in fact, and not just Saint-Lazare. Vincent's sense of good order

⁸ Conference 97, "Welcoming Returning Missioners," 5 September 1642, *CCD*, 11:114.

⁹ Conference 17, "Cordial Respect," 1 January 1644, *CCD*, 9:127.

¹⁰ Conference 148, "Repetition of Prayer," 16 March 1656, *CCD*, 11:297.

found its fulfillment not in any need of his to be prissy or demanding, but in his need to provide the best for his men. He did not want them to be accommodated with the ultimate must-have items. Indeed, he himself lived a simple and austere life, as his own room made clear. He eschewed the use of bed curtains, for example, but eventually agreed that his confreres could install them because of his declining health. On display in the Vincentian Museum at the Paris mother house, it is evident they certainly would have kept him warm at night in the unheated house.

The sets of rules cited above, as well as numerous others, all prescribe attention to cleanliness in the house and in one's room. In so doing, Vincent inculcated a spirit of good order and respect for others, the heart of hospitality. Of course, best practices were sometimes not observed, but this was an abuse, not a normal standard. Some men were hoarders, and others were careless about themselves and their surroundings, for example.

Lessons learned

Examining the life of Vincent de Paul reveals both human and spiritual qualities. He was a good organizer and he had a welcoming spirit. People flocked to him, both women and men; they helped his work with their time, talents, and treasure, as we say. He must have been warm and charming for this to happen. Quite possibly his rural background and awareness of the human realities strengthened him for his ministry, reforming his abrupt and quick-tempered spirit until he, like Moses, became the "meekest man of his time."

On the spiritual side, he was able to link his human qualities with biblical teaching, especially from the New Testament. Adopting the theological and spiritual practices of others, such as John of God, the Portuguese founder of the Order of Hospitalers, Vincent saw in others, especially the sick and the poor, the person of Jesus Christ. One was expected to serve Jesus in the person of the poor, but not only them, since Vincent's rules demonstrate that he used this perspective as the key to hospitality for everyone, near and far, poor and rich, laity and clergy. This is the principal lesson to be gleaned from his ministry, something that everyone, Christian or not, could make his or her own. Openness to others, availability to guests, care for the weak, with a heart of mercy and forgiveness: such are the qualities of Vincentian hospitality.



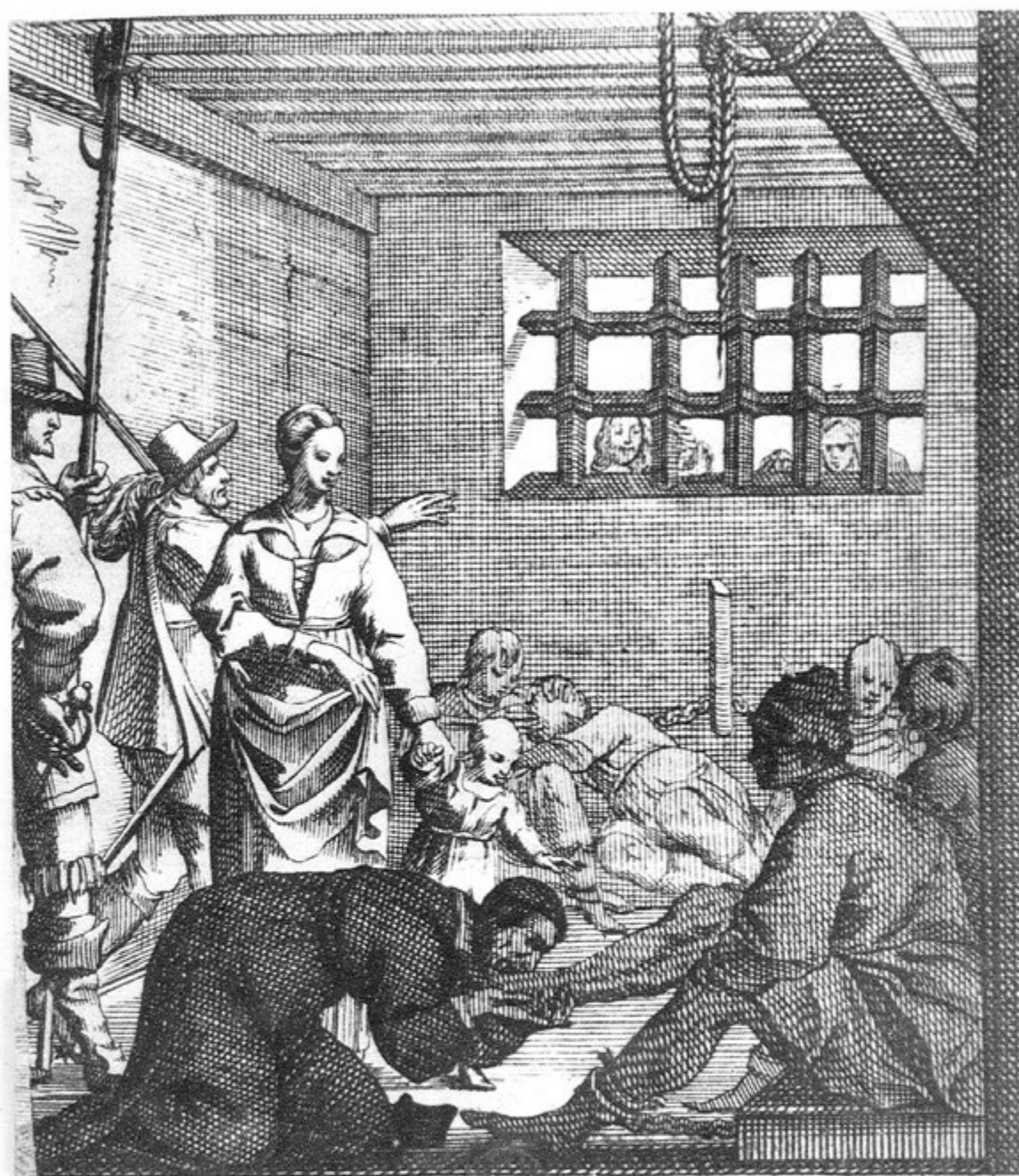


Engraving of the chapel exterior of Saint-Lazare, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





*ux qui sont destinés pour servir aux galères. Reçoivent son aumône, et ce vertueux père
Et qui pour leur forfaits s'ôt de chaisnes liés Leur emplissent les mains leur baissent les pieds.*

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL
VISITANT LES GALÉRIENS DE LA TOURNELLE.
Gravure du temps.

Vincent de Paul visits the galley prisoners at La Tournelle.

One of the earliest engravings of Vincent.

Reproduced in Henri Lavedan, *The Heroic Life of Saint Vincent de Paul* (1929).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Vincent de Paul welcoming pilgrims to lodge.

Engraving by Abraham Bosse.

Printed in Arthur Loth, *Saint Vincent de Paul et sa Mission Sociale* (1880).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Hospitality Ethos with Justice and Dignity: Catholic, Vincentian, and Jesuit Perspectives on Global Migration

MARCO TAVANTI, PH.D.

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[previous
article](#)

[next
article](#)

Introduction

On his first pastoral visit outside of Rome, newly-elected Pope Francis celebrated mass in a “boat cemetery” on the tiny Italian island of Lampedusa. Using a small painted boat as his altar, he prayed for those who drowned trying to reach the shores of Europe. He condemned the global indifference to their plight as well as the human traffickers who sent them off in the overcrowded, rickety boats.¹ Pope Francis, an Argentinian Jesuit, reminded the world about its shared responsibility toward migrants and our common humanity in light of God’s call for a dignified life.

God asks each one of us: Where is the blood of your brother that cries out to me? ...Today no one in the world feels responsible for this; we have lost the sense of fraternal responsibility.... In this world of globalization we have fallen into a globalization of indifference. We are accustomed to the suffering of others, it doesn’t concern us, it’s none of our business.... The Church is near to you in the search for a more dignified life for yourselves and for your families.²

At the end of the celebration Pope Francis thanked the people and organizations of Lampedusa for their example of hospitality—symbolically representing how the world should welcome desperate migrants.

Before imparting my blessing to you I want to thank you once again; you people of Lampedusa, for the example of love, charity and hospitality that you have set us and are still setting us. The Bishop said that Lampedusa is a beacon. May this example be a beacon that shines throughout the world, so that people will have the courage to welcome those in search of a better life. Thank you for bearing this witness!³

His words are a powerful reminder of the global responsibilities and human-divine love (*caritas*) we owe to people affected by forced migration. Before any policy formulation, migration is an ethical call for human rights in the global community. From a Christian standpoint, the ethical reawakening of our consciences is a necessary step to recuperate our responsibility as brothers and sisters for victims of forced migration. Pope Francis’s words, along with many examples of the Church’s hospitality for migrants, are inspiring challenges to the world, an invitation to move our global societies from ‘xenophobia’ to ‘xenophilia.’

¹ “Pope Francis visits Italy’s migrant island of Lampedusa,” BBC.com, 8 July 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23224010> (accessed 28 June 2014).

² “Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014): Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World,” http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_world-migrants-day.html (accessed 28 June 2014).

³ *Ibid.*

Hospitality as social responsibility and human dignity is central to the mission of numerous hospitals, shelters, and services named after Saint Vincent de Paul and other charity champions in the Vincentian tradition. Vincent de Paul, a seventeenth-century priest from France, symbolizes the quest for human dignity in the name of *caritas*. A popular quote attributed to Vincent explains his understanding and expectations for gratuitous quality service in the name of dignity.

You will find out that Charity is a heavy burden to carry, heavier than the kettle of soup and the full basket. But you will keep your gentleness and your smile. It is not enough to give soup and bread. This the rich can do. You are the servant of the poor, always smiling and good-humored. They are your masters, terribly sensitive and exacting masters you will see. And the uglier and the dirtier they will be, the more unjust and insulting, the more love you must give them. It is only for your love alone that the poor will forgive you the bread you give to them.⁴

From Vincent de Paul's perspective, the top-down action of charity to the needy is an unequal and humiliating relation that can only be re-equalized by an act of divine love for the poor (*caritas*). The human-divine dignity of poor people draws from his equal recognition of our shared identity as children of God. The poor person (the stranger, the orphan, widow, sick person, etc.) has dignity because of his/her image in God. Vincent's vision continues to be an inspiration for organized charities in recognizing dignity. His human dignity faith-based perspectives can also be applied to modern challenges such as forced migration.

What would St. Ignatius, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, and Frédéric Ozanam, principal co-founder of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, do in the face of the current problem of modern-day slavery? What would they do to alleviate the suffering of forced migration and poor migrants who are victims of exploitation? What would they do to institute effective quality services while seeking systemic solutions to these problems? How would they inspire people to recognize the shared human dignity of all, even in the face of extreme inequalities, emergency needs and radical differences in beliefs? Both the Jesuit and Vincentian traditions demonstrate examples of hospitality, service, and practical solutions to the issues of forced migrants, trafficking victims, and other migration related crises.

As both voluntary and forced migration is on the rise, we must ask ourselves about the social and ethical implications of hospitality. Studying biblical passages, Catholic social teachings and religious traditions of hospitality and social service, we focus on these implications. This article reflects on the aspects of social justice and human dignity demonstrated by the Jesuit and Vincentian values and traditions. Specifically, we argue that the dynamics of justice and dignity apply not only to moral consequences linked

⁴ Vincent de Paul, as quoted in Mary Ellen Hombs, and Mitch Snyder, *Homelessness in America: A Forced March to Nowhere* (Washington, D.C.: Community for Creative Non-violence, 1983), 121.



Welcome to the land of freedom.

Immigrants on the steerage deck of an ocean steamer pass the Statue of Liberty.

Published in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 2 July 1887.

Public Domain



to charity, but also to organizational and institutional responsibilities based on human rights⁵ and global citizenship rights.⁶ Although the debate on migration policies and state regulations desperately needs new innovative designs and comparative policy studies,⁷ our insights about a hospitality ethos for social justice and human dignity encourage an understanding of migration in relation to diversity relations, social services, and systemic change for poverty reduction.⁸

Global Migration Yesterday and Today

“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”

— Emma Lazarus (1883)

Human migration explains human history and development. Both migration and hospitality are at the core of an American identity symbolically represented by the Statue of Liberty, that icon of freedom and a welcoming symbol to immigrants arriving from all over the world. Lazarus's inscription at the base of the statue reminds us of the immigrant history of the United States and our collective responsibility toward new migrants.

Currently, the polarized debates in Congress over migration make it difficult to move forward toward regulated and comprehensive migration policies.⁹ However, even before

⁵ Yaffa Zilbershats, *The Human Right to Citizenship* (Ardsley: Transnational Publishers, 2002).

⁶ Ronnie Munck, Carl-Ulrik Schirup, and Raul Delgado Wise, *Migration, Work and Citizenship in the New Global Order* (London: Routledge, 2012).

⁷ For an overview of the debate on immigration policies see Carissa Byrne Hessick and Gabriel J. Chin, *Strange Neighbors: The Role of States in Immigration Policy* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); See also, Bill Ong Hing, *Ethical borders: NAFTA, Globalization, and Mexican Migration* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

⁸ For an overview of Vincent de Paul and Vincentian efforts at poverty reduction see Edward R. Udovic, “Our Good Will and Honest Efforts. Vincentian Perspectives on Poverty Reduction Efforts,” *Vincentian Heritage* 28:2 (2008), 69-77. See: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol28/iss2/5/>

⁹ Judith Gans, Elaine M. Replogle, and Daniel J. Tichenor, *Debates on U.S. Immigration* (Los Angeles: SAGE Reference, 2012).

addressing migration debates and policy solutions, we need to consider human migration at its moral foundation, and the serious impact it has upon topics such as diversity relations, human rights, and human services. We also need to better understand the current migration phenomenon's ethical implications upon human rights, social justice, and human dignity.

Globalization has both accentuated and exasperated the mobility of people across the world. According to estimates of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of international migrants was around 220 million people in 2013, and it is expected to reach 405 million by 2050.¹⁰ The International Labour Organization (ILO) states that the primary reason that more than three percent of the world's population move internationally is to seek employment. The ILO also observes that about 48% are women, and 12% are young people between the ages of 15 and 24. Asians are the largest diaspora group and the U.S. border with Mexico is the largest corridor of international migration.¹¹

Contemporary reasons for migration are not so different from those of the past. Four centuries ago, Marc Lescarbot, a contemporary of Vincent de Paul, described the three primary motives for migration in France. In his 1609 *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* he wrote, "Three things drive men to seek lands far away and to abandon their homes. First, is the desire to find something better. Second, is when a province is full to bursting of people.... Third, are divisions, disputes and quarrels."¹²

In the twenty-first century, economic, political, social, and environmental conditions are the main factors in the decision to migrate. As of 28 June 2014, the ILO website recognizes the movement of labor migrants in the context of globalization as both a challenge and an opportunity:

Today, there are an estimated 232 million migrant workers around the world. Globalization, demographic shifts, conflicts, income inequalities and climate change will encourage ever more workers and their families to cross borders in search of employment and security. Migrant workers contribute to growth and development in their countries of destination, while countries of origin greatly benefit from their remittances and the skills acquired during their migration experience. Yet, the migration process implies complex challenges in terms of governance, migrant workers' protection, migration and development linkages, and international cooperation.¹³

Sadly, migration often includes severe risk and dehumanizing treatment. Human trafficking frequently happens when desperate migrants are looking for work within and

¹⁰ Frank Laczko and Gervais Appave, eds., *World Migration Report 2013: Migrant Well-being and Development* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2013).

¹¹ "Labour Migration: Facts and Figures," *International Labour Organization*, at: http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/media-centre/issue-briefs/WCMS_239651/lang--en/index.htm (accessed 28 June 2014).

¹² Marc Lescarbot, W.L. Grant, and Henry Percival Biggar, *The History of New France. Volume 1* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1907), at: http://link.library.utoronto.ca/champlain/item_record.cfm?Idno=9_96828&lang=eng&query=The%20history%20of%20New%20France,%20Vol.%20I&browsetype=Title&startrow=1 (accessed 28 June 2014).

¹³ Learn more at: <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm>

across countries, and the ILO estimates that the majority of the 20.9 million victims are trafficked for labor exploitation. About 9.1 million (44%) persons have migrated prior to their exploitation.¹⁴

Human trafficking profits are estimated at US \$44 billion annually. Victims often incur debt bondage with little or no pay, and they can experience devastating physical and emotional pain.¹⁵ Human trafficking is the antithesis of the human dignity and social justice paradigms of hospitality. Forced migration is an alarming and dehumanizing outcome of our globalizing societies. The International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM) defines forced migration as “a general term that refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects.”¹⁶

In addition to the 1951 United Nations definition of refugees and asylum seekers, forced migration includes internally displaced people (IDPs), development displacees, environmental and disaster displacees, smuggled people, and trafficked people. It explains the situation of any person who migrates to escape persecution, conflict, repression, natural and human-made disasters, ecological degradation, or other situations that endanger their lives, freedom, or livelihood. Often these situations reach beyond the regular channels of national and international protection and regulation of migration, generating insecurity, crime, and modern slavery.

Many studies explain migration with ideas of human security and push factors related to poverty, war, violence, human rights violation, systematic discrimination, and environmental disasters.¹⁷ Much emergency assistance is given from those with limited resources and scattered political support from the international community, including many international, national, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs). About 36 million refugees, internally displaced people and other forced migrants (only a small fraction of the current reality), receive some protection and care from the United Nations Refugee Agency.¹⁸

Migration is also considered a fundamental element of human freedom. The 2009 Human Development Report, *Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* documents this concept.¹⁹

¹⁴ “Global estimate of forced labour. Executive summary,” *International Labour Organization*, at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_181953.pdf (accessed 28 June 2014).

¹⁵ “Mainstreaming of Migration in Development Policy and Integrating Migration in the Post-2015 U.N. Development Agenda,” *International Labour Organization*, at: http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_220084/lang--en/index.htm (accessed 28 June 2014).

¹⁶ “What is forced migration?” *International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM)*. Available at: <http://www.forcedmigration.org/about/whatisfm>

¹⁷ Elspeth Guild, *Security and Migration in the 21st Century* (Cambridge, England: Polity, 2009).

¹⁸ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, *The State of the World’s Refugees 2012: In Search of Solidarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁹ United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, *Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (New York: United Nations, 2009).

In a world with increased opportunity for some yet increased disparity for others, the human freedom and human rights aspects of migration is lost in the ongoing and contentious immigration policy debate. Nevertheless, migration through remittances and fluid movement of people between countries (circular migration) is a powerful tool for poverty alleviation, economic development and social change.²⁰ Migrants encompass a diverse group of people, nearly 1 billion either moving within their country or crossing borders, and the diversity of these individuals and laws that govern their movement makes migration a global multifarious issue.²¹

Migration is also recognized as a crucial element behind human innovation and global progress. “Throughout history, migrants have fueled the engine of human progress. Their movement has sparked innovation, spread ideas, relieved poverty, and laid the foundation for a global economy. In a world more interconnected than ever before, the number of people with the means and motivation to migrate will only increase.”²² Acknowledging how human migration is key to human development should inspire our attitude toward hospitality and our openness to the diverse perspectives of others. Yet, migration is also representative of numerous misconceptions and dysfunctional phenomena linked to forced migration, human trafficking, terrorist mobility, brain drain, and xenophobia.

An ethically centered and balanced approach to human migration needs an analysis of hospitality as a societal responsibility and a human right. It requires understanding the core of a hospitality ethos centered on the notion of human dignity and social justice. The inclusion versus exclusion perspectives in the immigration debate would benefit from rediscovering the justice and dignity implications of migration in our globalizing communities and workplaces.²³ It also requires a re-examination of our understanding of common identities and appreciation of the value added by the diversity of people considered as ‘others.’²⁴

Today, in spite of the many multi-cultural expressions, recognition and respect for diversity is still quite challenging. This is not only due to the lack of cultural intelligence (also referred to as CQ). It is also due to our inability (or unwillingness) to recognize our common humanity and shared concern for a better future.

²⁰ Laczko and Appave, *World Migration Report* 2013.

²¹ *Human Development Report* 2009.

²² Ian Goldin, Geoffrey Cameron, and Meera Balarajan, *Exceptional People: How Migration Shaped our World and Will Define our Future* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

²³ Uma Anand Segal, Doreen Elliott, and Nazneen S. Mayadas, *Immigration Worldwide: Policies, Practices, and Trends* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁴ Hurriyet Babacan, *Challenges of Inclusion: Cultural Diversity, Citizenship and Engagement* (Queensland: University of the Sunshine Coast, 2005).



"Hospitality." Icon by Andrei Rublev, circa 1425.

The icon depicts the three nameless visitors who were provided with food and drink by Abraham.

Public Domain



Abrahamic Hospitality Ethos and Migration

Hospitality values are at the root of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—the Abrahamic religious traditions. Hospitality relates to generosity and graciousness, not only to friends but also to strangers and enemies. Under the shared identity labeled people of God (Judaism), children of God (Christianity), and believers of God (Islam), there is a shared responsibility toward giving hospitality. The often-quoted story of Abraham and Sarah's gracious hospitality to three divine strangers at the Oak of Mamre²⁵ is symbolic of providing an expected (justice) and generous (dignity) welcome to strangers. In the story, Abraham and Sarah illustrate that hospitality is paradigmatic of service, sharing, and openness to strangers as a service to God and humanity. Their act of generous hospitality becomes a transformative event, Sarah expecting a child later in life and Abraham becoming the father of many nations.²⁶

Hospitality is characterized by opening doors to diverse, unknown, and possibly even dangerous strangers. The Greek root of the word *xenos* has the literal meaning of 'foreigner,' 'stranger,' and even 'enemy.' The action of giving hospitality is about restoring the good condition a guest deserves (the Latin word *restaurāre* explains the origin of the English word 'restaurant'). It is also about generosity and gratuitousness based on the needs of the guest, and not for the benefit of the host. The ancient Middle Eastern practice of refraining to ask the name and origin of a guest for the first three days, even at the risk of harboring an enemy, encourages complete hospitality without self-interest. The duty of offering generous and selfless hospitality is not simply due to the harsh conditions of the desert. It is about restoring the dignity given by belonging to a community. Hence, what is expected of the host is to open the doors, share resources, and give priority to the guest's

²⁵ Genesis 18:1-8.

²⁶ Hemchand Gossai, *Power and Marginality in the Abraham Narrative* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010).

needs. Hospitality is offered with extreme openness. Generous banquets symbolize the kingdom (or kin-dom) of God.²⁷

However, the guest also shares responsibility by respecting the norms of the host community. The Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology (EDBT) explains the connection between hospitality and strangers in need (aliens) in the ancient Middle East:

The plight of aliens was desperate. They lacked membership in the community, be it tribe, city-state, or nation. As an alienated person, the traveler often needed immediate food and lodging. Widows, orphans, the poor, or sojourners from other lands lacked the familial or community status that provided a landed inheritance, the means of making a living, and protection. In the ancient world, the practice of hospitality meant graciously receiving an alienated person into one's land, home, or community and providing directly for that person's needs.²⁸

Hospitality in the Abrahamic tradition concerns the act of making space for others.²⁹

The act of welcoming strangers becomes not only an expression of shared human identity (under God the creator of life), and shared responsibility (with God's creation), but also of transformation (God's new creation). This is manifested in the new life announced to Abraham and Sara by the strangers at the end of their visit. New outcomes are possible not because of faith (actually Sarah was incredulous about having a child at her age) but through their acts of hospitality.

Jesus was also clear in making the case that what counts is our actions toward strangers, and not our perceptions (or justifications) of reality, when he declared himself to be the stranger (*xenos*). Jesus's disciples are initiated in the act of hospitality as they are called to feed, refresh, welcome, clothe, nurse, and visit the *xenos*.³⁰ Those who have shown hospitality to the *xenos* will be welcomed into the kingdom (kin-dom) of heaven,³¹ while those who were not hospitable will depart from the presence of the Lord into everlasting fire.³² This practice of hospitality to the *xenos* is central to Christianity, as we are all one family in the blood of Jesus given to all humankind.

The responsibility of the blood family of Jesus is to see beyond the old paradigm of insiders-outsiders based upon race, ethnicity, or citizenship. Instead, the early Christian community was instructed to practice hospitality, as divine presence is manifested in such actions. "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it."³³ In the new humanity (kin-

²⁷ Isaiah 25:6-9; Matthew 22:2-4.

²⁸ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996).

²⁹ Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999).

³⁰ See Matthew 25:35, 36.

³¹ Matthew 25:34.

³² Matthew 25:41.

³³ Hebrew 13:1-2.

dom) created under the power of the cross “there are no more strangers and aliens, but citizens with the saints and members of God’s household.”³⁴ “Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines.”³⁵

These ethical perspectives have practical implications for our individual actions and collective policies. Although many hospitality services, social services, and human emergency services are professionalized and institutionalized, the guiding values and principles evaluating programs and organizations should clearly reflect these Abrahamic paradigms. Beyond Abrahamic (Semitic) religious traditions, such hospitality values and ethical paradigms for diversity inclusion are manifested in many other traditions. Mahatma Gandhi, for example embodied these values in the practices of the ‘ashram family’ that included women and men, young and old, Christians, Muslims, Jews, untouchables, and Brahmins. He practiced hospitality with an open-door-policy and believed that the spiritual practice of hospitality was a suitable model even for the unequal societies of South Africa and India.

What do these ethical imperatives for migration mean for our modern society, global economy, and for the Christian tradition in particular? Ironically, the hospitality industry in the United States, which accounts for 9% of world gross domestic product and employs 98 million people, includes many immigrant workers from Mexico who are often discriminated against and considered less-skilled by other fields of business.³⁶ This Mexican immigrant community is also a significant presence in the ministry of American Christian communities, and now sits in the pews of Catholic churches which once served European immigrants.

The Christian Hospitality Challenge

The early Christian community was clearly centered on extended hospitality as love of one another (*philadelphia*), and the welcoming of strangers (*philoxenias*). These Christian principled actions of individuals and communities (ethos) were often exhorted as essential behaviors among the followers.³⁷ The strong identification with the loving practice of hospitality for strangers surely emerged from the remembering of Jesus, his words and his actions. Various theological reflections recall how this hospitality ethos spread across Jewish practices, Jesus’ example, and the teachings of the early Christian community.

³⁴ Ephesians 2:19.

³⁵ Henri J. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975).

³⁶ Jaime Seba, *Tourism and Hospitality: Issues and Developments* (Toronto: Apple Academic Press, 2012).

³⁷ See Romans 12:10 and Hebrews 13:1-2.

Furthermore, Jesus' ministry had hospitality at its very core. When asked to sum up the whole of the law, Jesus quoted... [scripture and emphasized the love of God and love for thy neighbor.]³⁸ ...Love, complete love of God and love of neighbour, is the way of eternal life.³⁹ The parable that Jesus tells here in response to the question "who is my neighbour?" is one in which a Samaritan, someone who is an outsider, is upheld as the exemplary neighbor.⁴⁰ Through this parable and by his association of himself with outcasts,⁴¹ Jesus blurs the boundaries of insider and outsider. The followers of Jesus are to live their lives according to new ideas of kinship and humanity, thus welcoming those whom would have been previously unapproachable.⁴²

The early Christian community was asking to practice hospitality in the same way that Jesus did with his disciples. "Receive one another, therefore, as Christ has received you for the glory of God."⁴³ The Christian ethos of hospitality expressed in the receiving of others as an action of love, respect, service, and dialogue is at the core of its human-divine identity.⁴⁴ What qualifies the action as Christian is not an act of top-down charity, or an attempt to make others like us, but the deep respect and appreciation of their diversity as both an expression of humanity and divinity at the same time. It is the recognition of (and our hope to recognize) the divinity in humanity (*xenos* as the poor, the stranger, the marginalized) and the humanity in divinity (Jesus Christ). This is present today in the example of Benedictine hospitality, as stated in Chapter 53 of the Rule of Saint Benedict: *Hospites tamquam Christus suscipiantur* (guests are to be received as Christ).⁴⁵

Yet, the daily challenges faced by today's migrants and refugees demonstrate that we have much to do to translate this call for hospitality into reality. The debate on immigration reform has not lost its voice within the Catholic community, where human rights are considered a serious issue to be mitigated actively.⁴⁶ Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, Chairman of The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, observes

³⁸ Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 in the accounts of Matthew 22:37-40; see also Mark 12:29, 30, 33; Luke 10:27; Paul also made this statement in Romans 13:9-10.

³⁹ Luke 10:25.

⁴⁰ Luke 10:30-37.

⁴¹ Matthew 25:31-46.

⁴² S.W. Sykes, "Making Room for the Other: Hostility and Hospitality in a Christian Perspective." Paper presented as part of the Elijah Interfaith Academy Think Tank in preparation for a meeting of world religious leaders at the international conference on *Religion, Society and the Other: Hostility, Hospitality and the Hope of Human Flourishing*, Sevilla, Spain, 14-17 December 2003.

⁴³ Romans 15:7.

⁴⁴ See Thomas J. Reese, "Love the Alien as Yourself: This Catholic's View," at: <http://www.faithstreet.com/onfaith/2009/11/04/love-the-alien-as-yourself/4263> (accessed 28 June 2014).

⁴⁵ For a good overview of the Rule of St. Benedict and its implications for today's hospitality see, Patrick Barry, *Wisdom from the Monastery: The Rule of St. Benedict for Everyday Life* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005).

⁴⁶ "SVDP Urges Action on Immigration Reform," Famvin News, <http://famvin.org/en/2014/04/01/svdp-urges-action-immigration-reform/> (accessed 28 April 2014).

how the humanistic side of migration is often lost in the midst of debates surrounding its economic implications: “What we fail to remember in this debate is the human aspect of immigration—that immigration is primarily about human beings, not economic or social issues... Those who have died—and those deported each day—have the same value and innate God-given dignity as all persons, yet we ignore their suffering and their deaths.”⁴⁷

Statements such as these proclaim the faith-based hospitality ethos and shared moral responsibility toward migration within our universal (Catholic) human rights inherent values. The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops has repeatedly explained the unity in diversity, and the immigrant identity of the Church, then and now. The new immigration from all the continents of the world is a reminder of the cultural pluralism of the United States, a nation of immigrants. In this context, the Catholic church is rapidly re-encountering itself as an immigrant church. In the important document *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity* the conference reaffirmed the Catholic-Christian and human social responsibility of hospitality to new immigrants:

In this context of opportunity and challenge that is the new immigration, we bishops of the United States reaffirm the commitment of the Church, in the words of Pope John Paul II, to work “so that every person’s dignity is respected, the immigrant is welcomed as a brother or sister, and all humanity forms a united family which knows how to appreciate with discernment the different cultures which comprise it.”⁴⁸ We call upon all people of good will, but Catholics especially, to welcome the newcomers in their neighborhoods and schools, in their places of work and worship, with heartfelt hospitality, openness, and eagerness both to help and to learn from our brothers and sisters, of whatever race, religion, ethnicity, or background.⁴⁹

The Catholic-Christian hospitality ethos is not a marginal concern, it is the core of its Abrahamic and Judeo-Christian identity. The Bishops remind the Church about its origin as the people of God, once slave or refugee in the foreign land of Egypt. Because of the shared experience of being once oppressed and stranger, the no-oppression command (justice), the appreciation of the plight of migrants, and the love of strangers as our own (dignity) are non-negotiable. “You shall not oppress an alien; you well know how it feels to be an alien, since you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.”⁵⁰ “You shall treat the stranger who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you, have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once strangers in the land of Egypt.”⁵¹

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Pope John Paul II, “Message of the Holy Father for the World Migration Day 2000,” no. 5, at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_21111999_world-migration-day-2000.html

⁴⁹ United States Catholic Conference, USCCB, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity; A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 2000).

⁵⁰ Exodus 23:9.

⁵¹ Leviticus 19:33-34.

The experience of exile, of oppression as foreigners, of refugees as the Holy Family escaping into Egypt, and God's deliverance to the Promised Land, is the central message of Scriptures. This (forced) migration experience has clear implications for the Church's legacy in demonstrating social justice, equal respect, and human dignity to today's immigrants. "For the Lord, your God, is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who has no favorites, accepts no bribes; who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and befriends the alien, feeding and clothing him. So you too must befriend the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt."⁵² Jesus echoes this tradition and elevated this hospitality command into powerful, prophetic, and personal imageries when he proclaimed, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me."⁵³

Drawing from scripture and tradition, the Church clearly recognizes its role to promote the dignity and defend the rights of strangers and the vulnerable in society. Their vulnerability is a reminder of our dependence on the mercifulness of God, therefore we should treat strangers the way God treats us. Hence, the Church becomes a political advocate as it avows the dignity of immigrants in pursuing their equal access to economic, social, and political resources, rather than treating immigrants as threats to society and future generations.⁵⁴ The National Council of Churches Christian teaching emphasizes the potential benefits of a multicultural community created through immigration.⁵⁵

The hospitality ethos, a central message in the Jewish and Christian traditions, instills a practical challenge for translating these beliefs and commands into practices of justice and dignity. Vincentian and Jesuit religious traditions exemplify these powerful messages, offering practical interpretations of dignity in charity and justice in refugee services.

The Hospitality Ethos for Justice

Commitment to hospitality should emanate from an ethical commitment to social justice. The idea of social justice is attributed to the Jesuit Priest Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio (1793-1862), brother of the Italian politician Massimo D'Azeglio.⁵⁶ Father D'Azeglio was particularly concerned with social problems arising from the industrial revolution and wrote several essays in the journal he co-founded, *Civiltà Cattolica*. Eventually, his social thinking influenced Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, the first written work in Catholic Social Teaching (CST) to address the Church's concern about the conditions of the working class.⁵⁷

⁵² Deuteronomy 10:17-19.

⁵³ Matthew 25:35.

⁵⁴ Fred Elbel, "The Ethics of Immigration Policy," *Intergenerational Ethics*, in J. E. Rohe, *The Ethics of Immigration Policy* (Petosky: The Social Contract Press, 2006).

⁵⁵ "National Council of Churches Still Pushing for Comprehensive Immigration Policy Reform," *National Council of Churches* (updated 17 October 2013), at: <http://www.pcusa.org/news/2013/10/17/national-council-churches-still-pushing-comprehens/> (accessed 28 June 2014).

⁵⁶ Thomas Patrick Burke, "ESSAYS: The Origins of Social Justice: Taparelli d'Azeglio," *Modern Age* 52:2 (2010): 97.

⁵⁷ Thomas Massaro, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012).

In modern times, the concept of social justice offers justice-as-fairness as an answer to the question of the allocation of goods in society (distributive justice). In social contract theory, social justice is the basic structure of society wherein institutions should enable people to lead and fulfill their lives as active contributors to their communities.⁵⁸ Social justice promotes fairness by not benefiting those with advantageous social contingencies and promotes equality by giving advantage to those who are less well off (difference principle). In CST, this difference-for-equality principle is associated with the evangelical option for the poor.⁵⁹

Social justice moves in two directions. One is toward giving justice, providing welcome and respect for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The other is to enforce the law for all people residing in the country, including migrants and transient people. These dual directions imply a capacity development to recognize people's rights (empowerment), and institutional compliance to deliver those rights and services (responsibility). In this sense social justice resembles the values associated with human-rights-based approaches to human development.⁶⁰

Catholic teaching also reaffirms these two social justice elements in the migrant's human rights and governance responsibility:

The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the *foreigner* in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him.... Political authorities, for the sake of the common good for which they are responsible may make the exercise of the right to immigrate subject to various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants' duties toward their country of adoption. Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens.⁶¹

The Society of Jesus (S.J.), commonly called Jesuit, has been traditionally associated with the values, teaching and practice of social justice. In 1534, when Ignacio of Loyola met with Francisco Xavier and five other students from the University of Paris, they founded the Jesuits and called themselves the Company of Jesus.⁶² Eventually even St. Ignacio and his companions experienced being refugees when they were forced to flee the radicals of

⁵⁸ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971).

⁵⁹ Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor and for the Earth: Catholic Social Teaching* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2012).

⁶⁰ Sam Hickey, and Diana Mitlin, eds., *Rights-Based Approaches to Development: Exploring the Potential and Pitfalls* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2009).

⁶¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1994), No. 2241.

⁶² John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).



Portrait of Ignacio of Loyola (1491-1556).

Founder and first superior general of the Jesuits; the Company Seal of the Jesuits.

Public Domain

the Dominican Inquisition in Spain and found hospitality in Rome, under the protection of the Pope. Although persecuted and perceived as controversial, the Jesuit's view of seeing God in all things has made important theological and pastoral contributions in fostering a society based on God's justice.⁶³

In the Jesuit view of justice the connection between the sacredness of the Christian message and a responsibility to foster social justice cannot be separated. Pope Francis, the first Jesuit Pope elected in the history of the Church, reminded us about these connections by simply reaffirming our responsibility to give hospitality to refugees, forced migrants, and victims of trafficking. In his 2014 General Audience reflections on the World Refugee Day (June 20), Pope Francis made an appeal to individuals and institutions on behalf of hundreds of thousands of refugees. He said, "Millions of refugee families from different nations and of every religious faith live through dramatic stories and carry deep wounds that will be hard to heal." He also said, "We believe that Jesus was a refugee, had to flee to save his life, with Saint Joseph and Mary, had to leave for Egypt. He was a refugee. Let us pray to Our Lady who knows the pain of refugees."⁶⁴

The word company actually relates directly to hospitality as it comes from the Latin *cum* and *pane* (with bread), indicating a group people who break bread together. In 2014, the 25th anniversary of the Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador, we remember their message for social justice and hospitality. Ignatio Ellacuría, S.J., the murdered superior of the Jesuit community at the Universidad Centro Americana (UCA) said, "The struggle against injustice and the pursuit of truth cannot be separated nor can one work for one independent of the

⁶³ For a good overview on the Jesuit connection of faith and justice see, Michael Campbell-Johnston, and Stephen McCarthy, *Just Faith: A Jesuit Striving for Social Justice* (Oxford: Way Books, 2010).

⁶⁴ "Pope Makes Appeal on Behalf of Refugees," Vatican City, 18 June 2014, at: http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-makes-appeal-on-behalf-of-refugees?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+zenit/english+%28ZENIT+English%29 (accessed 15 August 2014).

other.” Fr. Ellacuría and his fellow Jesuits at UCA were a leading voice for social justice in El Salvador regarding human rights violations, disappearances, and military repression during the ongoing bloody civil war.⁶⁵

The Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) embodies the social justice values of Catholic social teaching within the organization’s mission and through its commitment to *accompaniment* of refugees and migrants. As the Company of Jesus, accompaniment implies walking together and welcoming others in hospitality as sharing of bread.

The Jesuit Refugee Service is a modest venture, but it does claim to bring a specific dimension to its work which is sometimes lacking elsewhere. While always ready to help refugees in their material and spiritual wants, and also in designing projects leading to a fuller and more independent life, we try to place special emphasis on being with and doing with, rather than doing for. We want our presence among refugees to be one of sharing with them, of accompaniment, of walking together along the same path. In so far as possible, we want to feel what they have felt, suffer as they have, share the same hopes and aspirations, see the world through their eyes. We ourselves would like to become one with the refugees and displaced people so that, all together, we can begin the search for a new life.⁶⁶

JRS considers modern discourse surrounding migrants and refugees to be the antithesis of hospitality and accompaniment. As Pope Francis proclaimed to migrants and refugees on Vatican Radio in 2014, “Do not lose hope for a better future.” JRS keeps that hope alive through its beliefs that “presence can be a sign. That a free person chooses willingly and faithfully to accompany those who are not free, who had no choice about being there, is itself a sign, a way of eliciting hope.”⁶⁷

The Jesuit Refugee Service’s model of hospitality, as inspired by faith, is to “understand and address the causes of structural inequality... to work in partnership with others to create communities of justice, dialogue, peace and reconciliation.”⁶⁸ Their International Director, Fr. Peter Balleis, S.J., describes the social justice foundation in JRS’s hospitality model:

We have seen how in cities as diverse as Bangkok, Bogota and Nairobi hospitality strengthens community solidarity to the benefit of all... For us hospitality is core to everything we do in our accompaniment, service and advocacy. It is about how we welcome the refugee as a human person. From this encounter

⁶⁵ Jon Sobrino, *Witnesses to the Kingdom: The Martyrs of El Salvador and the Crucified Peoples* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2003).

⁶⁶ “A New Way of Being Present,” *Jesuit Refugee Services*, at: <http://jrsusa.org/accompaniment?LID=141> (accessed 28 April 2014).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ “Jesuit Refugee Service,” *JRS*, at: <http://www.jrs.net> (accessed 28 June 2014).

we understand how best to serve them. It is by developing relationships with refugees that we are able to undertake advocacy in defense of their rights.⁶⁹

Fr. Balleis' words are a representation of the intricate and fundamental relationship between social justice and hospitality, as expressed in Jesuit spirituality. The Second Vatican Council brought this perspective to the forefront of Catholic principles, intrinsically tying the Church to the concerns of humanity and giving special attention to those who are poor or vulnerable (such as migrants). In the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," the Council articulated that social and economic disparities between people and populations disrupt peace and human dignity while counteracting social justice and enabling scandal. At its 32nd General Congregation, The Society of Jesus proclaimed the criticalness of justice, particularly in service, championing "a commitment to promote justice and to enter into solidarity with the voiceless and the powerless."⁷⁰ Following these declarations there was a reform within Catholic schools and universities, particularly within Jesuit universities, implementing service programs nationally as a universal effort to promote social justice.⁷¹

Justice is a virtue and a foundation of charity.⁷² As a cardinal virtue, justice concerns our duty to respect the natural rights of others. More than that, it is our obligation as people "to give everyone his or her rightful due."⁷³ During the 1971 World Synod of Bishops, Pope Benedict XVI expressed that charity is an action on behalf of justice; this act is a "constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel" and "of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."⁷⁴ In essence, the promotion of justice is not an act to be delegated to certain individuals, but to all Christians.⁷⁵ What is truly profound about this proclamation is the acknowledgment that without charity's foundation in justice, relief from oppression cannot occur. Pope John Paul II, on the 100th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, said: "Love for others, and in the first place love for the poor, in whom the Church sees Christ himself, is made concrete in the promotion of justice."⁷⁶

⁶⁹ "Pope Francis Appeals for Hospitality and Justice During Visit to Jesuit Refugee Service," *Jesuit Refugee Service: News*, at: http://jrsusa.org/news_detail?TN=NEWS-20130914074122 (accessed 29 April 2014).

⁷⁰ Joseph Gerics, "From Orthodoxy to Orthopraxis: Community Service as Noblesse Oblige and Solidarity with the Poor," *Religious Education* (1991): 253.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*: 250-264.

⁷² Vincent J. Genovesi, "Steps Toward Justice: What is the Purpose of Charitable Works?," *America: The National Catholic Review*, 15 September 2008, 35-36, at: <http://americamagazine.org/issue/667/article/steps-toward-justice> (accessed 28 June 2014).

⁷³ John A. Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980).

⁷⁴ Charles Murphy, "Charity, Not Justice, as Constitutive of the Church's Mission," *Theological Studies* (2007): 274-286.

⁷⁵ Gerics, "From Orthodoxy to Orthopraxis," 250-264.

⁷⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html

Hospitality Ethos in Dignity

Hospitality ethos is also about the recognition, promotion, and respect of human dignity. Vincent de Paul was a champion of providing organized charity service for human dignity. He was able to do so because of his faith and recognition of the divine presence in poor-marginalized people. There is an icon of Vincent that illustrates this notion of dignity in hospitality and charity. Written by Meltem Aktas, the work is called *The beggar-Christ and Vincent de Paul* and it is located in the chapel of Rosati House, a Vincentian residence at DePaul University in Chicago. It is a small icon with a very powerful message, illuminating the give-receive reciprocal movement between a poor person, perhaps represented by a Palestinian Jesus, and an older Vincent giving (or receiving) a loaf of bread. The icon pictures a vertical tree behind Jesus inviting us to a deeper understanding of these symbols, relations, gestures, and the context of desert and the city.⁷⁷ *The beggar-Christ and Vincent* is also a symbol of guest-host migrant hospitality. Andrei Rublev, the famous Russian icon painter, represented the three person-angels who visited Abraham at the Oak of Mamre⁷⁸ in a work interpreted as the image of the Holy Trinity. *The beggar-Christ* is similarly full of this symbolism. It invites us to reflect on our social responsibility toward poverty and migration, along with human dignity and respect for people in need.

Vincent de Paul initially founded the Confraternities of Charity. The members were aristocratic ladies of charity with good intentions, but they were unable to offer the poor service with dignity that aligned with the true meaning of charity. Although their monetary help was essential, effective, and transformative, charity really happened with the hospital work led by Louise de Marillac and the Daughters of Charity. An orphan and a poor widow with a child herself, Louise and other Daughters were able to better relate to poor people, and they provided a high quality of service with dignity at the oldest and largest hospital in Paris, Hôtel-Dieu.⁷⁹

With Vincent's mentorship and close collaboration, Louise and the Daughters of Charity's mobility and social proximity with the people they served helped them to become what is still today the largest female congregation in the world. After almost four centuries, the hospitals of the Daughters of Charity, and Elizabeth Seton in the United States, continue to earn the highest ratings of the best quality care. The meaning of the word 'hospital' comes from the Latin *hospes*, signifying a stranger or foreigner, a guest. Since their formal establishment in 1633, the Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul (D.C.), and later the Sisters of Charity Federation in the Vincentian-Setonian Tradition (S.C.), have been exemplary in their charity practices in hospitals and in social care for the poor.

The Vincentian combination of spirituality to serve the poor (*caritas*), the social identity of its servants, and the systemic-sustainable model of organized charity generated various

⁷⁷ Louis Brusatti, C.M., and James Swift, C.M., "The Icon of Saint Vincent," *Vincentian Heritage* 18:1 (1997), at: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol18/iss1/4> (accessed 28 June 2014).

⁷⁸ Genesis 18:1-15.

⁷⁹ Susan E. Dinan, *Women and Poor Relief in Seventeenth-Century France: The Early History of the Daughters of Charity* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006).



Detail of "The beggar-Christ and Vincent de Paul." Icon by Meltem Aktas.

Courtesy of the Vincentian Community, Rosati House, DePaul University, Chicago, IL



experiences of service. Charity is in itself an extension of justice. Charity (as *caritas*) is about the recognition, respect, and promotion of human dignity with justice. We cannot give for charity what is due to the other for justice. In other words, charity is not a substitution for justice but an enhancement of it. In a similar way, transformational leadership as a type of values-centered practice cannot exist without a solid foundation of justice as in transactional (contractual) leadership practices. The Church's CST has always upheld the fundamental connection between charity and justice in the promotion of human dignity and intrinsic worth of persons as created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*).

In the Vincentian tradition, *caritas* is an expression of leadership that collaborates and connects people while focusing on the well-being of those being served, especially the poor.⁸⁰ Hence, true practices of *caritas* synthesize the social justice and human dignity aspects of hospitality. From a Vincentian perspective, it does not matter if the other person is a king or a beggar as they are all children of God.⁸¹ Eventually, though, special attention and superior quality of service should be reserved for poor persons (the widow, the orphan, the stranger) who are in need and require extra care to restore justice.⁸²

The practice of hospitality for human dignity would need to be based on justice and oriented toward fixing the dichotomy between the haves and the have-nots. Hence, hospitality should entail both parties benefiting reciprocally.⁸³ Reciprocity involves a mutuality and humility in the host and guest so that it is a horizontal relationship without social distance.⁸⁴ Reciprocity does not entail expecting thanks for an act of charity, because this is not an act of simple generosity but an act of justice—a service that is due for justice.

⁸⁰ Louise Sullivan, D.C., "'God Wants First The Heart And Then The Work': Louise de Marillac And Leadership In The Vincentian Tradition," *Vincentian Heritage* 19:1 (1998): 161-176. See: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol19/iss1/11/>

⁸¹ Robert P. Maloney, C.M., *The Way of Vincent de Paul: A Contemporary Spirituality in the Service of the Poor* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New City Press, 1992).

⁸² Ruth Ann Strickland, *Restorative Justice* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004).

⁸³ Carter I. Heyward, *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation* (New York: University Press of America, 1982).

⁸⁴ Maurice Hamington, "Toward a Theory of Feminist Hospitality," *Feminist Formations* 22:1 (2010): 21-38.



Portrait of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853).

Principal Co-Founder of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Published in Léonce Curnier, *La jeunesse de Frédéric Ozanam* (1888).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Love is intrinsically connected to justice and both are central to Catholic teaching and the Vincentian tradition. Pope Benedict XVI, in the 2012 *Message for World Day of Peace*, reiterated and explained these connections. He said: “Justice, indeed, is not simply a human convention, since what is just is ultimately determined not by positive law, but by the profound identity of the human being. It is the integral vision of man that saves us from falling into a contractual conception of justice and enables us to locate justice within the horizon of solidarity and love.”⁸⁵ Frédéric Ozanam, principal co-founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, insisted on the importance of combining direct quality service to the poor with seeking systemic solutions to prevent those conditions. He said: “The poor person is a unique person of God’s fashioning with an inalienable right to respect. You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis; you must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty with the aim of a long term improvement.”⁸⁶

Ozanam was critical of philanthropic gestures often performed as a means of personal recognition, which he considered undignified and lacking compassion. He distinguished philanthropy from charity, which should emanate from authentic human relationships. Charity is about solidarity within a community and it should aim to rehabilitate society by providing opportunities for those most ignored, reengaging their voices in a more inclusive community. Therefore, in order for charity to be a means of poverty reduction, a substantial overhaul of relationships must take place with a goal of trust and tolerance.⁸⁷

Frédéric took an inductive approach to charity, setting a faith-based benchmark based on relational poverty reduction (human dignity) and the comprehension of the root causes

⁸⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, “2012 Message for the World Day of Peace,” available at: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20111208_xlv-world-day-peace_en.html

⁸⁶ Louis Pierre Baunard, *Ozanam in his Correspondence* (Sydney: National Council, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, 1974).

⁸⁷ Raymond L. Sickinger, Ph.D., “Faith, Charity, Justice, and Civic Learning: The Lessons and Legacy of Frédéric Ozanam,” *Vincentian Heritage* 30:1 (2010), at: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol30/iss1/5>

of poverty (social justice). This dual approach to charity would need to be integrated by organized charities to avoid dehumanization and bureaucratization.⁸⁸

The societal distance that is created via economic, social, and citizenship inequalities⁸⁹ requires both social justice to recognize the *human rights* foundation of the disequilibrium, and charity to reinstate human dignity in the relation. A Vincentian approach is helpful in recognizing the poor (orphan-widow-stranger) with God's view of dignity beyond an us-and-them-mentality. Charity without dignity creates a transaction in which the recipient is left passive and dependent, instead of a connection between two equitable citizens.^{90 91} True charity (*caritas*) necessarily includes a personal act of dignity recognition, reestablishing the social disequilibrium created by the depersonalization and dehumanization of the marginalized and excluded. True charity also teaches society to recognize its social responsibility for the common good, to see beyond accusations of freeloading and an unequal expectation of repayment when something is given.

Implications for Hospitality Ethos

Hospitality ethos for migration does not mean supporting unregulated migration and unconditional hospitality.⁹² Policies for irregular (undocumented) migration need to be addressed systemically by stopping those who organize smuggling and trafficking, by sanctioning those who hire and exploit irregular migration forces, by improving external border control, and by providing humane return and readmission policies. As migration is a growing phenomenon of globalization, institutional responsibilities are indeed very important. Public, private, and civil institutions cannot lose the perspective necessary to see the importance of building a cohesive societal interaction and translational fair migration policy agenda. It is our collective and institutional responsibility to reassess the systemic causes of migration that lead countries to either welcome new arrivals as guests, or disapprove of them as aliens.⁹³

Nevertheless, both migration policies and hospitality practices need to recognize the ethic that no human being should be labeled 'illegal.'⁹⁴ Algerian born French philosopher Jacques Derrida, in his deconstruction of hospitality attitudes and policies, asserts the ethical dimensions of migration.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ Janet Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 1998).

⁸⁹ Zilbershats, *The Human Right to Citizenship*.

⁹⁰ Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity?*

⁹¹ Sickinger, "Faith, Charity, Justice, and Civic Learning."

⁹² Ilsup Ahn, "Economy of Invisible Debt and Ethics of Radical Hospitality," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38 (2010): 243-267. See also Wes Grandberg-Michaelson, "Radical Welcome," *Sojourners* (August 2013), <http://sojo.net/magazine/2013/08/radical-welcome> (accessed 30 April 2014).

⁹³ Saskia Sassen, *Guests and Aliens* (New York: New Press, 1999).

⁹⁴ Donald Kerwin, "No Person is Illegal," *Woodstock Report* (Washington, D.C., 2010).

⁹⁵ Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), at: <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10442260>

Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others. In so far as it has to do with the ethos, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, ethics is hospitality; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality.⁹⁶

Based on the principles of social justice, human rights, human dignity and xenophilia, better migration policies need to be designed and implemented. Aware of the crucial role that migration has in the global economy, and upon human relations within our globalized societies, the United Nations convened a *Dialogue on International Migration and Development* in October of 2013. They produced an "Eight-point Agenda for Action" on how best to make migration work. The points represent a template for national and international policy formulation, promoting the mutually beneficial effects of migration while preventing abuses and negative phenomena.

1. Protect the human rights of all migrants (this should include ratifying and implementing all relevant international instruments related to international migration, including the core international human rights instruments, relevant ILO conventions, the protocols against human trafficking and migrant smuggling and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees);
2. Reduce the costs of labor migration;
3. Eliminate migrant exploitation, including human trafficking;
4. Address the plight of stranded migrants (those people unable to return to their country of origin as a result of humanitarian crises in their country of destination or transit has often been overlooked);
5. Improve public perceptions of migrants (by combatting discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance against migrants and their families);
6. Integrate migration into the development agenda (especially as a cross-cutting theme in the Post 2015 agenda);
7. Strengthen the migration evidence base (especially with dedicated surveys for assessing the impacts of migration on social and economic development); and
8. Enhance migration partnerships and cooperation (as no country can manage migration alone).⁹⁷

The Catholic Church, grounded in biblical and CST traditions regarding social justice and human dignity, has been defending the right to migrate. Catholic teaching also

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

⁹⁷ "Making Migration Work: An Eight-Point Agenda for Action," paper presented by the Global Migration Group for the Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/190); U.N. High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, New York, 3-4 October 2013, at: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/migration/> (accessed 28 June 2014).

emphasizes our global social responsibility to address the root causes of forced migration, problems such as poverty, injustice, religious intolerance, and armed conflicts. Shared responsibility addresses these social issues through the promotion of socio-economic development, justice, tolerance, and peace so that migrants might remain in their homeland and support their families. In “Strangers No Longer,” a pastoral letter concerning migration, the U.S. and Mexican Episcopal Conferences jointly echo the rich social justice and human dignity tradition of the Church’s teachings with regard to migration; it includes these five key principles:⁹⁸

- I. *Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland:* All persons have the right to find in their own countries the economic, political, and social opportunities to live in dignity and achieve a full life through the use of their God-given gifts. In this context, work that provides a just, living wage is a basic human need.
- II. *Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families:* The Church recognizes that all the goods of the earth belong to all people. When persons cannot find employment in their country of origin to support themselves and their families, they have a right to find work elsewhere in order to survive. Sovereign nations should provide ways to accommodate this right.
- III. *Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders:* The Church recognizes the right of sovereign nations to control their territories but rejects such control when it is exerted merely for the purpose of acquiring additional wealth. More powerful economic nations, which have the ability to protect and feed their residents, have a stronger obligation to accommodate migration flows.
- IV. *Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection:* Those who escape wars and persecution should be protected by the global community. This requires, at a minimum, that migrants have a right to claim refugee status without incarceration and to have their claims fully considered by a competent authority.
- V. *The human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected:* Regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected. Often they are subject to punitive laws and harsh treatment from enforcement officers from both receiving and transit countries. Government policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented are necessary.

These principles and recommendations on affording migrants respect, protection, support, and dignity represent practical policy frameworks in line with the hospitality ethos discussed in this paper. This is part of a necessary process to best recognize and

⁹⁸ *Strangers no longer: Together on the journey of hope: A pastoral letter concerning migration* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003), at: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/strangers-no-longer-together-on-the-journey-of-hope.cfm> (accessed 28 June 2014).

channel the forces of migration into opportunities for a better future for all. Such a future should be reflective of the values of human dignity, social justice, tolerance, equality, and respect.

There is still much to do in order to create relations and migration policies in line with the values and responsibility of hospitality ethos. The Church's rich biblical message and social teaching provides a solid foundation on centering our actions and decision-making processes in the human-divine dignity of every individual—no matter their origin, race, class, gender, or other condition. Vincentian and Jesuit religious traditions regarding social justice and human dignity add a very important voice to the migration debate and hospitality challenges. The hospitality ethos requires a commitment to recognize, develop, and translate values into actions. We can do this, first, in our willingness to understand others, a principal form of hospitality. Second, we need to develop a set of ethical practices emerging from the sound theology of a migrant church.⁹⁹ Third, and finally, we need to translate the theological and ethical normative for migration and diversity integration into adequate migration policies in line with social justice and human dignity principles.

Conclusion

We have considered how migration in the context of globalization brings opportunities and challenges. It is first and foremost a human rights issue with deep ethical implications for states, organizations, and individuals to provide a welcoming environment and a regulated agenda for migration in host, guest, and transient countries. There is mounting evidence that migration, when accompanied by the right policies, can significantly contribute to the betterment of origin and destination countries through remittances, creation of enterprises, and transfer of technology, skills, and knowledge. This is why there is a global and systemic responsibility to create policies that will move hostility stances into hospitality ethos.

On the 100th World Day for Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis, shared an insightful message summarizing some of the global, human, and Christian ethical responsibilities for migration hospitality:

While it is true that migrations often reveal failures and shortcomings on the part of States and the international community, they also point to the aspiration of humanity to enjoy a unity marked by respect for differences, by attitudes of acceptance and hospitality which enable an equitable sharing of the world's goods, and by the protection and the advancement of the dignity and centrality of each human being. From the Christian standpoint, the reality of migration, like other human realities, points to the tension between the beauty of creation, marked by Grace and the Redemption, and the mystery of sin. Solidarity, acceptance, and signs of fraternity and understanding exist side by side with

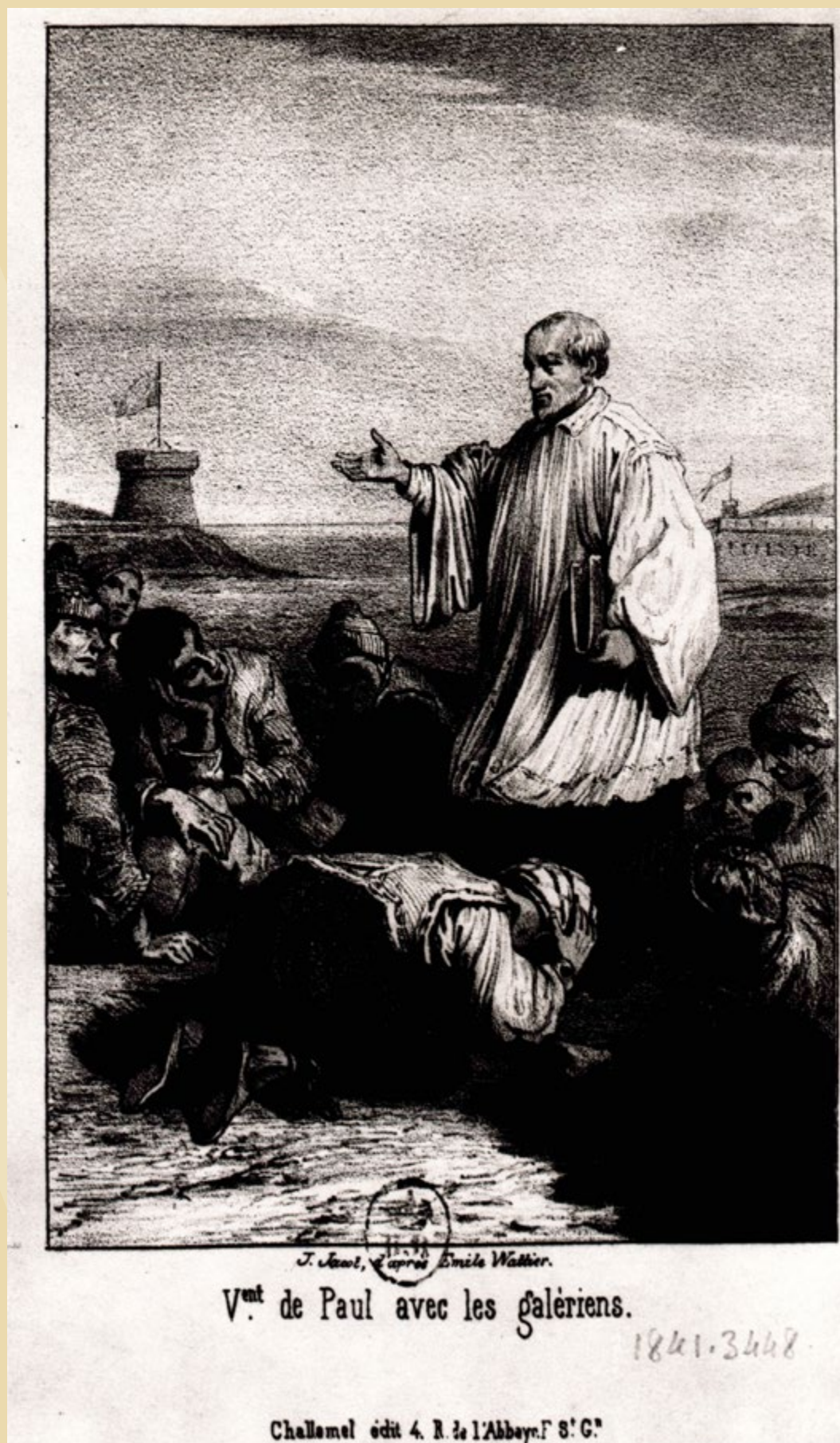
⁹⁹ Gemma Tulud Cruz, *Toward a Theology of Migration: Social Justice and Religious Experience* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

rejection, discrimination, trafficking and exploitation, suffering and death.... Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who leave or who are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more.¹⁰⁰

There are many religious-ethical implications on hospitality for migrants. Future research in hospitality ethos should dig deeper into the relational, programmatic, and policy implications of the social justice and human dignity paradigms. Other viewpoints, such as a feminine perspective on hospitality, would provide further insight. The combination of masculine and feminine perspectives¹⁰¹ on hospitality can strengthen the values and positive dimensions of social justice and human dignity. Nonetheless any comprehensive migration policies need to start with human rights and a global responsibility (ethics) cognizant of our past, present, and future communities. This re-centering of values expressed within a social justice and human dignity paradigm needs to be central to any regulatory migration policies; and they are values that will continue to be relevant to the best practices of the many Catholic, Vincentian, and Jesuit social services reaching out to migrants and refugees.

¹⁰⁰ "Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014)," at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_world-migrants-day.html (accessed 15 August 2014).

¹⁰¹ Hamington, "Toward a Theory," 21-38; See also, Sean Michael Barnette, "Houses of Hospitality the Material Rhetoric of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker" (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2011), at: http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/1156/



Vincent de Paul and the galley prisoners.

From a series of engravings in Augustin Challamel, *Saint-Vincent de Paul* (1841).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Welcome to the land of freedom.

Immigrants on the steerage deck of an ocean steamer pass the Statue of Liberty.

Published in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 2 July 1887.

Public Domain





"Hospitality." Icon by Andrei Rublev, circa 1425.

The icon depicts the three nameless visitors who were provided with food and drink by Abraham.

Public Domain





Portrait of Ignacio of Loyola (1491-1556).

Founder and first superior general of the Jesuits; the Company Seal of the Jesuits.

Public Domain





Detail of "The beggar-Christ and Vincent de Paul." Icon by Meltem Aktas.

Courtesy of the Vincentian Community, Rosati House, DePaul University, Chicago, IL





Portrait of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853).

Principal Co-Founder of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Published in Léonce Curnier, *La jeunesse de Frédéric Ozanam* (1888).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Brothers of Charity: Hospitality as a Community of Brothers

BRO. DR. RENÉ STOCKMAN
SUPERIOR GENERAL, CONGREGATION OF THE BROTHERS OF CHARITY

[previous
article](#)

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[next
article](#)

Introduction

Hospitality is a key foundational value from which we derive part of our name, 'Hospital Brothers of Saint Vincent.' Living hospitality in the spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul was laid down as one of the key pillars of our charism. Later, when by name we officially adopted 'Brothers of Charity,' this phrase became a meaningful addition to both our name and charism: we would be practicing hospitality in a loving way in the spirit of Saint Vincent.

What is hospitality?

In ancient civilizations, practicing hospitality was already considered to be one of the cornerstones of humanization and morality. We know the Greek word *xenos*, meaning 'stranger' but also 'guest.' The stem is found in the words *xenophobia*, which indicates a negative attitude towards the stranger, and *philoxenia*, which means love and hospitality for the stranger. Another Greek word is *oikos*, which means 'house,' the place where I belong, where I have rights and obligations. In Latin, we have the word *hospes*, meaning 'guest.' This word is cognate with *hostis*, which means 'enemy'; the word 'hostile' is derived from it. So, the word 'hospitality' is derived from the Latin *hospes*.

When we reflect on offering hospitality to others we always have to start from the notion of privacy, which everyone searches for in their very own way and claims for themselves. Having a space where you can be yourself is an important aspect of life. Hospitality exactly expresses the will to share this privacy with the other in a very personal way. We break down the walls that we have built around our privacy and we allow the other to enter the safe enclosure. Hospitality signifies welcoming the stranger; the stranger becomes a guest and receives the liberty to be himself and to express himself. Henri Nouwen says it very aptly: "The paradox of hospitality is that it creates an emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own song, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations."¹

The image of the friendly space is very typical of hospitality; in this space, the stranger becomes a guest, where he is accepted as the other without having to adjust. The fact that he is a stranger is respected and even appreciated; he can speak his own language, sing his own song, and dance his own dance. A space is created where he can feel at home; a subculture is created where he can cultivate his own culture. This means that practicing hospitality is not an easy matter because we allow another person in the space which, initially, was meant for us and which we naturally want to protect. The closed space is opened, with the risk of being misused by the other, the stranger, inappropriately occupied to such an extent that, ultimately, I do not feel at home there anymore. The entire problem

¹ Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York, N.Y.: Image Book, 1966), 71-72.



Vincent de Paul helps a sick man to his carriage.

Oil on canvas by Pierre-Nicolas Brisset, 1858.

Original in St. Nicolas-des-Champs, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



with strangers or foreigners, xenophobia, and the fact of whether or not they are accepted in another country rests on this experience.

A brief philosophical reflection

When he discusses hospitality, philosopher and theologian Karl Barth defines a theory of circles within which he describes the relationships between people of the same family, the same neighborhood, the same town or city, and even of the same nation.² We can all draw circles in which we will place our neighbors closer or further away from us. It is a well-known exercise in psychology and group dynamics. Every circle that we draw around ourselves includes and excludes at the same time. People are accepted into the circle while others are excluded from it based on family ties, race, skin color, ethnic background, language or religion, all grounds for a discriminating attitude. Sometimes, the circle becomes a border, a wall, a curtain. We all know the Berlin Wall, the Israeli West Bank barrier, the Korean wall, the Iron Curtain. They were all put up out of fear, allegedly to protect people against the strangers on the other side. Hospitality commences when we take down these walls, including the walls that we put up, when we allow more people into the inner circle and make it bigger.

Only once these walls are down can freedom commence and can we add quality to our hospitality, as Barth calls it. To do so, he recommends a four-step method. First of all, we must look the one we meet in the eye. This seems quite logical, yet it is not. We often tend to look the other way, we avert our eyes and refuse to see the other. It does happen that sometimes the person to whom we are talking suddenly finds someone else more important and looks away. When that happens, we may feel we no longer exist to that person.

² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936).

Secondly, we must give the other a hearing; listen to him. There are people who can only listen to themselves and turn a deaf ear to the stories of others. In his pedagogy, the psychologist Thomas Gordon teaches us the importance of listening actively, which is so much more important than talking.

The third step is the willingness to help. After having looked the other in the eye and having listened to him or her, one will reveal a willingness to help. This is where humanity remembers that, first and foremost, we are fellows, our brother's keeper, accountable and jointly responsible for our neighbor's well-being, for the respect and possible restoration of human dignity.

Finally, we must do all of this with joy. The joy that radiates in our relationship with the other will determine the quality of the hospitality that we wish to display. The joy with which we approach the other should ease or relieve tensions, which the other can experience when entering unknown territory. It is a reflection on how we should take these points into account in our encounters with others; how do we look at the other, how do we listen, how do we show that we want to help, and that we will do so with joy and gladness.

Obstacles for hospitality

The great migration wave near the end of the previous century resulted in the fact that hospitality became a very important topic, even on a social level. At the same time, we see that there are many obstacles on the road that make practicing hospitality rather problematic. The biggest obstacle for hospitality is probably individualism, which has thoroughly permeated our modern-day culture. In individualism, a person fully turns to himself and every bit of energy goes into self-realization, as it is called, while everything that blocks this is painstakingly avoided. Modern-day society thrives on an ethic of absolute self-realization, in which everything is focused on the well-being of the individual as the highest good. This individualism contrasts sharply with personalism, in which men and women are considered our neighbor, and through which our development, including our self-realization, is linked to and even made subordinate to our neighbor's development and care. In a personalistic morality, the presence of the neighbor—and the guest—is considered a wealth and an invitation; in an individualistic morality, the neighbor—and the guest—is rather a threat.

In a narcissistic society, which we can label our modern-day society, there is only room for the individual. We are what we own, consuming only reinforces our individualism. When we find ourselves in an environment with limitations, restraints with regard to space and consumer goods, every increase in the number of other individuals is a threat to our own individualism. Every other becomes a competitor in our pursuit for possession and consumption. The entire Christian message offers a strong counterbalance to this mentality of 'every man for himself.' The Gospel urges us to consider our 'being a man' as 'being a



Vincent de Paul and the poor. Giving alms to a kneeling man.

Original in Vincentian house, Udine, Italy.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



fellow man,' and to give shape to the love of neighbor in our readiness to share with each other, be hospitable to one another, help those who are in need, literally making ourselves subordinate to the well-being of the other. This Christian message and praxis can cause a certain counterculture, a realization of the commandment of love for the neighbor, for the guest, for the stranger, for the enemy. It is a commandment to see God in the neighbor, not just as a possibility but as a reality, and even to see the stranger as our neighbor. Therefore, every time we turn down a stranger, refuse hospitality, we turn down God; we refuse to offer hospitality to God Himself.

Hospitality as a community of brothers with a Vincentian mentality

The basic attitude that is fundamentally important when practicing hospitality is that of the encounter with Jesus, the actualization of the commandment to see God Himself in every neighbor. We all know that this is not easy, for Jesus sometimes succeeds in disguising himself rather well. Sometimes it is hard to descry his likeness in that concrete neighbor and we feel greatly challenged to see, meet, and love Jesus in this person. However, in these difficult situations the commandment of love truly becomes a commandment, and hospitality becomes a task. Receiving friends and making time for them does not require much of an effort; for people who we do not get along with, or who bear some sort of threat, the duty is quite a bit harder. In those moments we must be very heedful of the words of Jesus: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine (for this difficult neighbor, for this stranger who repels me...), you did for me."³ To Saint Vincent, it was seeing the icon of Christ in the face of the poor.

As a young student, when I took part in a summer camp with severely mentally challenged children, a brother teacher asked me to see Jesus in these children. When the

³ Matthew 25:40.

first camping session was over, I had not succeeded in realizing his request. It required more time and effort, and probably the work of God's mercy, to open my eyes and see Jesus himself in these children. The miracle happened when I was washing these children's feet. Jesus had done so as well.

A Brother of Charity's hospitality will particularly take shape in care for the poor, the sick, persons with disabilities. We are to provide a real home for them. Many of them cannot find a place in society, sometimes they literally have not got a roof over their heads, or they are cast aside by their families. By our actions, they should experience that we love them, that, in them, we discern the face of Jesus, that we accept and appreciate them, and that we want to move forward with them as their brother. The value of our name is done full justice here: brother, becoming and being a brother to those who no longer have a brother, or who had no one who considered them a brother.

A Cambodian psychiatrist's question has left a lasting impression on me: "May I call you brother?" He had lost his brothers during Pol Pot's regime. It was so important for him to see me as his brother. For just one moment, I could be this man's brother. When we are a brother to another person, it means that we want to create a home, like brothers feeling at home in a family. It is therefore our task to make sure that our homes and institutes where people reside or stay temporarily become and are places where people can feel at home, where they can feel safe and secure. We know that for many it is only a temporary home, but that is not a reason it should be less of a home.

I especially felt this hospitality when I was a pupil at a school of the Brothers of Charity. The brothers, and the brother headmaster most of all, understood the art of carrying out their role as brother through their capacity as teachers. The school had its very own atmosphere; it was a nice place to be. They addressed the pupils by their first name, they knew the parents, they empathized with the ups and downs of their pupils. And it was definitely not a small school. The moment when, after a few days, the brother headmaster addressed me by my first name on the playground, and asked me how I was doing, that sense of feeling unfamiliar, like an outsider or a stranger, completely disappeared. Indeed, I felt a bit lost in that big school with no fewer than 80 students the first year of grammar school. The head master expressed his concern for my minor distress and found time to talk to me about it, as a brother, as a concerned father or mother.

When I became the director of a large psychiatric hospital one of the patients addressed me. He said, "Brother, you are always here and you sleep under the same roof." Indeed, our quarters were on the same floor as the dormitory where this patient was accommodated. It gave him a feeling of safety, of security, possibly. Unknowingly, we made sure that this patient felt at home in our institute. It was during a time when many chronic patients were still staying in our hospital, and several of them had small tasks to do. Some cleaned the refectory of the brothers, and did so proudly. Others performed the shopping, and one patient faithfully brought me my mail every day. When he was asked what his job was, he

proudly replied that he was my secretary. We were one big family, even though there was a great distance between our way of life and theirs. Such things are somewhat lost in our modern-day, over-structured institutes. Still, it pleases me when I see that during a visit to an institution the director who accompanies me knows the names of the chronic patients, and to witness the fact that they are glad to talk to him. These are small signs that say a great deal about the hospitality experienced in the institute.

As a community, we find that discrimination is still ubiquitous. Psychiatric patients are still excluded from society, drug-dependent persons are still looked at askance, and persons with disabilities are still considered inferior. Making a stand against discrimination can best be achieved through offering very specific examples of hospitality toward these oppressed groups. It is ever so painful to find that we are sometimes driven away in certain countries when we wish to develop a home for chronic psychiatric patients in a certain neighborhood, or a therapeutic community for drug-dependent persons. “No addicts, psychiatric patients, or disabled people in my backyard,” remains a harsh declaration. However, today, we are happy to say that a gradual change of mentality is occurring. The words spoken in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast, by the bishop and minister at the inauguration of our new psychiatric nursing home still echo in my mind: “Brothers, thank you for cleaning up our city.” And, indeed, a number of psychiatric patients who were once wandering the city streets, completely neglected, are now rehabilitated and functioning relatively normally in the city once again.

Today, we must also take heed of the strangers and refugees around us. This is an acute problem in some countries where brothers are in close contact. After the genocide in Rwanda several brothers devoted themselves to be near to the refugees; they even shared a part of their life in the camps. It was a very powerful experience; a new form of apostolate even grew from it. The care afforded to education in the camps, especially in Tanzania, was a new and fresh interpretation of our apostolate in education, and involved nothing but hospitality. Our community life was thoroughly changed by it. In other places, brothers are living in open communities with guests, strangers, and persons with disabilities. Sometimes, new reception centers for specific groups come into being—for instance, for the Romani in Belgium. There are brothers who dedicate themselves to refugees and help them find a way to integrate into their new environment. Some provide additional support in teaching children who come from abroad. There are also communities that offer temporary accommodation to strangers until a more permanent solution is found. These are specific, contemporary interpretations of our mission of hospitality as ‘Hospital Brothers.’

In our Rule of Life, we read that the visitor to the community should be welcome. He should feel that he is accepted with consideration and attention. Are our communities truly capable of creating this open space where our guest can be himself, where he can have a breather? Are we offering him or her that security and, at the same time, that freedom to be themselves? The fact of whether or not one feels at home in an unfamiliar community will

depend on little details: the care that went into readying the guestroom, a clear schedule for the day that clarifies when one is expected in chapel or at the table, bottled water, some fruit, etc. These are all expressions of a mentality of hospitality.

Let us recall Karl Barth's scheme: do we see, listen, and help the other with joy? Is our first reaction in an encounter a reaction of joy, of spontaneous welcome? Does our time also belong to others, and do we enjoy sacrificing it to welcome, to guide our neighbor, and to listen to his or her story? When we are able to answer affirmatively to these questions, as is our hope to do so, then we will live and experience the virtues found in our original name 'Hospital Brothers of Saint Vincent,' not simply as history or heritage but as a permanent task, a mission constantly in process.





Vincent de Paul helps a sick man to his carriage.

Oil on canvas by Pierre-Nicolas Brisset, 1858.

Original in St. Nicolas-des-Champs, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Vincent de Paul and the poor. Giving alms to a kneeling man.

Original in Vincentian house, Udine, Italy.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



You Were Told to Love the Immigrant, But What if the Story Never Happened? Hospitality and United States Immigration Law

REV. CRAIG B. MOUSIN

[previous
article](#)

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[next
article](#)

The stories we tell ourselves define our lives.¹ We read and speak God's Word: "Love the immigrant, for you too were slaves in Egypt."² That command to love arises out of the biblical narrative of exile, return, and response to immigrants residing amidst a community that lived its history through stories of how its mothers and fathers in faith survived and coalesced from a wandering people into a nation. That biblical narrative constitutes both individual stories about persons and nations as well as an overarching story that provides a record of God's relationship and covenant with many generations of people. And, this narrative was especially important to Saint Vincent de Paul as he articulated the mission to serve the poor.

To examine how the Vincentian tradition would address immigration law, this article first explores the biblical stories and narratives that were crucial to the formation of religious and national communities. Part I explores the importance of the narratives both to our nation and the community of faith, particularly with specific reference to those gathered within and around the Congregation of the Mission founded by Vincent de Paul. It focuses on how the narrative impacts responses to immigration, and, specifically Vincentian hospitality to the immigrant. Part II focuses on how that biblical narrative and immigration law intersect. Immigration law defends a nation and protects its sovereignty. Citizens expect the law to regulate admission and determine the types of individuals a nation wants to welcome to further its growth while maintaining its security. To test the efficacy of those goals, Part II conducts a thought experiment by asking what would happen to the biblical narrative if its heroes and heroines had to face the strictures of immigration law during their wanderings. I argue that American immigration law as it is currently legislated and implemented would have scuttled the biblical narrative, leaving a story to neither tell nor guide for a contemporary moral framework. Given the draconian consequences many face under the rule of law, I posit that the law currently deprives the nation of the gifts of the sojourner to its detriment. Part III contemplates the critical significance of the biblical narrative on Vincentian hospitality to immigrants, and addresses two current issues for the more than eleven million unauthorized persons residing within the United States as well as the recent surge of unaccompanied minors at the nation's borders.³ Part IV contends that Vincentian hospitality to immigrants would advocate fixing broken immigration law by expediting lawful residence for the undocumented and encouraging a humanitarian response to the

¹ Parts of this article were initially presented at talks at Dominican University in 2011, and at the Parish of the Epiphany in Winchester, Massachusetts, in 2014. I am grateful for the invitation to present as well as for the questions and discussion that provided new perspectives on these issues. I give thanks to Maribeth Conley, Randy Rapp, and Susan Schreiber for their valuable comments and critiques. I also thank my research assistant Christine Chen for her assistance.

² Lev. 19:33-34. I dedicate this article to Ms. Elizabeth Metzger, who taught Sunday school at the Westtown, New York, Presbyterian Church. Her faith and witness taught us the power and beauty of the biblical story.

³ The specific number of unauthorized persons residing in the United States has "fluctuated" in recent years from a high of twelve million to approximately eleven million. Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Karen A. Pren, "Border Enforcement and Return Migration by Documented and Undocumented Mexicans," 41 *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2015), 1016-17.

current crisis of women and children and unaccompanied minors fleeing their homelands. The biblical narrative, however, whether a source of faith to believers or a source of law and inspiration to a democratic society where all are held up to be equal, remains a substantial resource for addressing solutions to this nation's broken immigration regime.

I. The Biblical Narrative

Secular and religious narratives shape the meaning of individuals and communities. Phyllis Tribble writes, "Stories are the style and substance of life. They fashion and fill existence."⁴ The Tanakh,⁵ the Christian Scriptures, and the Quran⁶ have served as authoritative sources for understanding God and human responses for centuries. Martin Buber describes how the Jewish Bible has confronted each generation with the encounter between God and a people, forcing even those who do not believe to respond to its narrative.⁷ For James Gustafson, "The Bible is the principle source of the Church's language. The identity of the Church is maintained by its use of the words and significant concepts of the Bible."⁸ As Stanley Hauerwas summarizes, "The nature of Christian ethics is determined by the fact that Christian convictions take the form of a story, or perhaps better, a set of stories that constitutes a tradition, which in turn creates and forms a community."⁹

Whether it serves as history, theology, identity, culture or as a source of legal theory regarding freedom and sovereignty, the narrative has served a predominant role in religion, history, and culture. The Reformers declared, "the Bible is to be understood 'as Scripture' in the community that gathers in response to the claim that here God is decisively disclosed."¹⁰ For many, the Bible remains a historical source of the Divine communication with the human. G. Ernest Wright underscored the importance of "Israel's preoccupation with history" as how "God made God known to the sojourners who fled Egypt."¹¹ Wright

⁴ Phyllis Tribble, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: 1984), 1. Jack Balkin provides a similar conclusion in how we tell our national story: "We understand ourselves in terms of stories about who we are and how we came to be. These stories help us understand the situation we are currently facing and the ways we should respond to it." Jack Balkin, *Constitutional Redemption: Political Faith in an Unjust World* (Cambridge, 2011), 26.

⁵ Moses L. Pava, "Loving the Stranger and the Moral Myopia at Agriprocessors" in *Religious and Ethical Perspectives on Global Migration*, Elizabeth W. Collier and Charles R. Strain, eds. (Lanham, Md.: 2014), 131.

⁶ Azam Nizamuddin, "Islam and Immigration," *Ibid.*, 165, 170-71. The scope of this article is restricted primarily to the Vincentian response to immigration law, but its lessons will be applicable to any tradition, including secular society, that relies upon the biblical narrative for its moral and legal foundation.

⁷ Martin Buber, *On the Bible: Eighteen Studies*, Nahum N. Glatzer, ed. (N.Y.: 1968), 1-2.

⁸ James M. Gustafson, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels: The Church as a Human Community* (Chicago: 1961), 46.

⁹ Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame: 1983), 24. Indeed, story critically influences the formation of new communities. The writers of the New Testament Gospels culled many stories from the Hebrew Scriptures to give greater credibility to their Gospel stories. André LaCocque, *Jesus, The Central Jew: His Times and His People* (Atlanta: 2015), 273.

¹⁰ Walter Bruggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: 1997), 3; See also, John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Henry Beveridge, trans. (London: 1957), 64.

¹¹ G. Ernest Wright, *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital* (London: 1954), 43.



Vincent de Paul in full surplice, hand upon a book.

Oil painting in the Vincentian provincial office, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



stresses the magnitude of how that history defined a people who were wandering in the wilderness only to be protected and saved by their God.¹² For Saint Vincent de Paul, the history of the persons within the Scripture became models of Vincentian mission and hospitality.

More than history, however, the Bible encourages the interpretation for the faithful to participate in the ongoing story. Gerhard von Rad argued that "Israel's faith is a narrative faith" which requires constant retelling.¹³ Part of its prodigious influence stems from its diverse roles, particularly as narrative-as-theology. According to André LaCocque, Genesis reveals that there is "no better vehicle for 'theology' than narrative."¹⁴ Johann Baptist Metz writes that the Scriptures demonstrate that, "...reasoning is not the original form of theological expression, which is above all that of narrative."¹⁵ The combination of theology and story has influenced generations to "shape and sustain the ethos of the community,"¹⁶ and provide a "crucial conceptual category for...displaying the content of Christian convictions."¹⁷ Jean Luis Segundo, S.J., summarizes this critical interplay

¹² *Ibid.*, 44, 50.

¹³ Bruggemann, *Theology*, 33.

¹⁴ André LaCocque and Paul Ricoeur, *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*, David Pellauer, trans. (Chicago: 1998), 8.

¹⁵ Johann Baptist Metz, "A Short Apology of Narrative," in Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones, *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: 1989), 252.

¹⁶ James Gustafson, "Varieties of Moral Discourse: Prophetic, Narrative, Ethical, and Policy," *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5. See also, H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Story of Our Life," *Ibid.*, 23: "tell[s] the story of the Christian community's life"; Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: 1979), 671: "the authoritative witness to God's purpose in Jesus Christ for the church and the world."; Donald Senior, C.P., *Jesus: A Gospel Portrait* (New York: 1992): "...the gospels....are the privileged source for the life of Jesus. Anything the Church or the individual Christian asserts about Jesus must be authenticated in the light of the gospels."; James Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: 1975), 31: "The Bible is the witness to God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ. Thus the black experience requires that Scripture be a source of Black Theology."

between history and theology: “Christianity is a *biblical* religion. It is the religion of a *book*. Theology....must keep going back to its book.”¹⁸ It must keep going back because the story needs to be told in new settings that invoke new issues. While acknowledging the power of this narrative as a “life-sustaining source of commitment of God’s reign,” Mary Boys argues for redeeming the sacred story to “transform troubled tellings.”¹⁹

Although many exegetes today find less certainty in the Bible as a historical document, the narrative still asserts power within our national understanding of morality; even those who critique how the interpretation has failed, or who seek to find additional sources of authority, must address this narrative. It may be true as some argue that this grand metanarrative has been lost.²⁰ Nonetheless, while process philosopher Lewis Ford argues modernity eviscerates the Bible’s “...all-embracing horizon for our understanding of God, which must now be correlated with a greatly expanded world history, a scientific understanding of nature and man and a drastically altered social and ethical situation,” he nonetheless acknowledges the new hermeneutical task requires “justice to its historical concerns.”²¹

Historically, although the Republic and its constitutional protections necessitated that religion does not establish laws in our country, the narrative significantly influenced how the people governed themselves. The Puritans’ conceptions of colonial governance arose out of “biblical constitutionalism.”²² The first European migrants to North America instituted new governance in their colonies, in part, to reform the corruption of the English church and nation. The colonists relied upon the same foundation of the biblical narrative that Vincent followed. John Winthrop erected a new “city on a hill” in 1630 based on his response to the biblical narrative.²³ Core elements were added to Winthrop’s vision as the national story soon included belief that all humans were created equal—a vision the nation still struggles to achieve, while building upon this foundation. Those goals of justice,

¹⁸ Juan Luis Segundo, S.J., *The Liberation of Theology* (Maryknoll: 1976), 7.

¹⁹ Mary C. Boys, *Redeeming Our Sacred Story: The Death of Jesus and Relations Between Jews and Christians* (N.Y.: 2013), 25.

²⁰ See, e.g., Frederick Mark Gedicks, “Spirituality, Fundamentalism, Liberty: Religion at the End of Modernity,” 54 *DePaul Law Review* (2005), 1197: “We no longer possess an understanding of the place and purpose of humanity that would infuse every life with the same ultimate meaning.”

²¹ Lewis S. Ford, *The Lure of God: A Biblical Background for Process Theism* (Philadelphia: 1978), 16.

²² H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (Middletown, Ct.: 1988), 62. See also: John Witte Jr., *God’s Joust: God’s Justice Law and Religion in the Western Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Mi.: 2006), 8: “The precise shape and balance of the Western legal tradition has been determined, in part, by the Western religious tradition. And when the prevailing ideas, officials, symbols, and methods of the Western religious tradition have changed, the shape and balance of the Western legal tradition have changed as well.”

²³ See, e.g., Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Ma.: 1956), 10-15. It is interesting to note that Vincent was simultaneously developing and implementing the concept of the Congregation of the Mission to reform corruption in the French Church, while educating the elite on the humanity of the poor. Subsequent research is needed to compare and contrast the developments in achieving their respective missions.

equality, and liberty intertwine within the religious and secular narratives.²⁴

Thomas Jefferson's "unalienable rights" for all people stems from the same belief in humans created in God's image that Vincent also understood.²⁵ According to Robert Bellah the Bible was the only reading material for many in the earliest generations, and "biblical imagery provided the basic framework for imaginative thought in America up until quite recent times and, unconsciously, its control is still formidable."²⁶ Even as many contemporary judges, legislatures, scholars, and lawyers abandon reliance on a Divine source for law or develop legal themes based on legal positivism, they cannot ignore the foundation of the nation's law arising out of the biblical narrative or the religious tradition that formed the basis of much of western law. Marxist Terry Eagleton asserts, at the very least, contemporary "critics of the most enduring form of popular culture in human history have a moral obligation to confront that case at its most persuasive."²⁷ Even many who possess no particular claim to faith in one of those religions still witness the cultural and

²⁴ Reinhold Niebuhr, "Liberty and Equality," *Faith and Politics: A Commentary on Religion, Social and Political Thought in a Technological Age* (New York: 1968), 190-192.

²⁵ John M. Buchanan, "Patriot Cause," *The Christian Century* 131:14 (9 July 2014), 3. Jefferson's "all men are created equal" flows from Enlightenment thinkers and "the equally radical proposal that human beings are created in the image of the Creator." The Catholic Church has since recognized that reason also supports a finding of human dignity. See, John Noonan, *The Lustre of Our Country: The American Experience of Religious Freedom* (Berkeley: 1998), 349-350. Frank R. Strong provides another example of the biblical heritage within secular history. He notes that "the term 'federal' derives from the Latin, *foedus*, meaning covenant." He suggests that Ancient Israel's belief in the covenant between God and humanity may have "harbored the earliest seeds of the concept of federalism." Frank R. Strong, *Judicial Function in Constitutional Limitation on Governmental Power* (Durham, N.C.: 1997), 7-8.

This article primarily addresses Vincentian hospitality, and is therefore, faith-based. Those who follow in the Vincentian tradition participate in this nation under its laws; as such, they must be able to articulate their faith understandings and make their arguments accessible and persuasive to others who may not believe in this faith-based story. The scope of this article does not fully permit arguing how the biblical narrative might persuade those who do not believe to love the immigrant. Nonetheless, the concepts of human dignity and covenantal relationships that find new meaning in democratic laws and procedures, that call for equality, liberty, and justice contain integral elements from the biblical constitutionalism of our nation's founding. Thus, the substance of the biblical narrative should be of interest even to those who claim no faith in the Bible.

²⁶ Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: 1992), 12. See, generally: *The Bible in American Law: Politics, and Political Rhetoric*, James Turner Johnson, ed. (Philadelphia: 1985); Martin E. Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 years of Religion in America* (N.Y.: 1984), 302; Noonan, *Lustre*, 257.

²⁷ Terry Eagleton, *Reason, Faith, and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate* (New Haven: 2009), 33.



The east facade of the United States Supreme Court Building includes Moses with the Ten Commandments.

CC BY-SA 3.0



political impact the Bible has had on western civilization.²⁸

For those within faith traditions, the narrative is far more than rote retelling of a factual past. In reciting the biblical narrative, persons of faith place themselves within an engaged community that reinterprets the story within the context of contemporary times. Judith Plaskow reminds that for Jews it is not just remembering, but rather re-living the event for “It is in telling the story of our past as Jews that we learn who we truly are in the present.”²⁹ Plaskow recalls the Passover Seder where “families gather together not to memorialize the Exodus from Egypt, but to relive it.”³⁰ H. Richard Niebuhr explains the Christian experience of transformation: “When we become members of such a community of selves, we adopt its past as our own and thereby are changed in our present existence.... the prophets of the Hebrews become our prophets and the Lord of the early disciples is acknowledged as our Lord.”³¹ Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza celebrates the continuous contemporary engagement: “The Bible is not just a document of past history but functions

²⁸ André LaCocque, *Onslaught against Innocence: Cain, Abel, and the Yahwist* (Eugene, Or.: 2008), 5. See: Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, Mi.: 1992), 407: “The Bible has become part and parcel of North American culture because it has been constantly read, discussed, and studied.”; John C. Bennett, *Christians and the State* (N.Y.: 1958), 154: noting “...the traditions which have nourished Anglo-Saxon democracy, a tradition that owes more to Calvinism than to the Enlightenment, which was expressed within the spiritual and political ferment in the Cromwellian period in England and in the realism of some of the American founding fathers.”; John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (Kansas City, Mo.: 1960), 39: “[t]he Bill of Rights.... is far more the product of Christian history.” Northrop Frye concludes, “a student of English literature who does not know the Bible does not understand a good deal of what is going on in what he reads: the most conscientious student will be continually misconstruing the implications, even the meaning.” Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (N.Y.: 1982), 4. Accord, Noll, *History of Christianity*, 420. Even Christians who disregard the Old Testament have lost “a model for true social justice and an ethos to support it.” Marilynne Robinson, *When I Was a Child I Read Books* (N.Y.: 2012), 64. Moreover, even if the substance is not replicated, the language may be particularly relevant in the secular realm: Jack Balkin writes “...constitutional traditions have much in common with religious traditions, and especially religious traditions that feature a central organizing text that states the tradition’s core beliefs. We must have a way to talk about the commitments of a people in a creedal tradition spanning many years, involving the work of many generations, constantly subject to change and circumstances that are sometimes recognized and sometimes not, and organized around the maintenance and interpretation of an ancient creedal text.... That is why the language of religion is particularly useful in understanding the path of the American Constitution, even if the constitutional project is secular.” Balkin, *Redemption*, 7. Indeed, Jaroslav Pelikan states that the Constitution “functions as the normative American Scripture.” Pelikan, *Interpreting the Bible and the Constitution* (New Haven, 2004), 21.

²⁹ Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* (San Francisco: 1990), 29.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Niebuhr, “Story of Our Life,” 37.



Inspection of immigrants at Ellis Island in 1897.

Etching by Ewald Thiel published in *Die Gartenlaube*.

Public Domain



as Scripture in present day religious communities.”³² Likewise, in specifically relating the Word to the Vincentian experience, José María Román, C.M., describes “when Vincent de Paul read the gospel it was no mere speculative exercise but a dynamic act of commitment.”³³

Today all who approach the Word must make an “interpretive decision about epistemological assumptions and whether to locate one’s interpretive work in the narrative of modernity or the narrative of faith claims that refuse the skepticism of modernity.”³⁴ Regardless of that decision, it remains imperative to interpret the narrative and to seek its wisdom for our lives together on this planet. For Gustafson, it may be as critical as mere survival because the biblical words and events give the church its identity.³⁵ But Marilynne Robinson reminds us that the loss impinges far more than just the identity of the church. She writes, “We live in an age of neo-Hobbesism....If our myths and truths are only another exotic blossoming, the free play of possibility, then they are fully as real and as worthy of respect as anything else.”³⁶ Community also suffers greatly when the narrative of the past is forgotten or lost. Theodore Adorno warned: “Forgetting is inhuman because man’s accumulated suffering is forgotten....This is why tradition is nowadays confronted with an insoluble contradiction. It is not present and cannot be evoked, but as soon as all tradition is extinguished, inhumanity begins.”³⁷

If we believe God’s Word in Leviticus that we have all been slaves in Egypt,³⁸ then, too, we must recognize that we all came across the Alaskan peninsula with the Native Americans, braved the seas on the Mayflower, poured through the Cumberland Gap,

³² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (N.Y.: 1983), xxii. See also, Ched Myers and Matthew Colwell, *Our God is Undocumented: Biblical Faith and Immigrant Justice* (Maryknoll: 2012) 5.

³³ José María Román, C.M., *St. Vincent de Paul: A Biography*, Joyce Howard, D.C., trans. (London: 1999), 316.

³⁴ Bruggemann, *Theology*, 19.

³⁵ Gustafson, *Treasure*, 46.

³⁶ Marilynne Robinson, *The Death of Adam* (N.Y.: 2005), 2.

³⁷ T.W. Adorno, “Thesenüber Tradition,” *Ohne Leitbille* (Frankfurt: 1967), 34ff., as quoted by Metz, in Hauerwas, *Narrative*, 260.

³⁸ Lev. 19:34.

walked the Trail of Tears, crossed the plains with the Mormons, climbed the long walk at Ellis Island, joined the Great Migration from the South to the Midwest, fled the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, or found ourselves tossed on the seas with Vietnamese boat people or Haitian refugees. As we meet the children crossing the Rio Grande, whom do we see? If, in Adorno's words, we forget our participation in the narrative, we invite that tragic inhumanity.

The biblical narrative speaks directly to the question of Vincentian hospitality and response to immigration today. Immigration law has played a significant role in giving meaning to this nation. Oscar Handlin confessed: "Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants *were* American history."³⁹ Similarly, immigrants fill the stories within the biblical narrative. After tracing the vigorous centuries-old debate of Old Testament exegetical studies, Walter Bruggemann concludes that most scholars now agree that its final form is a product of and a response to the Babylonian exile⁴⁰ leading him to assert that the "core of faith, for Christians as for Jews, is situated in the matrix of exile."⁴¹ The juxtaposition of living within the most powerful democratic republic in the world, while following a narrative whose core of faith finds its context within the matrix of exile, necessitates continuous interpretation of loving the immigrant. Such a central focus relies on more than mere proof-texting a line of scripture.

Rather, our faith response to immigration must explore that matrix of exile, and examine the human responses to a God who begins the human story through the exile of Adam and Eve with only the promise of God's protective love. The story of the Israelites starts with a departure from home to a new land that eventually ends in captivity in Egypt. With the Exodus, the people become refugees again, wandering before coming home.⁴² The Exodus theme is rephrased in the narratives of exile to Babylon. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus become exiles shortly after the Bethlehem birth and the disciples scatter after the crucifixion. Saint Paul, perhaps the principal peregrine of the narrative, spread the promise of the gospel precisely because he rarely called a place home after his conversion.

It is out of this narrative that God told us to "love the immigrant."⁴³ Alice Hunt reminds us that in addition to loving God, loving the neighbor, God issues the imperative, "love

³⁹ Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People* (N.Y.: 1951), 3.

⁴⁰ Bruggemann, *Theology*, 74; See also, Frederick A. Norwood, *Strangers and Exiles: A History of Religious Refugees*, Vol. I (Nashville, TN: 1969), 21-90.

⁴¹ Bruggemann, *Theology*, 76.

⁴² Robert Bellah reminds that the founders of the United States saw this nation as the promised land: "God has led his people to establish a new sort of social order that shall be a light unto all the nations." "Civil Religion in America," in *Religion in America*, William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah, eds. (Boston: 1968), 10. To cite the ongoing influence of this ideal in the nation's history, Bellah quoted President Lyndon Johnson's inaugural address:

They came here—the exile and the stranger brave but frightened—to find a place where a man could be his own man.

They made a covenant with this land. Conceived in justice, written in liberty, bound in union, it was meant one day to inspire the hopes of all mankind; and it binds us still. If we keep its terms, we shall flourish.

Ibid. More recently, President Barack Obama stated: "Scripture tells that we shall not oppress a stranger, for we know the heart of a stranger. We were strangers once too." see: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration/immigration-action>

⁴³ Lev. 19:33-34.

the immigrant.”⁴⁴ Not just be kind to or care for the immigrant, but love the immigrant. Moses Pava delves deeply into the juxtaposition of loving one’s neighbor with loving the immigrant.⁴⁵ Agreeing that the concept is most difficult if not impossible to follow, he argues it remains critical to love the stranger to teach humanity how to discover its humanity.⁴⁶ The Bible, moreover, teaches not simply a command to love, but instructs why this gift of the immigrant enters the very core of our being. Marco Tavanti discusses one important aspect of the biblical message of hospitality to the stranger in this volume.⁴⁷ John Koenig concurs that the biblical story’s ancient sacred bond between guest and host stands as a “pillar of morality upon which the universe stands.”⁴⁸ Koenig adds a second rationale that finds recognition within Vincentian hospitality and Catholic Social Thought (CST). For Koenig, in addition to morality, the numinous intrudes through hospitality to the stranger, a place where “the advent of the divine stranger...offers blessings that cannot at first, be comprehended.”⁴⁹

Given the matrix of the exile, it is not surprising that this biblical narrative involves so many stories responding to the unexpected visitor. The Bible has many words for that stranger: sojourner, exile, immigrant, alien, *ger*.⁵⁰ Distinguished from foreigners who were foes or those who would not assimilate, the foreign-born living within the land—the *gerim*—were to be treated equally under the law. Because the Israelites had been strangers in Egypt and had lived in the foreign land of Babylon, they too should understand that the stranger should be treated with kindness. Recognizing that their outsider status would often lead them to be marginalized without the typical resources of land or connections within society, the *ger*, like the widow and orphan, taught Israel to meet vulnerability with love. Hunt emphasizes that most biblical references to the *ger* can be found in the context of treatment by law; a law that treats them favorably.⁵¹ Given human worry over security, the desire to lock the gate or deny rights to the visitor can make the goal aspirational and difficult to fulfill, but the narrative does not retreat from this moral question.

The Bible records diverse human responses to God, and, therefore, its call of hospitality to the stranger is not univocal. Ruiz notes that as David’s and Solomon’s monarchies grew in power, other biblical voices sought to exclude the *gerim* from Israel’s life.⁵² Moreover,

⁴⁴ Alice Hunt, “Love the Immigrant,” on file with the author. *Accord*, Robinson, *When I Was a Child*, 72.

⁴⁵ Pava, “Loving the Stranger,” 132-22.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 136, quoting Hermann Cohen.

⁴⁷ Marco Tavanti, Ph.D., “Hospitality Ethos with Justice and Dignity: Catholic, Vincentian, and Jesuit Perspectives on Global Migration,” in this volume of *Vincentian Heritage*.

⁴⁸ John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: 1985), 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁰ André LaCocque, “The Stranger in the Old Testament,” *Migration Today* 15 (1970); See also, Hunt, “Love”; and Francisco Ruiz Vasquez, “The Stranger that is Within Thy Gates,” *Migration Today* 12 (1969), 44. Migrants were characterized in the Bible in multiple ways, see: <http://classic.net.bible.org/dictionary.php?word=Stranger%20And%20Sojourner%20%28In%20The%20Old%20Testament%29>

⁵¹ Hunt, *Ibid*.

⁵² Ruiz Vasquez, “Stranger,” 48.

the narrative can fuel false efforts. Mere possession does not indicate whether the mantle of owning a narrative benefits the nation. The biblical narrative faces the same historical critique of a chosen people wandering for the Promised Land, limited to their exclusive benefit in contrast to a people chosen by the Divine One to be a “holy people” modeling justice and liberty for all humanity.⁵³ Similarly, the idea of a chosen people can be exploited by the worst aspects of American exceptionalism that dominate other nations and undermine the promises of liberty and justice for all; or it can serve as the model for building constitutional protections when nations throw off the yoke of dictatorship. Some have used the narrative to kill and displace indigenous peoples in the name of progress, or to enslave blacks in the name of economic efficiency, but the narrative has also been a resource for many who have sought to end these wrongs and combat genocide and tragedy.⁵⁴ Certainly, the biblical narrative contains many contested and sometimes contradictory voices, but the core story remains, a Divine call for human love when faced with the vulnerability of the exile.

Within this narrative, people of faith engage the question of whether love for the immigrant can be reconciled with the monarchial elements that exercise the power to exclude. Robinson articulates this ongoing interpretive debate: “Since the time of the Hebrew prophets it has been the role of the outsider to loosen these chains, or lengthen, if only by bringing the rumor of a life lived otherwise.”⁵⁵ It is noteworthy, however, that loving the immigrant also influenced the laws of the local polity in biblical times. First century CE historian, Flavius Josephus wrote with pride, “It is good to see how equitable our lawgivers wished us to be in our treatment of foreigners.”⁵⁶

When lawmakers and citizens become too in love with our homes and our nation, we may be less inclined to understand the life God has intended for humankind. LaCocque emphasizes this gift, “What matters is that we should not ourselves in turn miss the opportunity which the presence of the [stranger] ‘Ger’ in our midst represents.”⁵⁷ The narrative calls people of faith to respond to God to counter the idols and temptations of the world that conspire to keep humans from choosing life.⁵⁸ The stranger who arrives opens eyes to understand the choice of seeking security through human hands or God’s love. Certainly, a tension exists and humans must work to build communities in a world

⁵³ André LaCocque, *But As For Me: The Question of Election for God’s People* (Atlanta: 1979).

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Martin E. Marty, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (1970), 5-33; and Martin H. Belsky and Joseph Bessler-Northcutt, “African-Americans: Slavery and Segregation,” in *Law and Theology: Cases and Readings* (Durham, N.C.: 2005), 25; These conflicts also reflect the finitude of the human condition. In a similar vein, Jack Balkin appropriates religious language when he notes “The Constitution, and therefore the Constitution-in-practice, always exists in a fallen condition. It was made in imperfect times by imperfect people... it is our job, standing later in history, to try to see farther than past generations could,” Balkin, *Redemption*, 249.

⁵⁵ Robinson, *When I Was a Child*, 92-3.

⁵⁶ Flavius Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, 2, 28, quoted by Ruiz Vasquez, “Stranger,” 47.

⁵⁷ LaCocque, “Stranger,” 55.

⁵⁸ Deut. 30:19. Ethicist Robin Lovin states that this passage from Deuteronomy reminds us the world is a “morally serious place. And to that fundamental message, the Gospel adds only that the choice of life must be made in the midst of life, and that the blessing, likewise, is not a reward for a life well-lived, but the living of it.” Lovin, “Sermon for Epiphany Season,” Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, 2 February 1993, 5, on file with the author.



A Syrian refugee camp pictured in summer of 2015 during the ongoing crisis.

Public Domain



constantly threatened by human sin and environmental destruction. As Buber asserts, within the Bible “the desire to own land is not condemned and renunciation is not demanded” but God is God and “Lord of the land” while the human is simply the “sojourner” before God.⁵⁹ We are all aliens and strangers in this land.⁶⁰ Balancing the tension is never easy or simple. Human finitude and greed demand more than most are willing to admit. To paraphrase Jack Balkin’s secular use of a religious term, we are a people engaged in redeeming the biblical narrative in our times.⁶¹ Vincent de Paul, self-deprecating for all his failures, nonetheless reminded his friends to redeem their culture by imitating the ultimate stranger, the one who reveals God to us, Jesus.

This tension continues to the present day. CST emphasizes welcoming the stranger with an acceptance that the state has a duty to protect its sovereignty.⁶² CST balances the state’s responsibility to sovereignty by employing systems that recognize the dignity of all humans and that take particular care to address the vulnerability of the immigrant.⁶³ Immigration law is one manifestation of the tension to welcome newcomers through a just process while protecting national security. One way to test its efficacy in meeting these goals is to apply immigration law to the biblical narrative and consider the results.

II. American Immigration Law Applied to the Narrative

Immigration law distinguishes between those seeking to immigrate to the United States or flee to these shores in response to persecution through a complex and not

⁵⁹ Buber, *On the Bible*, 3.

⁶⁰ 1 Pet. 2:11.

⁶¹ Balkin, *Redemption*, 249.

⁶² Elizabeth Collier, “And They Fled Into Egypt: Migration in the Light of Scriptures and Catholic Social Teaching,” in Collier, *Religious and Ethical Perspectives*, 147.

⁶³ See: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Strangers No Longer Together on the Journey of Hope*, 22 January 2003, at: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/strangers-no-longer-together-on-the-journey-of-hope.cfm>. See also: *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz, eds. (Lanham, Md.: 2009); and Michael A. Scaperlanda, “Immigration Law: A Catholic Perspective on Immigration Justice” in *Recovering Self-Evident Truths: Catholic Perspectives on American Law*, Michael A. Scaperlanda and Teresa Stanton Collett, eds. (Washington, D.C.: 2007), 292.

always consistent policy of determining who may enter, who may stay and who, upon transgressing the nation's hospitality, may be deported or removed.⁶⁴ Currently, there are two compilations of enforcement laws—grounds of inadmissibility and grounds of deportability—that include categories of conduct or circumstances that may bar admission or eligibility for benefits once admitted, as well as make people subject to removal that leads to deportation and loss of permission to remain in the country. In essence, Congress, through immigration law, molds the character of our nation by determining who can be members, allowing entry for family reunification, specific job skills, and designated refugees, while also defining who may be removable because of conduct deemed inappropriate.

As a test to examine the efficacy of the law's ability to mold our national identity, consider what would happen if U.S. immigration law regulated migration in the lives of the biblical protagonists. Undergirding the biblical motif of exile, after the Bible commences "in the beginning," creation follows with Adam and Eve's exile, an exile story that repeats again and again throughout the narrative.⁶⁵

The biblical metaphor that the vulnerable stranger is protected by God continues with Cain's murder of Abel.⁶⁶ Cain becomes our "common ancestor, the murdered 'fugitive and wanderer' in all of us."⁶⁷ But Cain is a murderer and as such under U.S. immigration law, he has committed a crime of violence which is designated as a crime of moral turpitude or

⁶⁴ All references to immigration law will be to United States immigration law. For a summary of American immigration law and history, see Hiroshi Motomura, *Outside the Law* (N.Y.: 2014), 31-49; Craig B. Mousin, "Immigration Reform: What Can Religious Voices Require From the State?" in Collier, *Religious and Ethical Perspectives*, 327; and Marie Friedman Marquardt, Timothy J. Steigena, Philip J. Williams, and Manuel A Vasquez, *Living "Illegal": The Human Face of Unauthorized Immigrants* (N.Y.: 2011), 46-56.

⁶⁵ See text ascribed to footnotes 40 and 41.

⁶⁶ Gen. 4:15.

⁶⁷ André LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence: Adam, Eve, and the Yahwist* (Eugene, OR.: 2006), 204. Ched Myers points out that this story also shows God's protection for Cain, the wanderer, a "counterintuitive divine response" but also a challenge to those who follow the narrative to protect the sojourners in our midst despite their lack of legal status. Myers and Colwell, *Our God is Undocumented*, 56. The guilt of Cain juxtaposed with God's protection raises significant theological issues. See also: LaCocque, *Onslaught Against Innocence*. Victor Romero discusses similar issues of love and forgiveness for immigration violations through the lens of the parable of the Prodigal Son and immigration law. Victor C. Romero, "The Prodigal Illegal: Christian Love and Immigration Reform," 92 *Denver University Law Review* (2016), 927.



Edward Hicks painting, *Noah's Ark*, reveals one element of the biblical narrative's influence on United States culture. Oil on canvas, 1846. Currently held by the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Public Domain



an aggravated felony. He would not be admissible and would certainly be deportable.⁶⁸

Even when God protects, bad things happen under immigration law. When Noah built the ark to save his family, he took his wife, his three sons, and their wives.⁶⁹ But Noah, when disembarking from the ark in a foreign nation, violated the law barring smuggling. Although immigration law permits a waiver on the ground of inadmissibility for one to bring his or her spouse, parent, or children, nothing in the law provides a similar exemption for daughters-in-law. Noah was a smuggler.⁷⁰ His story stops when he is excluded at the border. Moreover, our refugee laws as currently adjudicated do not permit permanent refugee status for those fleeing environmental disaster. Noah is denied entry.

God calls Abraham and Sarah to: "Go forth from your country and your kindred...to the land that I show you."⁷¹ They present an interesting dilemma posed by immigration law. Most nations recognize that humans are free to leave a nation, but name no concomitant right to enter another nation. Immigration law possesses authority because a nation has a

⁶⁸ I.N.A. §212(a)(2); 8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(2); I.N.A. §237(a)(2)(A)(i) or (iii); 8 U.S.C. §1227(a)(2)(A)(i) or (iii). Every immigration case involves many variables. For our purposes, in applying current immigration law to the biblical narrative, an individual may violate either a ground of admissibility barring entry, or a ground of deportation leading to removal. A person's actual immigration history and context would determine which charges the government would bring. The government often charges multiple grounds, but need only prove one to effectuate exclusion or removal. In this article, one or more grounds will be listed to suggest the difficulty the person would have remaining in lawful status or, in this experiment, removing them as a protagonist from the biblical narrative. I do not address all the potential remedies or waivers, although Congress has increasingly tightened the grounds over the last twenty years making relief more difficult to obtain. In any given example, an attorney might reach a successful outcome and permit admission or defeat removal. This experiment reflects another difficulty, however: the law does not provide attorneys at government cost. Immigrants in removal proceedings must hire their own attorney, seek limited *pro bono* or legal assistance attorneys, or face the power of the federal government without benefit of counsel. Having an immigration attorney to assist one's case can make a considerable difference in seeking remedies, waivers, exemptions, or discretionary rulings. Jaya Ramji-Nogales, Andres I. Schoenholtz, and Philip G. Schrag, "Refugee Roulette: Disparities in Asylum Adjudication," 60 *Stanford Law Review* (2007), 348: "whether an asylum seeker is represented in court is the single most important factor affecting the outcome of her case."; "Representation is Key in Immigration Proceedings Involving Children," Syracuse University Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), Immigration Reports, 18 February 2015. See: <http://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/377/>

⁶⁹ Gen. 7:13.

⁷⁰ I.N.A. §212(6)(E); 8 U.S.C. §1182(6)(E).

⁷¹ Gen. 12:1.

right to decide who may cross that nation's borders.⁷² God told Abraham and Sarah to go, but provided no visas for entry elsewhere. Once they showed up at the point of entry, they had no ties to the land, no family connections, and no job skills that were needed. Under the law, they were ineligible for family visas, and therefore, they would be denied entry. Once inadmissible, the biblical narrative concludes before the story begins and they must return or wander elsewhere—indeed the Bible calls them *gerim*—for they will always be the wanderers.⁷³

Abraham and Sarah would present an additional challenge to an inspection officer. When the couple entered Egypt, they lied to the officials, claiming they were siblings rather than spouses. Immigration fraud leads to expedited removal, a prompt return to one's native land as the law precludes any opportunity to plead one's case in court.⁷⁴ Genesis records this state-ordered deportation: "And Pharaoh gave his men orders concerning him [Abraham]; and they set him on the way with his wife and all that he had."⁷⁵ Moreover, by committing fraud once and being deported, their names would enter the national database. Even if they subsequently earned the status to return, the prior fraud and deportation would make it much harder to do so; they would need discretionary permission to overcome their prior conduct. We have no story: no father and mother of the nations, no great multitude in this biblical narrative.

Subsequent generations again generate immigration issues. Rebecca and Jacob schemed to take away the inheritance Esau was rightfully entitled to when they fooled Isaac into giving his blessing to Jacob.⁷⁶ A conviction for fraud of over \$10,000 constitutes the deportable offense of an aggravated felony, which their confession confirms.⁷⁷

Joseph and his multicolored coat has become part of our culture as a simple, happy children's story and a Broadway musical, yet it includes actions by the parties involved that makes all subject to inadmissibility or removal. The brothers, who with Joseph had been destined to become heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, certainly were guilty of a crime of violence in kidnapping Joseph and selling him to slave traders. As such they would face immigration law consequences as traffickers, committing crimes of moral turpitude or

⁷² *Fong Yue Ting v. U.S.*, 149 U.S. 698, 710, 13 S. Ct. 1016, 1021 (1893) (Gray, J.) The Court acknowledges: "the right to exclude or to expel all aliens...absolutely or upon certain conditions, in war or in peace, being an inherent and inalienable right of every sovereign and independent nation, essential to its safety, its independence, and its welfare."

⁷³ Gen. 23:4; I.N.A. §212(a)(7)(A); 8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(7)(A).

⁷⁴ I.N.A. §235(b); 8 U.S.C. §1225(b); I.N.A. §212(a)(6)(C)(i); 8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(6)(C)(i); See also, *Habib v. Lynch*, 787 F.3d 826, 831 (7th Cir. 2015). Inadmissible because obtained admission by misrepresenting marital status, but remanded on other grounds.

⁷⁵ Gen. 12:20; Like father, like son: in a similar incident, the biblical narrative reveals some of the difficulties persons living as undocumented in another's land face. Genesis reports that Isaac was living as a *ger*, in effect an undocumented immigrant, but God told him to remain. He informed the authorities, in this case King Abimelech, that Rebecca was his sister instead of his wife. When later confronted with the truth, the King at first told Isaac to go away, but the narrative subsequently demonstrates how the King and Isaac worked out their relationship, with Isaac remaining in Gerar. See, Gen. 26:6-11. As with Cain, the narrative thus provides another example of power providing hospitality to the stranger.

⁷⁶ Gen. 27:1-38.

⁷⁷ I.N.A. §101(a)(43)(M); 8 U.S.C. §1101(a)(43)(M); I.N.A. §237(a)(2)(A)(iii); 8 U.S.C. §1227(a)(2)(A)(iii). *Eke v. Mukasey*, 512 F.3d 372, 381 (7th Cir. 2008). Conspiracy to commit financial fraud was an aggravated felony.

aggravated felons.⁷⁸ Joseph himself would be inadmissible to Egypt for want of a visa, but he would probably enter with a T-visa, a generous act of Congress to permit persons who have been trafficked to remain rather than return to face the wrath of traffickers.⁷⁹ This, of course, assumes that Joseph would have had access to an immigration attorney who could help him navigate the complexity of the law to request a T-visa. But Joseph has even more problems subsequent to entry. Potiphar's wife accused him of rape. Although the narrative makes it clear he was innocent, he served at least two years in prison.⁸⁰ A conviction for an attempted rape with punishment exceeding one year in prison qualifies as an aggravated felony; Joseph would be deportable despite the T-visa.⁸¹ Even though all who read the story know that Joseph was innocent, immigration law precludes the Immigration Judge from peering behind the record of the conviction to examine if a wrongful conviction occurred; the conviction proves the grounds of deportability, therefore, Joseph has no defense.⁸² He is deported. The well-loved children's story, like the story of so many families whose members have been caught up in the complexity of criminal and immigration law, founders under the burden and dooms the happy ending. No Joseph narrative, and consequently, like many in Egypt, the world would not know him.

The Exodus story begins because a new Pharaoh did not know Joseph or the gifts he had brought to the Egyptians after he was pardoned.⁸³ Pharaoh exploits the Hebrews. Moses' mother and sister save him, but he subsequently kills an Egyptian.⁸⁴ Pharaoh seeks the death penalty for Moses who then flees to Midian. Immigration law bars Moses from entry with a crime of moral turpitude, and the Exodus never occurs because our law eliminates Moses from the narrative.⁸⁵

The story of Ruth, the Moabite, the foreigner, has inspired many generations as a story of love and faith while simultaneously delineating the matriarchal lineage of King David and eventually Joseph, father of Jesus.⁸⁶ Fortunately, immigration law permits a foreign-born spouse to immigrate with the citizen spouse. If the application for a spousal visa is not filed when the marriage is intact, however, no visa would be available for the widow unless she self-petitioned within two years of her husband's death. Ruth did not intend to immigrate to Bethlehem until after her husband died, but even if she filed her petition when she decided to join Naomi, it would probably take at least a year under

⁷⁸ Gen. 37:1-28.

⁷⁹ I.N.A. §101(a)(15)(T); 8 U.S.C. §1101(a)(15)(T).

⁸⁰ Gen. 39:7-20; 41:1; Potiphar's wife claimed Joseph insulted her, but the biblical world clearly was aware that he was guilty of attempted rape. See, James L. Kugel, *In Potiphar's House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts* (San Francisco: 1990), 21-26.

⁸¹ I.N.A. §237(a)(2)(A)(iii); 8 U.S.C. §1227(a)(2)(A)(iii); *Castro-Baez v. Reno*, 217 F.3d 1057 (9th Cir. 2000). Rape conviction is an aggravated felony.

⁸² *Palmer v. INS*, 4 F.3d 482, 490 (7th Cir. 1993).

⁸³ Ex. 1:8.

⁸⁴ Ex. 2:15.

⁸⁵ I.N.A. §212(a)(2)(A)(i); 8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(2)(A)(i).

⁸⁶ Ruth 4:13-18.

current processing times for her to enter.⁸⁷ She would also have to prove that she had a job or sufficient resources, or risk becoming a public charge which would bar entry. Gleaning a field's last fruits would probably not be sufficient; indeed, it confirms that she was poor and dependent upon the charity of the field's owner.⁸⁸ Ruth may not get to Bethlehem, or if so, she might arrive too late to meet Boaz. The law threatens her story as the great-grandmother of King David; therefore we have no David or any of his descendants.⁸⁹

David, too, would have immigration problems. He conspires to have Bathsheba's husband killed in battle. Although within his prerogative as King to make battle plans, the prophet Nathan confronts David and declares that this was not military strategy but instead an extrajudicial killing inspired by his lust. Although David continues to rule, his confession to extrajudicial murder, and the attempted cover up under the fog of war, would make him deportable as an aggravated felon. His confession seals the deal.⁹⁰

One might think that Jesus would be the ideal immigrant whom we would welcome into our nation with outstretched arms. Unfortunately, Jesus, too, would run afoul of immigration law. Matthew's birth story describes the flight of the family to Egypt.⁹¹ They possess no ties with Egypt; therefore, they would have entered Egypt illegally. Despite Egypt's hospitality, God called the family home, but Jesus' immigration problems escalate. With all the events surrounding his birth, one wonders whether Joseph had time to register the family under the decree of Caesar Augustus. If the family registration might not have occurred, were their papers in proper order, and if not, would they have been permitted re-entry? Joseph may have sufficient paperwork, but Mary had just delivered a baby and she may not have registered. At the very least, Jesus had no passport or birth certificate.⁹² As parents, Joseph and Mary had no papers proving he was their son and they might be subject to trafficking restrictions. Imagine the difficulty of convincing an immigration officer that Joseph was Jesus' biological father. Imagine the difficulty some families have today proving parentage after fleeing persecution in their homelands. Alternatively, they might have been detained for smuggling a baby back into Israel. If Jesus was denied re-entry, the gospel story as we know it ends at the Israel-Egypt border. Mary and Joseph would face the difficult decision faced by thousands: do they enter and leave the child outside or do they remain in Egypt, living a life as an undocumented family never able to return home?

⁸⁷ Ruth 1:15-18; INA § 201(2)(A)(i); 8 U.S.C. § 1151(2)(A)(i).

⁸⁸ Ruth 2:2-11; -18; I.N.A. §212(a)(4)(A); 8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(4)(A).

⁸⁹ The story of Ruth presents the paradigmatic biblical example of the foreigner who defies the law, yet also reveals God's love and righteousness in times when those in power seek only to emphasize the power of the law as the sole security for humanity. See, André LaCocque, *Ruth: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: 2004), 27.

⁹⁰ 2 Sam. 12:1-13; *Matter of D-R-*, 25 I. & N. Dec. 445 (B.I.A. 2011).

⁹¹ Mat. 2:13-23.

⁹² Applying immigration law to the biblical narrative is not just a fanciful exercise with no contemporary examples. Although the Constitution recognizes birth citizenship, Texas has started to refuse to issue birth certificates to children born of undocumented parents, thus placing them at risk of statelessness because they will be unable to prove the location of their birth. See: Manny Fernandez, "Immigrants Fight Texas' Birth Certificate Rules," *New York Times*, 17 September 2015, at: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/18/us/illegal-immigrant-birth-certificates.html?emc=eta1&_r=0

Even if Jesus re-entered Israel, he would remain dogged without papers for the rest of his life. Immigration law presupposes one is an immigrant if one has no proof of citizenship or non-immigrant status.⁹³ The Bible tells us that Jesus had no papers. When religious authorities questioned the blind man who received sight from Jesus, the authorities stated, “We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”⁹⁴ If the authorities have no proof, and Jesus cannot prove his right to be in the nation, he is subject to removal as one who entered without inspection—some might call him an illegal alien.⁹⁵

Congress has also shown great concern in preventing anyone from entering the country who may have provided material aid to terrorists or terrorist organizations. The law offers little leeway for innocent provision, or *de minimis* provision, of aid to suspected terrorists. In his kindness and hospitality, Jesus often provided aid to those who would meet the law’s definition of terrorists. Significantly, his abundant generosity to all who came his way placed him at risk for providing aid to individuals who might be deemed terrorists by either side in that first century political struggle. Jesus healed the centurion’s servant.⁹⁶ The centurion served in the Roman military that had slaughtered the innocents under Herod, and crucified thousands of Israelites when Pilate maintained law and order through terror.⁹⁷ Jesus’ gift of hospitality would certainly place him at risk of removal for material support of terrorists. When Jesus fed the five thousand, many of whom Rome would have characterized as terrorists, his actions would subsequently be evidence of providing material support to terrorists opposed to Roman rule.⁹⁸ The courts have held that mere provision of food can constitute material support. One court denied asylum to an individual based on material support of terrorists when he provided one meal to seven members of the Kurdistan Worker’s Party. Although that case has been remanded for review, other courts continue to stress that a very low level of aid constitutes material support.⁹⁹ For example, another court upheld the deportation of an individual when guerrillas had commandeered his kitchen to prepare meals. The court ordered him removed because he

⁹³ INA § 214(b); 8 U.S.C. 1184(b).

⁹⁴ John 9:29-30.

⁹⁵ I.N.A. §212(a)(7)(A); 8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(7)(A).

⁹⁶ Mat. 8:5-13.

⁹⁷ Mat. 2:16-18; Reza Aslan, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* (N.Y.: 2013), 47; See also, Boys, *Sacred Story*, 168.

⁹⁸ Mat. 14:13-21; Reza Aslan documents that strife and resistance were so great in Galilee at the time of Roman occupation, that Rome considered all Galileans rebels—perhaps similar to the U.S. State Department designating certain nations or groups of people as terrorists. Given the appellation of “rebels,” some of the 5,000 persons Jesus fed would certainly have been considered terrorists of their day. Aslan, *Zealot*, 91. See also: Justo L. Gonzalez, *Faith & Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money* (San Francisco: 1990), 74-5.

⁹⁹ *Ayvaz v. Holder*, 564 Fed.Appx.625 (2nd Cir. 2014); but see: *Sesay v. Attorney General of U.S.*, 787 F.3d 215 (3rd Cir. 2015); See also, Deborah Anker, “Material Support of Terrorism,” *Law of Asylum in the United States* (Thompson West: 2015), §6:27.

provided material support to terrorists.¹⁰⁰ Jesus offered hospitality to all who are children of God. He would be deported for material aid to terrorists.

The government routinely charges those it seeks to remove with all possible grounds for removal. Jesus would have faced additional charges. He was convicted and sentenced to death by Pilate as guilty of sedition and a threat to Rome,¹⁰¹ branding him an aggravated felon. Even if he escaped the crucifixion, he would either be inadmissible or removable. As we saw with the Joseph conviction, his actual innocence would not matter; the state convicted him. Immigration law does not permit an inspector or immigration judge to look beneath the conviction to consider actual innocence. Jesus: convicted. Jesus: deported. Jesus: barred entry. No gospel story for us to read or tell.

Notwithstanding all these obstructions to the gospel story, even those who could tell whatever tale was left would be denied entrance under the law. The remaining disciples, unemployed and scattered by the Roman death sentence, would most likely be considered individuals who would become public charges. Therefore, even if they could have found a way to immigrate, they would be denied visas as the law denies entry to those without sufficient resources.¹⁰²

Peter, the rock upon whom the Christian church was founded, would not be permitted to meet the resurrected Christ on the shores of that Galilean lake because, he too, faced severe immigration problems. Conspiracy to commit an aggravated felony is sufficient to warrant removal based upon the underlying aggravated felony bar. Jesus' conviction would also make Peter and the other disciples removable for the same crime for seditiously conspiring with him. Peter also faced a serious non-political crime of violence and an aggravated felony charge for attempted murder when he assaulted the servant at Gethsemane.¹⁰³ Peter's assault would bar his entry.

Consider also Paul. Paul's immigration problems would have prevented him from spreading the gospel message. Paul was a confessed persecutor because he "was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison."¹⁰⁴ Immigration law does not permit entry of persecutors and bars asylum or any relief. In *Singh v. Gonzales*, the government ordered a person deported who "took innocent Sikhs into custody...and transported them to the police station, where he knew they would be subjected to unjustified physical abuse," and also guarded homes so residents could not escape while other officers went inside to arrest and beat them up.¹⁰⁵ Paul was

¹⁰⁰ *Barahona v. Holder*, 691 F.3d 349, 352 (4th Cir. 2012). Guerrillas always brought their own food, but "generally utilized the water and cooking facilities of his home under duress," which still constitutes material support. See also: *Singh-Kaur v. Ashcroft*, 385 F.3d 293 (3rd Cir. 2004). Provision of food and setting up of tents for persons who would commit terrorist activities was material support and made one inadmissible under the law.

¹⁰¹ John 19:14-16; Boys, *Sacred Story*, 173; Aslan, *Zealot*, 155-56.

¹⁰² I.N.A. §212(a)(4)(A); 8 U.S.C. §1182(a)(4)(A).

¹⁰³ John 18:10-11.

¹⁰⁴ Acts 8:3.

¹⁰⁵ 417 F. 3d 736, 740 (7th Cir. 2005). See also, *Abdallahi v. Holder*, 690 F.3d 467, 476-7 (6th Cir. 2012). A guard who brought students to prison for torture, and stood outside while it occurred, is inadmissible for assisting with torture.



St. Vincent de Paul not only sent Missioners to serve prisoners and refugees but believed he, too, was sent by the Gospel of Luke to heal and advocate for the detained, refugees, and the maimed.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



guilty of far worse, yet even his conversion on the road to Damascus, celebrated as it is in the Christian story, would not waive the penalty of the persecutor bar. He would be barred, leaving history with no messenger of the gospel. Neither gospel story nor any disciple remains to tell whatever story could still be constructed without actors or story tellers after the implementation of United States immigration law. Indeed, one is hard pressed to find any narrative left when both the narrator and all the protagonists are shoved off the stage, leaving none available to share the tale.

One final irony occurs in this experiment. Vincent de Paul founded the Congregation of the Mission based, in large part, on the gospel narrative. Here, too, immigration law interrupts and stops the story. Early in his ministry, Vincent rented a horse to seek repayment from an individual who owed the Congregation a substantial sum. Vincent subsequently confessed, "I sold the horse I had hired in Toulouse. I intended to pay for it on my return, which misfortune delayed so long that I am in great disgrace...."¹⁰⁶ Sorrowful he may be, but he remained guilty of theft. Bernard Pujo claims this theft made Vincent "guilty of a crime, which, in those days, was severely punished with imprisonment or even forced labor in the galleys."¹⁰⁷ Such severity would certainly be an aggravated felony today.¹⁰⁸ Those who claim to work in Vincent's legacy, lose twice: no gospel message and no Vincent de Paul to interpret the message for posterity. Without the scriptural narrative, Vincent possesses no blueprint to forge the mission. Immigration law would have deprived all of the gifts presented by these biblical sojourners.

¹⁰⁶ Document 1, "To Monsieur De Comet, in Dax," in *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, ed. and trans. by Jacqueline Kilar, D.C., Marie Poole, D.C., et al, 1-14 (N.Y.: 1985-2014), 1:3. Hereafter CCD.

¹⁰⁷ Bernard Pujo, *Vincent de Paul: The Trailblazer*, Gertrud Graubart Champe, trans. (Notre Dame: 2003), 25.

¹⁰⁸ I.N.A. §101(a)(43); 8 U.S.C. §1101(a)(43).

III. Vincentian Hospitality and Immigration Law

The good news is that the gift of the narrative has been received and acted upon. It provides meaning and ethos for those who participate in the Vincentian legacy. Unburdened by modern debate over whether the story was historically accurate or if post-modern critiques undermined its veracity and efficacy, Vincent, relying on Scripture, designed a distinctive ministry in founding the Congregation of the Mission. Based upon the biblical stories of a people struggling to live in covenant with God and to respond to the gospel of Jesus, Vincent sent Missioners out to meet the most vulnerable, whether on the streets of the city, the prisons of the galley slaves, or with refugees in war-torn border towns. Saint Vincent lived his belief that all humans created in God's image retain equal dignity.¹⁰⁹ That foundation undergirds the Vincentian mission: treating all people equally and serving in solidarity while encouraging full participation in society. This story has been well told in the histories of the Congregation of the Mission.¹¹⁰ In terms of Vincentian hospitality and immigration law, however, we should build upon that foundation and address two additional elements: the significance of being sent out; and the critical anchors of faith and reason when confronting a broken immigration legal regime that denigrates human dignity.

A. Sent on a Mission

Vincent stressed the necessity of being sent on mission to announce the gospel message of human dignity and God's love for the marginalized. In response, those sent agreed to assume the vulnerability of the immigrant absent from the perceived security of home, and through that vulnerability and presence, the sojourner reveals God.

1. Sent out from security

Vincent established the Congregation of the Mission as something particularly innovative in living the gospel story through an active engagement with the most vulnerable. Its name designates going out and leaving the comfort and security of safe havens to meet the poor. As Vincent stated, "...there should be a Company...of the Mission...that it should be entirely dedicated to that purpose, going here and there through hamlets and villages, leaving the towns behind—something that's never been done."¹¹¹ Vincent prioritized the biblical narrative as the Congregation's blueprint with the opening line of the *Common Rules*: "We read in sacred scripture..."¹¹² In seeking to imitate the life of Jesus,

¹⁰⁹ Thomas F. McKenna, C.M., "People of the Scarred Coin," *Vincentian Heritage* 22:2 (2001): 210. Available at: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol22/iss2/5/>

¹¹⁰ See John E. Rybolt, C.M., ed., *The Vincentians: A General History of the Congregation of the Mission*, Vols. 1-6a & 6b (N.Y.: 2009-2015). See, generally, Marco Tavanti, Ph.D., and Rev. Craig B. Mousin, eds., *What Would Vincent Do? Vincentian Higher Education and Poverty Reduction*, Special Issue of *Vincentian Heritage* 28:2 (2008), 356 pp., at: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol28/iss2/>

¹¹¹ Conference 180, "Observance of the Rules," 17 May 1658, CCD, 12:4.

¹¹² *Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission* (Philadelphia, 1989), 105.

actions become central to the mission of the Congregation, reminding all that “it seeks to imitate his virtues as well as what he *did*....”¹¹³ The narrative matters, for it would be impossible to imitate a non-existent narrative. The primacy of going forth and being an immigrant permeates Vincent’s words: “travel about,”¹¹⁴ “send workers,”¹¹⁵ and having “risked the dangers of a long journey.”¹¹⁶ He clearly sets forth that none could have a disproportionate liking for “any ministry, person, or place, *especially our native land*.”¹¹⁷ Relying on Providence, Vincentians are called to “pitch our tents” with the vulnerable and “be willing to discard some of our security.”¹¹⁸ Engaged in mission one should imitate Jesus, the ultimate stranger who had no place to lay his head.¹¹⁹

Retelling the story of being sent from the comfort of a secure home undergirds Jesus’ purpose: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore, he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord.”¹²⁰ These words codify the heart of the Vincentian mission.¹²¹ Vincentian hospitality lifted up the paradox of the biblical narrative: it is not those in the walled-off kingdoms that know best the grace and security of God, but it is in the eyes of the poorest of the poor, the ones without rights or recognition by the state.

In addition, Vincent recognized sending out countered a natural human propensity to employ the power of the law to wall itself off from the poor. One had to leave the comforts and security to go to those places where the law, whether it be the King, the army, or the elite, divided some apart and abandoned them. Immigration law by design segregates humans, blessing some with the state’s imprimatur of acceptance while banishing others through exclusion or detention. While society differentiates between human beings, classifying some as less worthy, Vincent’s particular insight was that by being created

¹¹³ Emphasis added, *Ibid.*; See also, Conference 1252, “Priestly Ministry,” CCD, 11:194, citing Ex. 4:16 and Ex. 17:9-12.

¹¹⁴ Letter 2936, “To Jean Parre in Saint-Quentin,” 9 August 1659, CCD, 8:83.

¹¹⁵ Conference 155, “Repetition of Prayer,” 18 October 1656, CCD, 11:321.

¹¹⁶ Letter 1951, “Letter to a Priest of the Mission,” CCD, 5:462. Compare Jesus sending out his disciples with few possessions in Mark 6:7-11.

¹¹⁷ Emphasis added, Document 117a., *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, Ch. II. Gospel Teaching, 17 May 1658, CCD, 13a:436.

¹¹⁸ John Prager, C.M., “The Shadow Side of the Vincentian Mission,” *Vincentian Heritage* 16:2 (1995): 181. Available at: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol16/iss2/4/>

¹¹⁹ Mat. 8:20.

¹²⁰ Luke 4:18-20; *Constitutions and Statutes*, Part 1, 5; Robert P. Maloney, C.M., *The Way of Vincent de Paul: A Contemporary Spirituality in the Service of the Poor* (Brooklyn: 1992), 14. Luke 4 is central to Vincentian spirituality. See also, Thomas F. McKenna, C.M., “Vincent de Paul: A Saint Who Got His Worlds Together,” *Vincentian Heritage* 18:1 (1997), 1, 14, at: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol18/iss1/1/>

¹²¹ Luke’s designation of the year of favor recalls the Torah’s Jubilee year; a year that proclaimed equality for all humans, not just for followers of the biblical God. The Jubilee’s promise to all humans, not just a particular nation or people, reinforces a universal twenty-first-century Vincentian mission: address the diversity of the world and, in particular, offer Vincentian hospitality to immigrants. See Rev. Craig B. Mousin, “Vincentian Leadership: Advocating for Justice,” *Vincentian Heritage* 23-25:2; 26:1(2005): 243, 265-69, at: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol26/iss1/14/>; Robinson, *When I Was a Child*, 106-107.

in God's image, all humans were equal. In contrast, many societies define character by legal and social status, concluding that the poor deserved to be poor, criminalized, and outcast.¹²²

When criminals were condemned to be galley convicts, respected members of society thought they deserved what was, in effect, a death penalty, and therefore, sought little contact with them. Contesting that societal perception, Vincent invited the Daughters of Charity to minister to the galley convicts. Today, strict enforcement of immigration laws often arises out of a disproportionate love of nation that distinguishes not only the lawful requirements of membership, but denigrates the other, the outsider, as illegal.¹²³ The nation's incarceration rates and deportation rates climb as if removing the person from the community, either through detention or deportation, solves the human problem. The law becomes a legal talisman that justifies acceptance of diminishing another human being's dignity and selfhood by naming them 'illegal,' and therefore, subject to less protection. Legal systems establish rights, but humans are divinely created in God's own image. For Vincent, the mission to the vulnerable meant to assist the sick and poor everywhere.¹²⁴ Two centuries later, Frédéric Ozanam stressed a similar sentiment when he said he must go to those "without rights."¹²⁵ In our nation, the law forces some underground to live without the protection of the law. Vincent would go to the vulnerable ones residing in an unauthorized status.

2. Experience the vulnerability of the sojourner and finding the Divine

Precisely because the Missioners left that security promised by the powerful, those sent experienced the vulnerability of the immigrant and necessitated a faith and reliance upon God's protection in conjunction with the support of the community. The good news of the biblical narrative as understood by Vincent was that the one marginalized and excluded by society becomes the one who offers the gift of the Divine. When asked how to enter the realm of God, Jesus illuminated the gift of the other, the one society deems expendable or removable, as the way to experience the Divine.¹²⁶ Vincent experienced that

¹²² McKenna, "Saint," 1, 14. See also, Edward R. Udovic, C.M., "'What About The Poor?' Nineteenth-Century Paris and the Revival of Vincentian Charity," *Vincentian Heritage* 14:1(1992): 69, 74, at: <http://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol14/iss1/5/>; Boys, *Sacred Story*, 168: Roman society distinguished between the privileged and non-privileged subject to crucifixion; Balkin, *Redemption*, 21-25.

¹²³ The appellation "illegal alien" is often placed on all unauthorized persons residing in this nation prior to any formal finding of a legal proceeding to determine whether a law has been broken. In recent litigation, District Court Judge Boasberg granted a preliminary injunction to prevent detention of women and children who had been found to have a credible fear of returning to Central America, noting "...neither those being detained nor those being deterred are certain wrongdoers, but rather individuals who may have legitimate claims to asylum in this country." *R.I.L.-R v. Johnson*, 80 F.Supp. 3d 164 (D.D.C. 2015), 189. Immigration law's complexity complicates determination of whether an individual is residing under color of law or has potential legal remedies that permit one to reside here while determining status. See Motomura, *Outside*, 22-31.

¹²⁴ Conference 135, "Repetition of Prayer," 22 August 1655, CCD, 11:264.

¹²⁵ Frédéric Ozanam, letter to M. Foisset, 22 February 1848, in *Lettres de Frédéric Ozanam* (Paris: 1873), 2:217; See also, Parker Thomas Moon, *The Labor Problem and the Social Catholic Movement in France* (N.Y.: 1921), 35.

¹²⁶ Mat. 25:44-46; McKenna, "Saint," 10.

grace, exclaiming refugees knew “true religion” that could be learned by serving them.¹²⁷ Indeed, Jesus, too, may have learned about hospitality from his own experience as a refugee. Pastor and poet Theodore Conklin points out the relationship of welcoming the stranger when he ponders the influence of the Egyptian border patrol:

I wonder what Egyptian had a care
When Joseph came to seek, and by whose grace
The first were fed and sheltered; in what place
Those aliens found, at length, a dwelling there?

And afterward—I wonder if He told
His friends to feed and clothe ‘the least of these
His brothers,’ minding that Egyptian’s part
In serving strangers? But how clear ones sees
He’s still a ‘displaced person’ till He hold
His proper dwelling—our surrendered hearts!¹²⁸

Vincentian hospitality reveals that the ones who thought they were the helpers become the helped.

B. Faith and Reason

Human nature’s innate concern for security for self and loved ones confronts and challenges the narrative’s call to love the immigrant. Families lock doors to protect their homes. The reasonableness of that action suggests that nations lock their borders for security. Vincent contributed to the Catholic doctrine that reason complements faith.¹²⁹ He engaged his critics with prudence and faith when he countered those who disparaged his plans to send men and women out on mission. Immigration law raises issues of the law and the state, especially in a constitutional democracy charged to “provide for the common defense,[and] promote the general welfare.”¹³⁰ Nations need a reasonable regulatory law to administer immigration.¹³¹ Trafficking of humans across borders must be condemned and eliminated. Refugee crises need to be addressed. Yet, as in Vincent’s time, the brokenness of the regulatory law that leads to harsh consequences necessitates calling that law into

¹²⁷ Conference 201, “Simplicity and Prudence,” 14 March 1659, CCD, 12:142.

¹²⁸ Theodore Conklin, “Displaced Person,” *The Christmas Poetry of Ted Conklin* (United States: 1984), 32.

¹²⁹ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 14 September 1998, “The Church remains profoundly convinced that faith and reason ‘mutually support each other,’” article 100, at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html

¹³⁰ The Constitution of the United States, Preamble. See: <http://constitutionus.com/>

¹³¹ For a fascinating history of the diverse voices debating United States hospitality and immigration, see Daniel M. Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton: 2002), 28-45.



Vincent warned that hospitality to asylees was not without risk as it could even threaten the safety of the Mother House at Saint-Lazare. This photograph shows Saint-Lazare after it was seized by the French government and turned into a prison in 1794.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



question and adapting hospitable responses.¹³²

Almost all of Vincent's life occurred during the religious wars of the seventeenth century. Indeed, the birth of the nation state grew out of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, just twelve years before his death. Vincent knew the destruction of war. He knew power that ravages kingdoms, villages, and human beings, and banishes refugees into exile.¹³³ Vincent certainly understood the prerogatives of power as he was intimately aware of the political machinations of the powerful. Secular forces often claim reason and pragmatism to necessitate stronger militaries and greater border control to combat an invasion of peoples into their sovereign nations.

Vincent's responses to both the biblical narrative and the political struggles he navigated provide lessons on Vincentian hospitality and immigration. He lived and spoke of faith, but still acknowledged the need for prudence when dealing with the wisdom of the world. He urged all to use prudence with faith. Vincent celebrated Jesus' prudential response of "rendering unto Caesar" that which Caesar owned, and he reveled in Jesus' ability to remain faithful while simultaneously avoiding the critics' trap.¹³⁴ But he was not averse from speaking to power when necessary, or using its authority to further serve the vulnerable. When his missionaries sought to ease the misery of refugees from war, he interceded with the King to gain safe passage for their work providing food and medicine.¹³⁵ Once present, however, Vincent and his followers tended to all persons regardless of the state's designation as enemy or heretic.¹³⁶ Since then, many have followed that model. Sister

¹³² See, e.g., Brianna Lee, "Immigration Reform 2015: U.S. Asylum Backlogs Soaring, Testing Patience For Those Fleeing Persecution," *International Business Times*, online edition, 20 July 2015, at: <http://www.ibtimes.com/immigration-reform-2015-us-asylum-backlogs-soaring-testing-patience-those-fleeing-2014306>. See generally, Margaret Taylor, "What Happened to Non-LPR Cancellation? Rationalizing Immigration Enforcement by Restoring Durable Relief from Removal," 30 *Journal of Law and Politics* (2015), 527; Massey, "Border Enforcement," 1016-17; David A. Martin, "Resolute Enforcement is Not Just for Restrictionists: Building a Stable and Efficient Immigration Enforcement System," 30 *Journal of Law and Politics* (2015), 416-17.

¹³³ Conference 125, "Repetition of Prayer," 24 July 1655, CCD, 11:189-190.

¹³⁴ "Simplicity and Prudence," CCD, 12:149.

¹³⁵ See Document 103, "Safe-conduct for Missionaries Sent to Champagne and Picardy," 14 February 1651, CCD, 13a:367.

¹³⁶ Román, *A Biography*, 522-524.

Rosalie Rendu, for example, ministered to the wounded of both sides in the revolution of 1848, refusing to accept the conventional wisdom of the day to only heal those from one's own side.¹³⁷

Faith also compelled Vincent to challenge the King. When Cardinal de Retz fled France and the wrath of Cardinal Mazarin, the Vincentians at the Mission House in Rome gave him sanctuary—thus angering Mazarin and placing them under threat. Even the Mother House at Saint-Lazare faced some risk. Yet, Vincent responded by accepting it: “If you grant asylum to so many refugees, your house may be sacked sooner by the soldiers; I see that clearly. The question is, however, whether, because of this danger, you should refuse to practice such a beautiful virtue as charity.”¹³⁸ Vincent also warned that reason could easily be subverted by rationalizing excuses. The outcast and the vulnerable, precisely because they knock at the door and present themselves as children of God and not as a status written by law, present a challenge for all who adopt Vincent's legacy. For Vincent, faith united with reason inspired his innovative responses.

IV. Vincentian Hospitality: Responding to Today's Gerim in the United States

A. Residing as Undocumented: “You shall not oppress the stranger.” (Ex. 22:21)

Over eleven million undocumented persons reside in the United States. Many pay taxes, support families, and contribute to the common good. Experts say our nation possesses neither the legal nor financial resources to deport all of them.¹³⁹ Within our communities, they are today's biblical *gerim*, assimilating into our midst, but living in an unauthorized status. Although they occupy many different social strata, they share the common characteristic of lacking documents demonstrating lawful presence, with fewer legal rights than permanent residents or citizens. Under the intense effort to deport, many lead lives of constant fear. Although the Obama Administration claims to prioritize removals targeting the most serious criminals, the evidence suggests that many who may have committed misdemeanors, or simply been unlucky enough to be detained, constitute the greatest number of forced removals.¹⁴⁰ Not only have countless families been disrupted by deportation, but whole communities and churches composed of mostly United States citizens and lawful permanent residents have suffered unreasonable harm from the

¹³⁷ Louise Sullivan, D.C., *Sister Rosalie Rendu: A Daughter of Charity On Fire with Love for the Poor* (Chicago: 2006), 178-181.

¹³⁸ Letter 1678, “To Louis Champion, Superior, In Montmirail,” 6 November 1653, CCD, 5:49. See also Pierre Coste, C.M., *The Life and Works of St. Vincent de Paul*, 3 vols. (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1987), 2:7-13.

¹³⁹ Most experts suggest this nation has the infrastructure and resources to deport about 400,000 persons per year. However, with over eleven million persons now facing potential deportation, other solutions are necessary. Motomura, *Outside*, 53. See also, Martin, “Resolute,” 425-26.

¹⁴⁰ “Since President Obama took office, two-thirds of the nearly two million deportation cases involve people who had committed minor infractions, including traffic violations, or had no criminal record at all.” Ginger Thompson and Sarah Cohen, “More Deportations Follow Minor Crimes, Records Show,” *The New York Times*, 6 April 2014, at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/07/us/more-deportations-follow-minor-crimes-data-shows.html?_r=0



Holding vigil outside the Broadview Immigration Staging Center in 2013.

Courtesy of the author



intensive enforcement of the immigration law.¹⁴¹

Vincent understood and accepted the authority of the law; he did not call for the release of all the galley slaves. But he did minister to them and sought to improve their conditions. In so doing, he not only imitated the biblical narrative, but modeled it. In recruiting women to join his ministry, he recounted the transformative impact of charity. One sister, who worked with the galley slaves, told him that simply by her presence she “would not allow the jailers to beat the prisoners.”¹⁴² This young woman empowered by the Spirit stood up to the jailers and stopped the human rights violations. Vincent subsequently built a hospital to care for the galley slaves. Thus, a ministry of healing led to a reformation of the treatment of prisoners. In recognizing the humanity of the galley slave, the hearts and conduct of the prison guards were changed.

Similar acts of grace continue today. In 2007, an immigration attorney and two nuns gathered at the Broadview Immigration Staging Center to pray as the buses took deportees to O’Hare Airport. Out of that witness, some soon received permission to pray with the deportees on the buses. Further action inspired state legislation that required pastoral care for immigrants in Illinois detention facilities. The group established the Interfaith Committee for Detained Immigrants (ICDI) to coordinate pastoral visits including weekly visits in Woodstock, Illinois, and Kenosha, Wisconsin. Today, the ICDI continues those weekly pastoral vigils and visits as well as Court Watch Ministry and, most recently, they have opened two new housing facilities for released detainees to stay in prior to reunion

¹⁴¹ See Friedman Marquardt, *Living “Illegal.”* See also, *U.S. v. Aguilar*, 2015 WL 4774507 (D.C., E.D.N.Y.), 6: “children from separated families are particularly susceptible to psychological harm.” See also, Bill Ong Hing, “Ethics, Morality, and Disruption of U.S. Immigration Laws,” 63 *University of Kansas Law Review* (2015), 983. Federal enforcement efforts use “over-zealous tools that wreak unnecessary havoc on communities” and further lack “a common sense of humanity and decency.”

¹⁴² Letter from Vincent de Paul to subsequent generations of sisters working with the galley slaves, as quoted in Joseph I. Dirvin, C.M., *Louise de Marillac* (Toronto: 1970), 201.



Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia, one of the largest private detention centers built by the Corrections Corporation of America. It reported \$459.3 million in revenue in the second quarter of 2015 alone, including \$65.9 million from the women and children's detention center in Dilley, Texas. See: <http://www.cca.com/press-releases?section=Investors>

Courtesy of the author



with their families.¹⁴³

ICDI's ministries mitigate the harshness of the law. Immigration law distinguishes between humans, segregates some as welcome and others as banned; it grants blessings to some while exiling others. The law, moreover, is one which almost all call broken.¹⁴⁴ It is a civil law, yet it adopts the harshest punishment that divides families, often permanently, and eviscerates parishes, undermines communities, and weakens the nation. The rhetoric of calling individuals "illegal aliens," cutting them off from society and calling for their immediate deportation, ignores what truly happens when these modern day *gerim* are taken away from the only society many of them have known. As Justice Douglas wrote about deportation:

Banishment is punishment in the practical sense. It may deprive a man and his family of all that makes life worthwhile. Those who have their roots here have an important stake in this country. Their plans for themselves and their hopes for their children all depend on their right to stay. If they are uprooted and sent to lands no longer known to them, no longer hospitable, they become displaced, homeless people condemned to bitterness and despair.¹⁴⁵

Hospitality to the immigrant, by accompanying the *gerim* of our community, exposes the brutality of the present deportation structure and how it hurts not just the

¹⁴³ www.icdichicago.org ; Although not witnessing any contemporary beatings as in Vincent's day, two of the founders of the ICDI report that their visits to immigrant detention centers in Illinois have had a beneficial impact on prison guards and administrators, improving conditions within the facilities. See interview with Sisters JoAnn Persch, S.M., and Pat Murphy, S.M., in *Prayer, Presence and Perseverance* (forthcoming 2016, Office of Mission and Values, DePaul University). The Georgia Detention Watch has engaged in similar work near the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin Georgia. See Friedman Marquardt, *Living "Illegal,"* 233-234.

¹⁴⁴ Rev. Craig B. Mousin, "Immigration Reform: What Can Religious Voices Require From the State?" in Collier, *Religious and Ethical Perspectives*, 333. See also, Eleanor Acer and Tara Magner, "Restoring America's Commitment to Refugees and Humanitarian Protection," 27 *Georgetown Immigration Law Journal* (2013), 445. Compare President Barack Obama naming the immigration system broken: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration/immigration-action>, to Representative Paul Ryan: "our immigration system is broken," at: <http://paulryan.house.gov/issues/issue/?IssueID=9970>

¹⁴⁵ *Hirsiades v. Shaughnessy*, 342 U.S. 580, 600 (1952), J. Douglas, dissenting. See also *U.S. v. Aguilar*, *supra*.

individual, but the community and the nation. As the nation waits for Congress to address comprehensive immigration reform, this thought experiment suggests that the law's grounds for exclusions and deportation—those grounds that would have precluded all the major biblical protagonists' stories from being part of the creedal story—need to be re-examined. The harsh amendments from the last twenty years minimize mercy and discretion while failing to take account of the complexity of families residing in this nation for years.

The strictures of the law, moreover, have exacerbated the problem by limiting the individuals who otherwise would have voluntarily left. Some argue that the law has, in effect, caged them within the nation's borders.¹⁴⁶ In addition, the expansion of enforcement efforts has not been met with comparative funding for the judicial procedures, thus overwhelming the adjudicative process, causing severe backlogs in processing cases.¹⁴⁷ In recognizing the importance of an improved and effective regulatory immigration law, David Martin argues that remedies providing discretion and permanent relief should be expanded.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, he acknowledges that any effective reform will necessitate establishing a process wherein most of the eleven million unauthorized individuals can eventually obtain lawful status, thus removing an almost impossible burden on the current system.¹⁴⁹ Faith communities who accept this biblical narrative can support such goals while continuing to address the pastoral needs as members of the communities where they now reside. Loving the immigrant does not mean doing away with immigration law, but it does call for a more predictable and just process aided by the pastoral efforts of groups such as ICDI.

B. Divided Families, Widows and Unaccompanied Minors: "You shall not abuse any widow or orphans." (Exodus 22:22)

The crisis that began in the summer of 2014, with over 68,000 unaccompanied minors as well as mothers and children fleeing gang violence and chaos arriving at our borders, raises a second pressing issue with its own subset of issues within those issues of the *gerim* in our midst.¹⁵⁰ World events, wars, environmental disasters, and civil anarchy have led these children to leave families to seek refuge in our land. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) first response encouraged immediate return, sending children back to

¹⁴⁶ Massey, "Border Enforcement," 1016-17.

¹⁴⁷ "Ballooning Wait Times for Hearing Dates in Overworked Immigration Courts," Syracuse University Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), Immigration Reports, 22 September 2015. See: <http://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/405/>

¹⁴⁸ Martin, "Resolute," 458-62. For a discussion of the role of mercy in immigration law, see Allison Brownwell Tirres, "Mercy in Immigration Law," 2013 *Brigham Young University Law Review* 1563. Victor Romero posits that Christian love "should err on the side of the powerless immigrant, not the powerful government." Romero, "Prodigal Illegal," 928.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 425-26.

¹⁵⁰ ABA Commission on Immigration, "Family Immigration Detention: Why the Past Cannot Be Prologue" (31 July 2015), 17. See: http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/commission_on_immigration/FINAL%20ABA%20Family%20Detention%20Report%2008-19-15.authcheckdam.pdf. See also, Susan J. Terio, *Whose Child Am I: Unaccompanied, Undocumented Children in U.S. Immigration Custody* (Oakland, CA: 2015), 11-12.



Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, most recently beatified by Pope Francis, was assassinated while saying Mass in San Salvador on 24 March 1980.

Public Domain



the violence, expediting deportation, pre-judging by proclaiming most have no remedy before permitting them to speak with attorneys or have their day in court, and promising long detention. Government policy included detention as a means of general deterrence of future immigration.¹⁵¹ This crisis also occurs within a larger move toward using private detention centers to house many of the unauthorized awaiting legal determinations of their status.¹⁵²

On 24 July 2015, one federal court described “the egregious conditions of the holding cells” for minors held with their mothers.¹⁵³ Commenting on the building of these detention centers to address the many women and children arriving at our borders, the Court said, “It is astonishing that Defendants (DHS) have enacted a policy that requires such expensive infrastructure...”; this, when the parties had agreed to a solution to the detention of children in preceding court cases over two decades previously.¹⁵⁴ Solutions exist under the law that might admit them as refugees.¹⁵⁵ Although DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson has subsequently announced an end to the general deterrence through detention policy along with other

¹⁵¹ ABA Commission on Immigration, “Family Immigration Detention,” 22-23. See also, Wil S. Hylton, “The Shame of America’s Family Detention Camps,” *The New York Times*, 4 February 2015, at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/08/magazine/the-shame-of-americas-family-detention-camps.html>

¹⁵² The Immigration Detention Transparency and Human Rights Project, “NIJC Freedom of Information Act Litigation Reveals Systemic Lack of Accountability in Immigration Detention Contracting” (August, 2015). See: <http://immigrantjustice.org/immigration-detention-transparency-and-human-rights-project-august-2015-report>

¹⁵³ *Flores v. Johnson*, C.D.Ca. (2015), 18. See: <http://immigrantjustice.org/sites/immigrantjustice.org/files/FloresRuling%20Family%20Detention%202015%2007%2024.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁵⁵ See, for example, Dan Kowalski, “The Refugee Option Obama Will Ignore,” *Huffington Post*, 10 July 2014, at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dan-kowalski/the-refugee-option-obama-immigration_b_5559991.html; *American Immigration Council, Children in Danger: A Guide to the Humanitarian Challenge at the Border*, 10 July 2014, at: <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/special-reports/children-danger-guide-humanitarian-challenge-border>. See also, “Law Professors Letter to President Obama Regarding Fair Treatment for Unaccompanied Central American Children,” 14 July 2014, at: <http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/files/professorsletterfairnessforcentralamericanchildren.pdf>

moderating conditions, substantial detention issues still exist.¹⁵⁶

We have an enforcement law that, in the name of border control, requires the U.S. government to actually fill over 30,000 beds each night, regardless of the need to detain so many people.¹⁵⁷ Corporate profits in transporting deportees, building higher walls, and privatizing prisons expand while communities fracture.¹⁵⁸ Vincent and Catholic teaching suggest reason must dialogue with faith. But for the last several decades, Congress and the Executive have largely acted in the name of reason purportedly to increase border security before immigration reform debate commences.¹⁵⁹ Over the last twenty years, however, when Congress actually enacted greater restrictions and increased border controls, it failed its goals, as the number of undocumented increased almost four-fold to eleven million.¹⁶⁰

Vincentian prudential thinking will help ground responses, but it will also challenge the unilateral requirement of increased enforcement or detention first, prior to comprehensively fixing the law or responding to the plight of women and children. Vincent was quick to cut behind the veil of the world's rationalizations to unmask the disguise of fear. The unaccompanied minor crisis exacerbates the ongoing impasse. While the detained minors provide witness to the tragedy of the orphan, pouring money into detention and deportation before comprehensively addressing all aspects of the law calls to mind the biblical parable of filling old wineskins with weak patches that fail to hold the wine.¹⁶¹

Increased militarization of the border is called for as a reasonable solution, yet military efforts in the last half century have increased refugee flows, destabilized governments, and increased migration throughout the world. Some of the largest refugee movements have happened due to military engagements that were subsequently seen as improper and wrongfully executed. Whether it was refugees fleeing Viet Nam in the 1970s, or the masses of people now fleeing a war-torn and destabilized Middle East in 2015, these were

¹⁵⁶ Flores, 11, n.7. ABA Commission on Immigration, "Family Immigration Detention." United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Statutory Enforcement Report: The State of Civil Rights at Immigration Detention Facilities" (September 2015), at: http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/Statutory_Enforcement_Report2015.pdf Despite this earlier statement, Secretary Johnson began 2016 with "concerted, nationwide operations to take into custody and return at a greater rate" and also continued to contest and fight the District Court decision in *Flores, supra*. Department of Homeland Security Press Office, "Statement by Secretary Jeh C. Johnson on Southwest Border Security," 4 January 2016, at: <http://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/01/04/statement-secretary-jeh-c-johnson-southwest-border-security>

¹⁵⁷ Authorities are "required to incarcerate people, no matter the circumstances or the affront to human rights." See "The Madness of U.S. Immigration Policy, Continued," *Bloomberg View*, 27 September 2013, at: <http://www.bloombergvew.com/articles/2013-09-26/the-madness-of-u-s-immigration-policy-continued>. See also: "Immigrant Detention Bed Quota Timeline," National Immigrant Justice Center, at: <http://www.immigrantjustice.org/search/node/Immigrant%20Detention%20Bed%20Quota%20Timeline>

¹⁵⁸ Betsy Woodruff, "Prison Gets Rich Locking Up Preschoolers," 15 September 2015, at: <http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/277-75/32281-prison-gets-rich-locking-up-preschoers>

¹⁵⁹ Rep. Michael McCaul, chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, stated, "Our border must be dealt with through regular order and in a step-by-step approach—not through any type of comprehensive immigration reform." See: <http://homeland.house.gov/press-release/committee-homeland-security-passes-secure-our-borders-first-act>. See also, "Secure Our Borders First Act of 2015," at: <https://homeland.house.gov/secure-our-borders/>

¹⁶⁰ Massey, "Border Enforcement," 1016-17.

¹⁶¹ Matthew: 9:16-17.



Many of the martyrs of Central America are memorialized in an annual prayer vigil at Fort Benning, Georgia, each November in remembrance of the assassination of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter on 16 November 1989. The fence which excludes those seeking to cross becomes transformed with a portrait of the daughter, Celina Ramos, and crosses for Archbishop Oscar Romero, Jean Donovan, and others whose lives were lost to the tragic violence.

Courtesy of the author

wars commenced under false pretenses that led to a crisis in the nation state's response to refugees. Central American refugees seeking safe haven by crossing our borders over the last three decades, including the recent arrival of women and children, were spawned in part by United States intervention in Central America. Such examples can be found in the 1954 coup in Guatemala, or the United States' training of many of the murderers of civilian leaders throughout the region, for instance the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980.¹⁶² The murders of church leaders and the many non-governmental leaders who would otherwise have strengthened civil society in Central America has led, in part, to the chaos and gang violence now forcing thousands of youth to flee.¹⁶³ At the

¹⁶² Penny Lernoux, *Cry of the People: The Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America—The Catholic Church in Conflict With U.S. Policy* (N.Y.: 1982); Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Garden City: 1983); Raymond Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit: U.S. Policy and El Salvador* (N.Y.: 1984); Lesley Gill, *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas* (Durham: 2004); and *From Madness to Hope: the 12 Year War in El Salvador: Report of the Commission for Truth for El Salvador*, United States Institute of Peace, 26 January 2001, 8: "By its response to the murder of the Jesuits, 10 years after the assassination of Monsignor Romero by the nightmarish creation of the 'death squads,' the military had showed how far its position had hardened in daring to eliminate those it viewed as opponents, either because they were opponents or they voiced concerns, including church workers and journalists." Available at: <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/ElSalvador-Report.pdf>. See also, *Matter of Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova*, 26 I & N. Dec. 494, 502-04 (BIA 2015). Respondent who had been the Director of the Salvadoran National Guard and the Minister of Defense knew that the National Guard had been involved in thousands of extrajudicial killings and human rights abuses, including the four North American churchwomen murdered in 1980, a labor activist in charge of agrarian reform in 1981, and did not bring any of the individuals to justice. *Doe v. Gonzalez*, 484 F. 3d 445, 446 (7th Cir. 2007). Salvadoran Army Colonel ordered by superiors to assassinate Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J., the President of the University of Central America, in 1989. Ellacuría was murdered, along with five other Jesuit scholars, their housekeeper, and her daughter, on 16 November 1989. *Arce v. Garcia*, 434 F.3d 1254, 1264 (11th Cir. 2006). "The evidence includes reports on abductions, torture, and murder by the [Salvadoran] military." See also, Myers and Colwell, *Our God is Undocumented*, 11-12. The SOA Watch has attempted to identify some of the military personnel accused of violating human rights who received military training from the United States, see: <http://www.soaw.org/about-the-soawhinsec/13-soawhinsec-graduates/4281-soa-grads-database-online-ur>

¹⁶³ Certainly the complexity of this issue means there were other reasons for flight. See, e.g., "Childhood and Migration in Central and North America: Causes, Policies, Practices and Challenges," Center for Gender and Refugee Studies (February 2015), at: http://cgrs.uchastings.edu/sites/default/files/Childhood_Migration_HumanRights_FullBook_English.pdf. Deborah Anker and Paul Lawrence, "Third Generation Gangs, Warfare in Central America, and Refugee Law's Political Opinion Ground," *Immigration Briefings* (October 2014), 1. The impunity of the many that planned and implemented the human rights violations in Central America further exacerbates the failure to address these additional issues.

very least, the resultant dismantling of the non-governmental infrastructure essential for democratic societies under the rule of law left a gaping void of protection. This evisceration of civil society now gets labeled as an immigration problem, rather than looking deeper into the cause of human rights violations, or acknowledging the United States' role in the assassination of church workers, leaders, and civilians. James Luther Adams describes "the voluntary association as a distinctive and indispensable institution of democratic society" and that they serve "as mediation structures in making the consent of the governed into an effective, and often dissenting power."¹⁶⁴ The loss of those indispensable elements eviscerated the very core of the societies that could have prevented, or at least, mitigated the subsequent violence that forced people to flee their native lands.

If the failure of our civilian leaders to command the military properly produced so many refugees, why, in the name of reason, do some look to militarization first to solve our immigration problem?¹⁶⁵ Reason should expect militarization will cause more refugees. As Bruggemann notes, "With the worldwide economic and environmental crisis that indicates no soon-to-come abatement and with the frantic response of intensified militarism, the world political economy is actively engaged in the production of exiles, as was the old Babylonian empire."¹⁶⁶ We need the biblical narrative now more than ever to engage in the debate and expose the fallacy of expanding militarization as the only response.

Vincent grew fatigued by the constant warfare in his time and urged all to "pray for peace," but he also unceasingly worked to ease the suffering of refugees.¹⁶⁷ If reason and faith are to dialogue on how to improve our immigration laws, persons of faith can engage the debate to break the impasse and suggest changes. Although the political debate remains stymied, many proposals for effective change have been made.¹⁶⁸ The Obama Administration has taken executive action in the face of this obstruction but it too has been shackled by litigation.¹⁶⁹ The *Flores* litigation has provided a hopeful sign that the DHS will

¹⁶⁴ James Luther Adams, *Voluntary Associations: Socio-cultural Analyses and Theological Interpretation* (Chicago: 1986), 154, 218.

¹⁶⁵ Americans are mistaken to be "enthralled" with military solutions for all the world's problems. See, for example, Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism, How Americans Are Seduced by War* (Oxford: 2005), 1, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Bruggemann, *Theology*, 78. Footnote omitted.

¹⁶⁷ Conference 125, "Repetition of Prayer," 24 July 1655, CCD, 11:189-90.

¹⁶⁸ See, e.g.: American Bar Association, "Reforming the Immigration System: Proposals to Promote Independence, Fairness, Efficiency, and Professionalism in the Adjudication of Removal Cases 23" (2010), at: http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/media/nosearch/immigration_reform_executive_summary_012510.authcheckdam.pdf. Motomura, *Outside*, 208-233.

¹⁶⁹ President Obama has taken steps to fix what he calls our broken immigration system. See: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration/immigration-action>. See also, Franczek Radelet, "White House Releases Report on Improving and Modernizing the Immigration System to Meet 21st Century Needs," 30 July 2015, at: <http://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=560933cf-5836-48f3-bff3-60ed86755f84>. President Obama has also implemented the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that has provided temporary relief for young persons who were brought to the United States as children. See Motomura, *Outside*, 173, 175. Subsequent efforts to expand this program to others have been enjoined by a Texas court. *Texas v. United States*, 86 F. Supp. 3d 591, 604 (S.D. Tex.) *aff'd*, 809 F.3d 134 (5th Cir. 2015), *as revised* (25 Nov. 2015) *cert. granted*, No. 15-674, 2016 WL 207257 (U.S. 19 Jan. 2016).

be required to end the emphasis on detention, especially of women and minors.¹⁷⁰

This article's main focus, however, seeks to illustrate the faith-based response based upon the biblical narrative, including alternatives to detention, and efforts to mitigate the harshness of any detention that might be necessary. The example of the ICDI visiting those in prison, praying with deportees, and expanding housing opportunities for the least of these echo some of Vincent's work. Such models should be replicated throughout the land. Religious organizations have had remarkable success in resettling refugees for decades. Instead of the costly, enormous detention infrastructure derided by the *Flores* court, some of those expenditures could be provided to not-for-profits to build upon the refugee resettlement model to house and care for those who do not have families or support.¹⁷¹

Second, critics ask whether generosity would simply serve as a magnet for more to come. They add that the biblical story of hospitality does not work in the real world today, and therefore we cannot afford to live the aspirational goals of a narrative that no longer applies. Vincent knew these arguments of conventional wisdom would confront his mission. He warned his friends that the alleged wisdom of the world would continually urge them not to go out and associate with the poor and distressed because it would be too hard, too dangerous, and too expensive. He was counseled against visiting the mentally ill or the galley slaves, but he did. He was warned not to go to the border towns where wars transformed residents into starving refugees, but he did. Most apt, especially for the current crisis of women and children at our border, critics challenged him to not care for the abandoned children as they were already overwhelmed by other ministries. Vincent reminded all:

Let's remember, brothers, what Our Lord said to His disciples: 'Let the children come to me,' and be very much on our guard against preventing them from coming to us; otherwise, we'll be opposed to Him....If Our Lord were still living among us and saw children abandoned by their fathers and mothers, as these are, do you think...that He'd also be willing to abandon them? ...we'd be unfaithful to His grace...if we were to refuse to accept the trouble we have with it.¹⁷²

Finally, the biblical narrative's call still challenges people of faith to release the captives and bring good news to the poor. Vincent perceived that we misread that story if we fail to realize that it is we, those with the power to extend Vincentian hospitality, who

¹⁷⁰ See text at Note 153 for details on *Flores* litigation.

¹⁷¹ The Catholic Church, and organizations such as Church World Service, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and Refugee One have had a remarkable history of resettling refugees in this nation. As such they provide a model, along with the relatively new work of ICDI, as to what might be accomplished if funds that now go to private detention corporations were reallocated to religious organizations and other not-for-profits to house and address the needs of refugees and the *gerim* in our midst. See: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/migrants-refugees-and-travelers/refugee-resettlement/index.cfm>; <http://cwsglobal.org/our-work/refugees-and-immigrants/>; <http://www.hias.org/work/resettling-refugees>; <http://www.refugeeone.org/>. See also, Mousin, "Immigration Reform," 341-42.

¹⁷² Conference 195, "Purpose of the Congregation of the Mission," 6 December 1658, CCD, 12:78-79.



St. Vincent's proclamation, "I am the captive" is captured in this Leon Bonnat painting of the galley slave's ball and chain being transferred to him as part of his ministry to the galley prisoners. Oil on canvas. Original in St. Nicolas-des-Champs.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



are the captives in need of release.¹⁷³ Vincent confessed, "I'm held captive."¹⁷⁴ We are the captives: captive to the world's temptations that we seek to defend at all costs and to deny others created in God's image. In welcoming the stranger, providing hospitality to the sojourner, and loving the immigrant, we release the captives; we liberate ourselves as God intended us to be free. People of faith can glean the benefits of loving the neighbor and the immigrant, receiving their gifts and knowing God's freedom.

In what is probably Vincent's most fitting metaphor on Vincentian hospitality and immigration law, he asked of his friends who would turn their purpose away from the good works that had already begun. He answered this question, describing as those:

...who seek only to enjoy themselves...people who have only a narrow outlook, confining their perspective and plans to a certain circumference within which they shut themselves away, so to speak, in one spot; they don't want to leave it, and if they're shown something outside it and go near to have a look, they immediately go back to their center, like snails into their shells.¹⁷⁵

Instead, he pled with those living in his legacy to "stand firm" and "stand fast" against arguments to cease their ministries of service.¹⁷⁶ Given his faith and reason, how can we deport the abandoned children at our door when we have the means to assist? In the light of the failed militarization of our border, the misguided military interventions that have undermined civilian governments and generated the chaos forcing children to leave, reason fails to support our abandoning children to detention and deportation.

¹⁷³ See, for example, Conference 205, "Indifference," 16 May 1659, CCD, 12:187-200.

¹⁷⁴ "Indifference," CCD, 12:188, 194. Vincent states, "Openness to God's Will must set the captive free"; yet he also acknowledges "I'm held captive." See also, Romero, "Illegal Prodigal," 930-31.

¹⁷⁵ "Purpose of the Congregation of the Mission," CCD, 12:81.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 81-82.

V. Conclusion

The stories we tell define our lives and our nation. The biblical narrative of an Exodus people has inspired the laws and hospitality of our nation for over three centuries. Yet counter-narratives also contest for defining who we are as a people. Some story tellers have told us we can only survive as a nation if we deny, detain, and deport those who have contributed to our nation or who seek the safety of our land. To simply deny, detain, and deport does not comport with a call to love the immigrant.

Two contemporary crises—a broken immigration legal system that permits a class of persons with uncertain legal status to increase to over eleven million persons; and the thousands of unaccompanied minors, as well as mothers with children, who seek safety at our borders, invite all participants to find a better rule of law. All of us participate in a Republic whose founding members drew much from the Exodus narrative and whose laws provided both the substance and the inspiration to think about covenants, laws, and how societies define themselves and treat all as equals—whether through the Genesis story of being created in the image of God, or through the rights that became associated with equality for all.

Given that current immigration law, if it had been applied in biblical times, would have erased the biblical story—our faith communities and nation as we know them would not have happened. What does that law deny us today? The biblical narrative's call to love challenges all to recognize that the actual implementation of immigration law contradicts its very ethos. Our current system of denial, detention, and deportation has not served us well. Denying dignity of the sojourner in our midst, we have expanded the numbers of persons living in this nation without authorized status; detention has occurred at great cost while dividing families and violating human rights; and deportation of individuals who were contributing members of society has harmed our communities and overburdened the judicial system. If we forget the narrative we invite the inhumanity detention and banishment of our neighbors has caused. Our civil society weakens with each loss.

The biblical narrative suggests an alternative response. The narrative gives more credence to forgiveness. It suggests a community that welcomes the sojourner while still holding them accountable.¹⁷⁷ It teaches, moreover, that it is not just Vincentian hospitality, but a story of welcome that arises in the many stories told by people inspired by this narrative. As such, it offers hope for the many in this country, beyond those participating in the legacy of Vincent, to change our nation's laws. Vincent based his beliefs on the same biblical stories that have generated so many faith communities, and even the secular laws of our nation. Furthermore, while the nation debates or delays discussion on comprehensive immigration reform, we still belong to faith communities that have been sent out to be with the vulnerable. Organizations like the Interfaith Coalition for Detained Immigrants reveal

¹⁷⁷ See, for example, Thomas Schafer, "The Radical Reformation and the Jurisprudence of Forgiveness," in *Christian Perspectives on Legal Thought*, Michael W. McConnell, Robert F. Cochran Jr., and Angela C. Carmella, eds. (New Haven: 2001), 321.

the value of presence, prayer, and perseverance. While engaged in the political debate, those inspired by the narrative must also join similar efforts to strengthen our communities by welcoming the *gerim* in our midst.

We are told the force of the biblical narrative has been lost because modernity or post-modernity eviscerates its historical accuracy, or the metanarrative's demise leaves it as just one more competing story. Nonetheless, we still must make choices about what stories define us. We have a legacy of Vincentian hospitality and a legacy of biblical hospitality to love the immigrant. Our times invoke our story. The immigrants in our midst and at our door call us to continually reinterpret that narrative, and to give new meaning to loving the immigrant in our time.



5592.

Sermon sur la charité.

J. David, Inv.

Challamel edit, 4 R. de l'Abbaye, F. St. G.

Vincent de Paul preaching on charity.

From a series of engravings in Augustin Challamel, *Saint-Vincent de Paul* (1841).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Vincent de Paul in full surplice, hand upon a book.

Oil painting in the Vincentian provincial office, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





The east facade of the United States Supreme Court Building includes Moses with the Ten Commandments.

CC BY-SA 3.0





Im Registrierungsaal auf Ellis Island.
Nach einer Photographie gezeichnet von Ewald Thiel.

Inspection of immigrants at Ellis Island in 1897.

Etching by Ewald Thiel published in *Die Gartenlaube*.

Public Domain





A Syrian refugee camp pictured in summer of 2015
during the ongoing crisis.

Public Domain

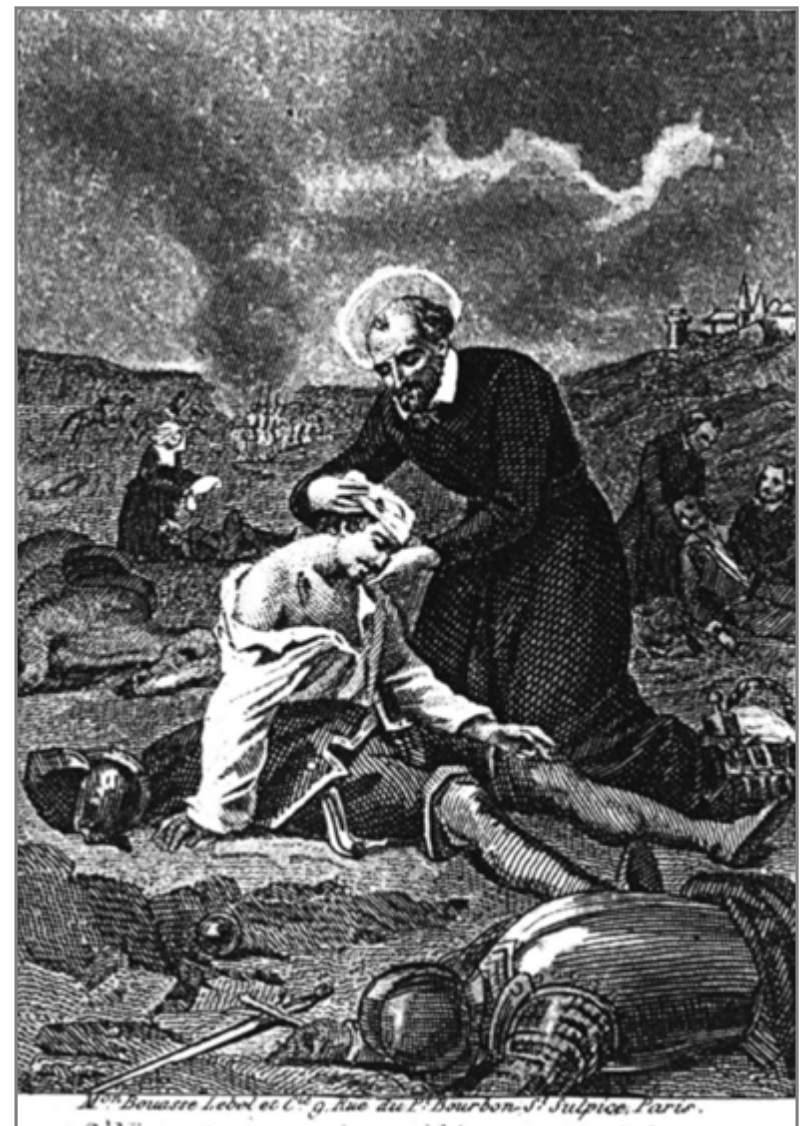
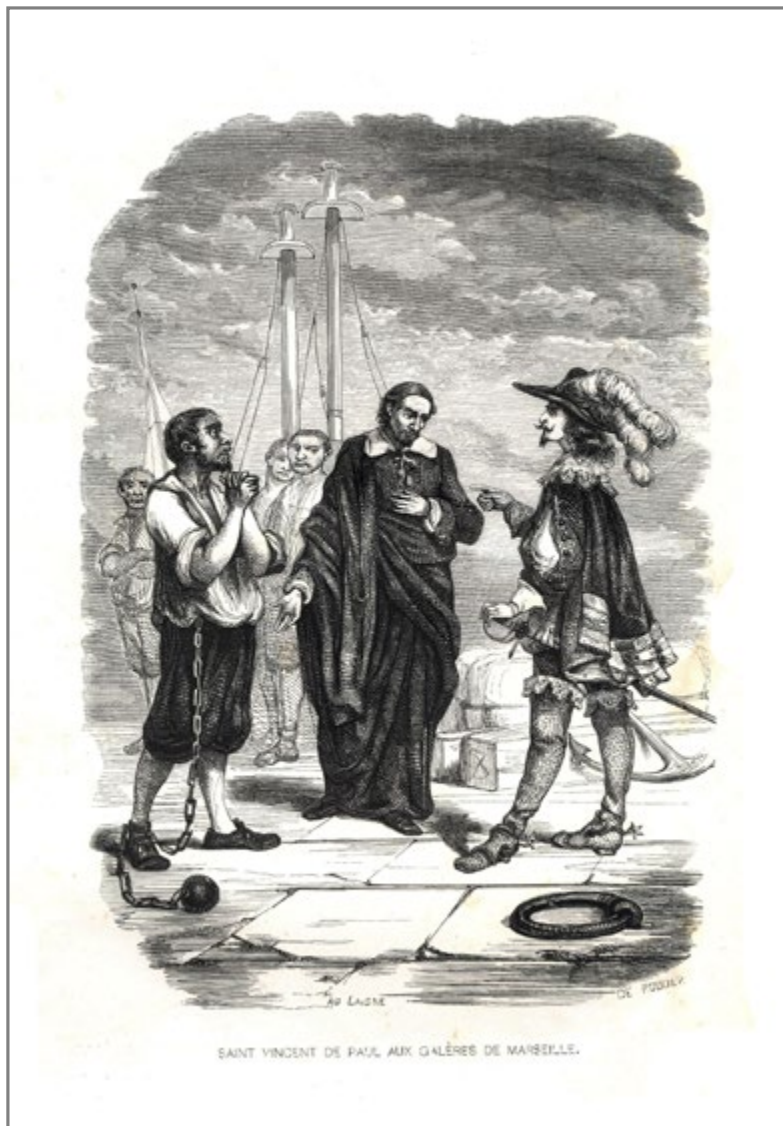




Edward Hicks painting, *Noah's Ark*, reveals one element of the biblical narrative's influence on United States culture. Oil on canvas, 1846. Currently held by the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Public Domain





St. Vincent de Paul not only sent Missioners to serve prisoners and refugees but believed he, too, was sent by the Gospel of Luke to heal and advocate for the detained, refugees, and the maimed.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Vincent warned that hospitality to asylees was not without risk as it could even threaten the safety of the Mother House at Saint-Lazare. This photograph shows Saint-Lazare after it was seized by the French government and turned into a prison in 1794.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Holding vigil outside the Broadview Immigration Staging Center in 2013.

Courtesy of the author





Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia, one of the largest private detention centers built by the Corrections Corporation of America. It reported \$459.3 million in revenue in the second quarter of 2015 alone, including \$65.9 million from the women and children's detention center in Dilley, Texas. See: <http://www.cca.com/press-releases?section=Investors>

Courtesy of the author





Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, most recently beatified by Pope Francis, was assassinated while saying Mass in San Salvador on 24 March 1980.

Public Domain





Many of the martyrs of Central America are memorialized in an annual prayer vigil at Fort Benning, Georgia, each November in remembrance of the assassination of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter on 16 November 1989. The fence which excludes those seeking to cross becomes transformed with a portrait of the daughter, Celina Ramos, and crosses for Archbishop Oscar Romero, Jean Donovan, and others whose lives were lost to the tragic violence.

Courtesy of the author





St. Vincent's proclamation, "I am the captive" is captured in this Leon Bonnat painting of the galley slave's ball and chain being transferred to him as part of his ministry to the galley prisoners. Oil on canvas. Original in St. Nicolas-des-Champs.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Hospitality on a Vincentian Campus: Welcoming the Stranger Outside our Tent

ANNELLE FITZPATRICK, CSJ, PH.D.

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[previous
article](#)

[next
article](#)

Introduction

The demographics of the United States are rapidly changing. Sociological research reveals that up until the late 1950s America was almost exclusively a Judeo-Christian nation. In 1965, however, Congress passed the Hart-Cellar Immigration Act which radically altered the demographic landscape of the United States. Up until the passage of that revolutionary legislation, the majority of immigrants to America (70%) were of European descent. Today, that is not the case. Ensuing legislation provided for the admission of immigrants from “underrepresented” nations, so immigration from Europe was capped and there was a dramatic decrease in the number of immigrants from traditionally Catholic nations (e.g. Ireland, Italy, Poland, etc.). Over the past five decades, millions upon millions of immigrants have come to our shores from nations such as China, India, Punjab, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Syria, Vietnam, Malaysia, Nigeria, Somalia and throughout Latin America. Many of these newcomers have brought with them religious beliefs and cultural traditions that are unfamiliar to most Americans. Today, Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Bahias, are now not only our neighbors and colleagues at the workplace, but very often, their sons and daughters are attending Catholic Colleges and Universities.

Today, religious congregations that sponsor institutions of higher education are keenly aware that the demographic and religious composition of Catholic universities has radically changed. Long gone are the days when vast majorities of faculty and students were “cradle Catholics” (i.e. graduates of Catholic schools and imbued with a sense of the Catholic “culture”), and administrative positions were held by priests and vowed religious. Statistics gathered by the Institutional Research and Market Analytics Strategy Group stated that in 2010, DePaul University, the largest Catholic university in the United States, reported that only 33% of students identify themselves as Catholic, and 45% of the student body failed to identify themselves as being a part of a traditional faith-based religion. Likewise, St. John’s University, with 21,354 students, reports that only 46% of their students identify themselves as Catholic. Statistics such as these present serious challenges for sponsoring congregations concerned about preserving the spiritual component of a faith-based education. In response to these radically changing demographics, religious congregations have asked themselves: “How can we maintain our Catholic identity when both our employees and students are so diverse?”

Valiant attempts are being made, and significant funds committed, to shore up the Catholic identity of educational and healthcare institutions by establishing offices such as a Vice-President for Mission/Sponsorship or an “Office of Mission” whose primary task is to preserve and propagate the philosophical and theological underpinnings of Catholic institutions. For example, on campuses sponsored by the Congregation of the Mission, known by many as the Vincentians, pictures and statues of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac are everywhere. The names of these two giants are even chiseled into the very bricks and mortar of Vincentian institutions. Activities such as Founder’s Week



Vincent de Paul, Father of the Clergy; Vincent helping the poor.

Stained glass, St. Thomas More Church, Jamaica campus, St. John's University, N.Y.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



are held, and Vincentian medals are awarded to individuals who demonstrate Saint Vincent's selfless commitment to the poor and disenfranchised. The mantras of "service" and "hospitality" are imbedded into the mission statements of every Vincentian institution.

However, in our enthusiasm for propagating the Vincentian value of "hospitality," particularly as it relates to the poor, I believe that we might be losing sight of a unique opportunity to expand our sense of its meaning (enthusiastic welcoming of the stranger) to our non-Christian students and parents who might be totally unfamiliar with the Catholic culture. On days when we sponsor an Open House or New Student & Parent Orientation sessions, do we speak exclusively about Catholic and Gospel values? Does it sometimes sound like we believe that Catholics have a monopoly on compassion and care for the poor? Could we also reference other faith traditions that underscore and resonate with Vincentian values such as concern for the poor and marginalized? Could we be more inclusive and acknowledge that we seek to galvanize the spiritual energy contained in *all* of our students. Thus, we again underscore the importance and "value-added benefits" of a Catholic education by letting parents know that we will do everything we can to offer *spiritual nourishment* to their sons and daughters, for religious belief, regardless of one's particular tradition, is a major component of what we offer—a faith based education! By no means am I suggesting that we mute our Catholic identity or spiritual beliefs; what I am saying is that we must be extra sensitive to how our words are heard and interpreted by non-Catholics who are new to the Catholic culture.

Researchers so often tell us that members of Generation X and Millennials often suffer from a condition called "spiritual ennui." Vincent himself spoke of spiritual poverty, as well as material poverty, a condition that he, and founders of all religions, tells us can be alleviated by service to others. Vincent reminds us "Empty yourself of self."¹ What an opportunity to build bridges among diverse faith traditions and to explore the challenges of self-sacrifice inherent in all spiritual traditions. Given the sobering statistics related to religious diversity in many Catholic institutions—many Catholic educational, healthcare,

¹ Letter 153, "Advice to Antoine Durand," 1656, in *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, ed. and trans. by Jacqueline Kilar, D.C., Marie Poole, D.C., et al, 1-14 (New York: New City Press, 1985-2014), 11:311. Hereafter CCD.

and social service agencies now report less than fifty percent of their clients, employees, or students identify themselves as Catholic—I think that we as Vincentians must do more to foster the virtue of hospitality, getting to know the stranger in our midst, and actively welcoming the non-Catholic student into our community, thus widening the circle of spiritual dialogue.

All agree that an essential component within the Vincentian milieu, be it at a university, a parish, or a shelter for the homeless, is the central virtue of hospitality. Yet, hospitality is a word that now encompasses many different images—we even now offer a major in Hospitality Management! Thus, as a backdrop for this discussion, I want to use the scriptural passage recorded in Genesis 18. In this foundational story for the three Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, we find the Patriarch Abraham sitting in his tent when he notices three strangers in the distance. The Bible tells us that Abraham runs out to meet these men, and that he immediately invites them into his tent to refresh themselves and to share a meal with both himself and his wife, Sarah. The Genesis account is further embellished in both the Talmud and the Midrash where the Rabbis tell us that Abraham purposely pitched his tent in the “crossroads,” opening all four flaps so that he could signal to strangers passing by that they were most welcome to make their home with him. Abraham was demonstrating the central Jewish mitzvah, *Hachnasat Orchim*—the virtue of welcoming the stranger with unconditional hospitality, that is, with no expectation of recompense.

The Call to Erect “Abraham’s Tent” On Vincentian Campuses

Recently I reflected on Genesis 18 and, as a follower of Vincent, I asked myself what this passage tells us about Abraham’s personality. Three observations jumped out at me. First, Abraham wanted to get to know the strangers in his midst. He didn’t just feed them; he invited them into his home. Secondly, Abraham humbled himself before these strangers. He washed their feet and called himself their servant, truly a Vincentian hallmark. And, thirdly, Abraham clearly showed these strangers that they were warmly welcome in his land. This 3,000 year old story should not only continue to capture our imagination, but it should also challenge us to be aware and sensitive to non-Catholic students, the stranger in our land, many of whom find themselves bewildered by flyers on bulletin boards with unfamiliar words inviting students to Eucharistic celebrations, Good Friday Walks, or Vincentian Service Opportunities.

I believe that we, like Abraham, must be alert to the stranger walking in the distance on our campuses and wholeheartedly embrace the challenge of hospitality. We must ask ourselves: What must it be like to be an outsider looking in? Do many of our non-Catholic students feel simply tolerated? Not welcomed? Do we, like Abraham, run out to welcome them? Are we truly anxious to really get to know them? To learn about their Gods? Their beliefs? Their rituals? The key to understanding the biblical virtue of hospitality as demonstrated in this passage is that Abraham rushes out to greet these strangers, he does

not wait for them to approach him to begin the conversation. He takes the initiative by inviting them into his tent to dine with him and his wife. Abraham, it appears, is anxious to get to know these new comers.

On our campuses we host many clubs: the Muslim Association; the Hindu Association; the Jewish Student Association, etc. While such associations are important sources of support and cultural nourishment for our students, I lament that these organizations might encourage students to often remain within their own religious silos. I have often pondered the possibility of building a variety of forums called “Abraham’s Tent,” wherein faculty and students could discuss the virtue of hospitality together along with a variety of issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and Wall Street greed, for example. This would include the wide spectrum of religious perspectives found on our campus. Such forums might give rise to a greater awareness that concern for the poor, the marginalized, and disenfranchised is a core value inherent in all the world’s major religions.

Hospitality is a “mutual gift”: the Jewish perspective

Our Catholic students might be surprised to learn that in Hebrew class their Jewish classmates were taught a lesson that embodies the spirit of Vincent de Paul: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so many have entertained angels without knowing it.”² Catholic students might be unaware that their Jewish colleagues have a world-wide organization similar to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul called *Tikkun Olam*, which literally translates to “repairing the world.” The concept of repairing the world is found in writings from the early Rabbinic period and is also referenced in the Kabbalah.

The Kabbalah teaches that when *Ein Sof* (The Ineffable God) willed to create human beings, He made humanity in the image of God’s own likeness. However, when God poured forth the radiance of the Divine presence into humans, the intensity of *Ein Sof*’s light was so great that the vessels shattered, filling the material world with both light and darkness, good and evil. Therefore, the devout Jew is obligated to restore God’s light back into the world. He/she does this through the great *Mitzvah* of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing and restoring God’s creation). *Tikkun Olam* clubs bring together committed young Jewish students devoted to bringing God’s light into the world through healing, repairing, and transforming some of the darkest corners of our planet. Since the desire to make this world a better place is also fundamental to the Jewish tradition, Jewish students who belong to a chapter of *Tikkun Olam* would have much in common with activities sponsored by Campus Ministry or the Society of St. Vincent de Paul—repairing homes devastated by Hurricane Katrina, working in soup kitchens and food pantries, etc.

What about Sikh students?

Likewise, what do we as Catholics know about the Sikh tradition? We often expect “them” to know about Vincent and Jesus, but perhaps it is time for us to learn about their

² Hebrews 13:1-2.



Popular depiction of Guru Nanak (1469-1539),
founder of Sikhism and the first Sikh Guru.

Public Domain



beliefs so that we can truly welcome them into our tent. What do we know about Guru Nanak or the Guru Granth Sahib? By discovering points of synergy between Christianity and Sikhism, I believe that we can build stronger and more vibrant faith communities on campus. I truly believe that Sikh students could be enticed to partake in many of the volunteer activities offered by the Office of Campus Ministry if we truly went the extra mile to actively invite them to join us. For example, inherent in the Sikh tradition is the concept of *Seva*: the Sikh mandate to be of service to others. To a Sikh, being of service is not just a nice thing to do, it is a religious command and Sikhs who fail to respond to the presence of God in the poor and marginalized cannot possibly reach *mukti* (absorption into God). Thus, they will be subjected to many more rebirths until they learn to recognize and honor the divine in the lowliest of persons.

If we could continue to create opportunities for dialogue, opportunities where a Sikh student could tell us about Guru Nanak, and a Catholic student could tell them about Vincent de Paul or Louise de Marillac, we would not only enlarge the circle but deepen the bond between religious traditions and, most importantly, deepen the spiritual dimension of the entire campus. For example, there is a wonderful story of a Sikh *Sant* (Saint) who is criticized by his followers for giving water to a dying enemy soldier. In response to the criticism, the *Sant* says: "I did not see the enemy, I only saw the face of God!" Does that not resonate with Vincent's challenge to always turn the coin? That is the essence of *Seva*, yet it also embodies the essence of Vincent's spirit. By encouraging students to share stories from their traditions we would not only enlarge the circle of those being invited into our tent, thus being nourished on a spiritual level, but we would also make all of our students more culturally competent and keenly aware of the richness of other traditions.

I personally witnessed a dramatic outpouring of *Seva* when groups of Sikh students came to Rockaway, New York, immediately after Hurricane Sandy. It took the Sikh community of Richmond Hill, New York, less than 24 hours to come to Rockaway with

cauldrons of soup, cases of bottled water, and piles of home-cooked naan bread to distribute to their non-Sikh neighbors. In fact, they arrived 24 hours earlier than the Red Cross! I am certain Sikh students would enjoy hearing of Vincent's genius at both galvanizing and organizing the Ladies of Charity into a formidable response team. In addition, Sikhs have the religious obligation of *Langar*, feeding those who come to the *Gurdwara* (Sikh temple). Attached to every *Gurdwara* is a communal kitchen where Sikhs and strangers in the land, often the homeless or visitors, are offered food on a daily basis without any expectation of payment. So central is the theme of hospitality to a Sikh that a *Gurdwara* must have a *Langar* attached or it is not a house of God.

What about Hindu students?

One of the salient hallmarks of a Vincentian university is the Office of Campus Ministry. Very often, weekly schedules are posted listing a variety of activities such as Eucharistic celebrations or Eucharistic Adoration. I believe most Hindu students don't have a clue what those words mean. Yet, if we could create forums where our students could share their reflections on "What nourishes you along your journey" we might be startled at the answer.

Central to Hindu worship is the religious ritual of *Darshan* wherein a Hindu sits, in total silence, before the image of a deity. Prayers are silent and the image is hidden behind a curtain until the *Pandit* (Hindu Priest), dramatically opens the curtains and displays the image of the deity. I have sat and prayed at numerous *Darshan* services and it is the closest ritual to Eucharistic adoration one can find. Total silence; staring at the Divine, the Divine staring back at you. This unique religious ceremony concludes when the priest closes the curtain, similar to Catholics returning the Eucharist to the locked doors of the tabernacle. Likewise, Hindus have sacred food called *Prasad* (food that gives peace). This is food available only in the *Mandir* (Hindu temple). *Prasad* is offered to the deities, blessed by the Priest, and consumed by the worshipper. Would that definition sound familiar to Catholics? Can you imagine the depth of a conversation between a devout Catholic student and a devout Hindu student concerning sacred food that nourishes the soul along life's journey? What an opportunity to speak of Eucharist to the stranger entering our tent.

What about Muslim students?

What about Muslim students? How do we talk about the life and works of Vincent as a tool for evangelization? One possible avenue would be to sponsor an imaginary discussion between Vincent and Muhammad focusing on the issue of slavery. Our Catholic students might be surprised to learn that Muhammad, like Vincent, was obsessed with the deplorable conditions of the slave. The Holy Quran in *Sura* 90 (*Sura* means Chapter), declares that the act of freeing a slave is the most meritorious action a Muslim could perform. Muhammad, like Vincent, was passionate about alleviating the suffering of slaves. On Vincentian campuses, we so often speak of Vincent going to care for the galley slaves, and of his



The "Hospitality of Abraham" Icon.

Russian. Artist unknown. Circa 1600.

Public Domain



kissing the chains that bound these slaves. In our imaginary dialogue a Catholic student could quote Vincent's words on slavery, his challenge to Monsieur de Gondi to see the deplorable conditions these men lived in, telling him these are your people and you will have to answer for them before God.³ In turn, a Muslim student could speak Muhammad's words exhorting his followers to ransom slaves. One *hadith* (stories about Muhammad), quotes the Prophet of Allah as saying, "Give food to the hungry, visit the sick and set free the one in captivity by paying his ransom."⁴ On numerous occasions, Muhammad states that to free a slave will earn the believer forgiveness of sins. Such an interfaith dialogue could draw a parallel between Vincent's and Muhammad's passion towards alleviating the suffering of slaves, and perhaps bring students together to address ways in which to alleviate modern day slavery, human trafficking, and the plight of refugees.

On Catholic campuses we celebrate both the Feast of the Assumption and Ascension Thursday. Again, is this another opportunity to build bridges by seeing similarities in the mysteries each tradition embraces? Muslims believe that Jesus was taken up, in bodily form, into heaven by Allah and is now being held in a "state of occultation." The Quran tells us that Jesus will one day return and "defeat the anti-Christ." As a matter of fact, there is an empty tomb in Mecca right next to Muhammad's that is reserved for Jesus after his return. It is a pilgrimage site for Muslims when making the Hajj (mandatory trip to Mecca). In addition, Muslims have tremendous respect for the Blessed Mother. They believe not only in the virgin birth of Jesus, but also that Mary was born without sin. All of chapter 19 in the Quran is dedicated to Mary, the Mother of *ISA* (Jesus). If we could get our students talking about such mysteries it would be an unbelievable opportunity to discuss more deeply the mystery of Jesus, the Prophet (Muslims) and the Son of God (Catholics). Jesus

³ Pierre Coste, C.M., *The Life and Works of Saint Vincent de Paul*, trans. Joseph Leonard, C.M., 3 vols. (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1952), 1:115-117.

⁴ *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 7, Book 65, Number 286.

and Mary are profound and major models for both our Catholic and Muslim students.

Discussion of these and other shared mysteries would undoubtedly help foster greater bonds of friendship among Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants. For instance, throughout the Muslim world different countries (Pakistan, Turkey, Lebanon) boast that they have the tomb of the virgin (Mary) within their borders. This is an issue that our Protestant students could also weigh in on, as Protestants do not ascribe to the Doctrine of the Assumption of Mary. It would get our students talking. Likewise, within the walls of Abraham's Tent, we could invite students to discuss Matthew 25 in light of their own religious tradition. Matthew 25 is perhaps the most quoted of all the Christian scriptures, reminding us that, on the Day of Judgment, Christ will separate his followers into sheep and goats. The Lord will ask the Christian, "I was hungry – did you give me to eat?" "I was thirsty—did you give me to drink?" Compare that passage with the following Islamic *Qudsi* (a Divine Hadith received in a dream), where the Holy Prophet said:

Allah will say on the Day of Judgment, 'O son of Adam, I was sick and you did not visit Me.' He will say, 'O my Lord, how could I visit You, when you are the Lord of the Worlds.' Allah will say, 'Did you not know that My servant so-and-so was sick and you did not visit him? Did you not know that if you had visited him, you would have found Me there?'

Allah will say, 'O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you fed Me not.' He shall say, 'O my Lord, how could I feed you and you are the Lord of the Worlds?' and Allah will say, 'Did you not know that My servant so-and-so was in need of food and you did not feed him? Did you not know that if you had fed him, you would have found that to have been for Me?'

'O son of Adam, I asked you for water and you did not give Me to drink.' The man shall say, 'O my Lord, how could I give You water, when You are the Lord of the Worlds?' Allah will say, 'My servant so-and-so asked you for water and you did not give him to drink water. Did you not know that if you had given him to drink, you would have found that to have been for Me?'⁵

Again, in this passage we see the intimate identification that the Divine has with human suffering and that to respond to a stranger in need is a sacred obligation.

Inviting Buddhist students into our tent

If we held a dialogue with our Buddhist students we would learn that they also venerate exceptionally holy men and women, although they do not use the term "Saint." The recognition that some human beings excel in virtue is not unique to Christianity. Our Buddhist students would tell us about *Bodhisattvas*. Akin to a Catholic saint, a *Bodhisattva* is

⁵ See: <http://hopingforparadise.blogspot.com/p/good-deeds-and-sins.html> (accessed 29 June 2015).

a soul that has gained so much merit that he/she is eligible to enter nirvana (like a Mother Theresa). They do not think of him/herself, rather they are concerned with alleviating the suffering in this world.

Through such dialogue, our Catholic students would learn that central to the Buddhist tradition is the cardinal virtue of compassion. Thus, when the *Bodhisattva* dies and he/she is told that nirvana (no more rebirths) is at hand. The *Bodhisattva*, due to his/her magnanimous soul, opts to be born again (i.e. another tour of duty) and forfeits any personal reward of entering into nirvana with the sole mission of alleviating the suffering of others in this world. One can only wonder the fruitful exchange that both our Christian and Buddhist students might experience if they compared Vincent's prayer with the Bodhisattva's Vow:

Vincent de Paul

Lord, when I ask You for the grace to put up with the difficulties Your Goodness will send me, I'm determined at the same time to receive them from Your hand. Since we can't be without troubles in this world, Lord, I propose to accept for Your love all those I may have to bear, as well as to rid myself of the spirit of sloth, to do well the things that have been ordered, and to be steadfast in the good I've begun because that will be pleasing to you.⁶

The Bodhisattva's Vow

I take upon myself the deed of all beings, even those in the hells, in the other worlds and in the realms of punishment. I take their sufferings upon me, I bear it, I do not draw back from it, I do not tremble at it, I have no fear of it. I do not lose heart, I must bear the burden of all beings for I have vowed to save all things living, to bring them safe through the forest of birth, age, disease, birth and re-birth. I think not of my own salvation, but strive to bestow on all beings the royalty of supreme wisdom. So I take upon myself all the sorrows of all beings. I resolve to bear every torment in every purgatory of the universe. For it is better that I alone should suffer than that the multitude of living beings should suffer. I give myself in exchange. I redeem the universe from the forest of purgatory, from the womb of flesh, from the realm of death. I agree to suffer as a ransom for all beings, and for the sake of all beings. Truly, I will not abandon them. For I have resolved to gain supreme wisdom for the sake of all.⁷

Here, in both the Catholic and Buddhist tradition, we see the theme of compassion and performing good works in spite of personal sacrifice as a supreme religious virtue.

⁶ Conference 74, "Love of Physical and Moral Sufferings," 23 July 1656, CCD, 10:159.

⁷ From the *Vajradhva Sutra*, see: https://www.csupomona.edu/~plin/ews431/bodhisattva_prayers.html (accessed 29 June 2015; link no longer active).



A gathering of worshipping Bodhisattvas.

Cave mural, China, Wei Dynasty (535-556 A.D.).

Public Domain



Conclusion

T.S. Eliot reminds us: “We shall not cease from exploration / And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time.”⁸ As the demographics of the United States continue to reflect increasing religious diversity it is imperative that institutions of higher learning do more to build bridges of understanding. As educators we must move beyond thinking that a three credit course in World Religions or the occasional interfaith prayer service will build bridges. We, as educators, must constantly look for opportunities to offer sustained and structured interfaith forums wherein we, in Vincent’s words, “enflame the nations with this sacred fire.” Many Catholic universities are already at the forefront of such ecumenical endeavors. Likewise, non-Catholic universities such as Dartmouth, Harvard, and Yale have vibrant spiritual/campus ministry departments that are both inclusive and passionate about fostering interreligious dialogue. Such efforts are to be applauded. As Vincentians, we too must be at the forefront of spiritually nourishing all our students. Vincent himself exhorted his followers: “We must be totally for God... We must give ourselves to God, burn ourselves up, give our lives. We must lay open our lives to carry the Gospel to the most distant lands.” Ironically for us those distant lands, those strangers, are right on our doorstep. The challenge is how to welcome them into our tent.

Having taught at the college level for over twenty-five years, I am keenly aware that it might take a little urging to get students to want to share on a spiritual level. Following in Vincent’s challenge to address both physical and spiritual poverty, I suggest two incentives. First, feed them! A slight modification of an old adage is so true: “If you feed them, they will come.” Like Abraham, we invite them into our tents to share a meal with us—the most fundamental gesture of human bonding and hospitality. Secondly, I might offer class

⁸ T.S. Eliot, “Little Gidding.” See: <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/history/winter/w3206/edit/tseliotlittlegidding.html> (accessed 29 June 2015).

credit or gift certificates to students willing both to do the research and to participate in forums hosted inside Abraham's Tent. Students would be challenged to speak not "of" Vincent, but "as" Vincent. One can only wonder what Vincent and Muhammad might say to each other should they meet on today's Catholic campus. I am confident that it would be an encounter that students would not forget, for such sharing from the heart could be a transformative experience for all involved.

Thus, if we look at Vincentian hospitality as a challenge to welcome the stranger, we realize the rich opportunity we have at hand. More and more, non-Catholics are coming to our institutions as students, as faculty, and as staff. Let us pray we receive them as hospitable hosts and that when they graduate and leave our tents, they will graduate as better Catholics, more committed Jews, more devout Hindus, more compassionate Buddhists, and more self-giving Sikhs. Vincent reminds us:

If we're really called to take the love of God far and near, if we must set nations on fire with it, if our vocation is to go throughout the world to spread this divine fire, if that's the case, I say, if that's the case... how I myself must burn with this divine fire!⁹

Let us all pray that we constantly burn with this divine fire and that we are forever vigilant in keeping the lights on in Abraham's Tent, welcoming the stranger on campus, running out to meet them and extending a profound gesture of hospitality to all our students in need of being spiritually refreshed.



⁹ Conference 207, "Charity," 30 May 1659, *CCD*, 12:215.



Vincent de Paul, Father of the Clergy; Vincent helping the poor.

Stained glass, St. Thomas More Church, Jamaica campus, St. John's University, N.Y.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Popular depiction of Guru Nanak (1469-1539),
founder of Sikhism and the first Sikh Guru.

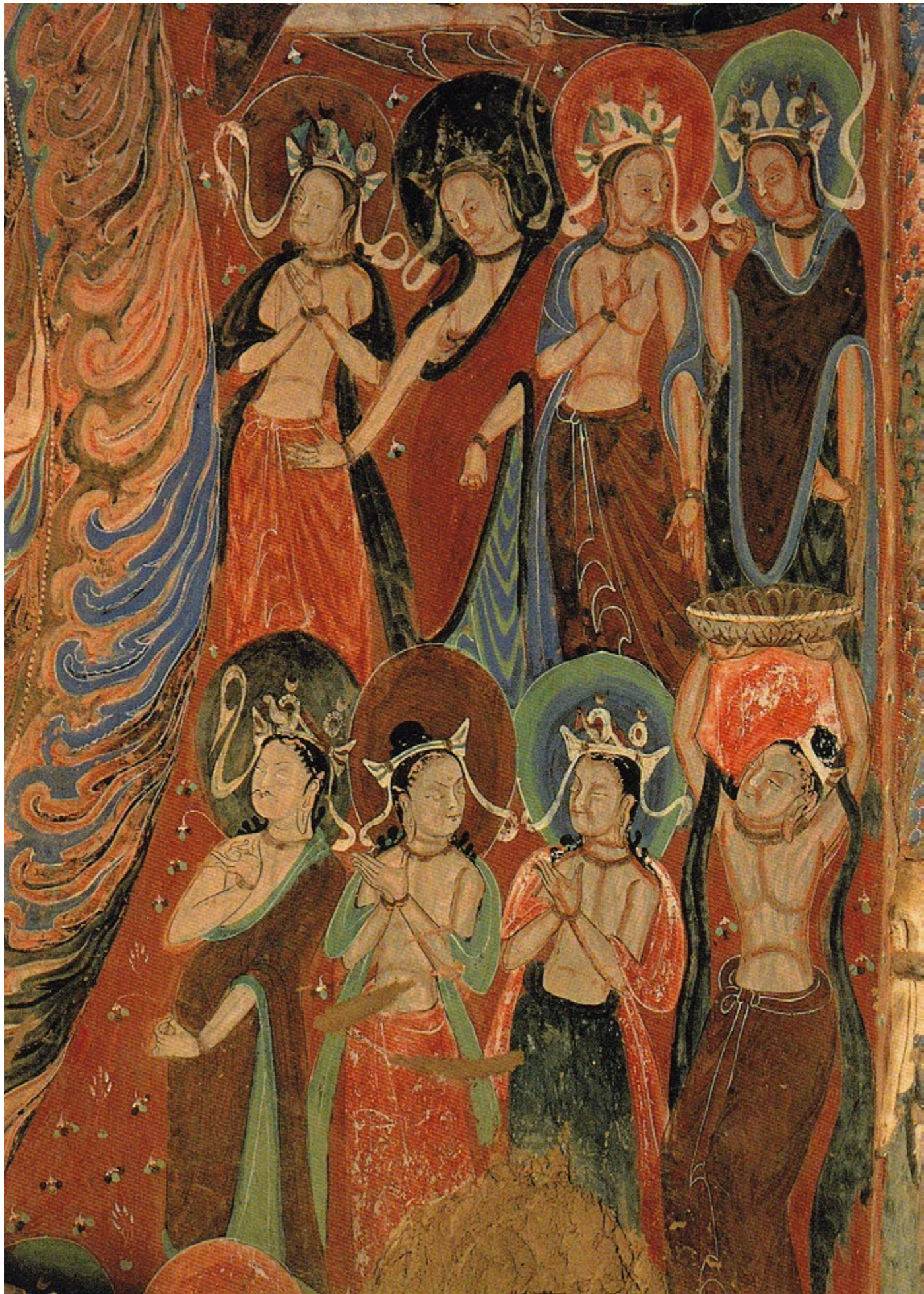
Public Domain





The "Hospitality of Abraham" Icon.
Russian. Artist unknown. Circa 1600.
Public Domain





A gathering of worshipping Bodhisattvas.
Cave mural, China, Wei Dynasty (535-556 A.D.).
Public Domain



Eucharistic Hospitality: A Bi-directional Dynamic

LEVI NKWOCHA, PH.D. CANDIDATE



[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)



Eucharistic hospitality transcends the modern notion that limits hospitality to welcoming someone into our homes or being friendly to others. To stop at this means nothing less than a mere simplification of a serious issue. Hence, “to equate hospitality with generic friendliness or private service is to domesticate it. For such domestication distorts how extraordinary and strange Christian hospitality really is.”¹ The Eucharistic hospitality that this paper advances implies a two-way movement and activity. First, it is a coming (communion), and secondly, a going (sharing), so long as the going is intrinsically understood as a demand to share that which we have become (“christs”). It is essentially an empowerment to share the new identity (Eucharistic person) of the receiver; not just a participant of Christ but also a willing channel for the same Christ to reach others. It stands as rational therefore, that Eucharistic hospitality is a mission of love; an extension of the Trinitarian *perichoresis*. In a similar sense, we should consider the African practice of ‘eating kola nut together’ in light of this two-way aspect of communion and sharing in love.

This dynamic balance of a bifurcated centripetal (coming) and centrifugal (going) impulse ensures equilibrium of the vertical and horizontal aspects of Christian lives. It evokes an invitation to participate in the divine life (hospitality), which launches us into the life of sharing among one another in gratitude to God’s prodigality (immanent and economic). The two forces notably derive from the same Trinitarian source. The forces that attract towards the source and that impel towards others draw from an ultimate participation in philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher’s *Deus est tremendum et fascinans*: “[A] participation that might well be as terrifying as it is consoling.”² Our responsibility towards others can be terrifying, but our resilience comes from God’s love. The exodus account of the burning bush suggests that understanding being advanced here. It connotes a strange imperative manner that humiliates, as depicted in Moses. The significant metaphor of the burning bush, without its leaves getting burned, captured the attention of Moses and engaged him in a mission of hospitality—the liberation of the Israelites. The encounter humbled but also empowered Moses, in such a related manner as what we experience at the reception of the Eucharist. He worshipped God in profound adoration and set out, considering himself only an instrument of God.

Worship as motivation for hospitality³ misleads because it locates hospitality outside worship and reduces worship as a means, not an end. But the proper locus of worship cannot be outside the trinity, which is the origin of the *perichoresis* of hospitality. The church’s liturgical life typifies this Trinitarian love that invites our participation, as depicted in David Fagerberg’s definition. “Liturgy is the Trinity’s *perichoresis* kenotically extended to invite our synergistic ascent into deification.”⁴ Even though liturgy as a whole is a participation in the divine life for the dual ends of glorification and divinization,

¹ Elizabeth Newman, *Untamed Hospitality, Welcoming God and other Strangers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), 13.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁴ David Fagerberg, *On Liturgical Asceticism* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 9.

the Eucharist as source and summit of liturgical activities suffices for the grounding of hospitality in Christian lives. Worship names the way we participate in a triune of God's mutual giving, and worship itself is hospitality.⁵ Other forms of hospitality derive from this Trinitarian foundation.

Worship simultaneously inculcates gratitude and disposes us to acknowledge our finitude and dependency, which harmonizes God's transcendental otherness without destroying His incarnational vulnerability, an event that recalls the divine-human intercourse towards the eschaton. In divine-human relationality, transcendence and solidarity mutually cohere. Worship in this context transcends the traditional one moment of a faith-gathering in a church to include the living out or sharing of the faith-based experience. Every authentic faith experience demands concrete witnesses, often described as liturgical life, in response to the divine invitation. In consonance with Fagerberg's classic definition, mentioned above, Don Saliers provides a deeper appreciation of the word "invite." First, "invite connotes a dialectic of action–reaction dynamics, whereby humanity only follows the constant initiation of the divine prompts. Invitation defines Eucharistic hospitality whose imperative does not compel but only impels.

Narrowing liturgical worship to the specificity of hospitality, Saliers explains liturgy as that unique opportunity which invites us to a home where none of us has ever been.⁶ The implied antimony of a home in a strange place or a home away from home should not evoke suspicion of contradiction; instead, it points to the reality that undergirds Eucharistic hospitality. "Salier's description of a home-to-be is depicted in various biblical stories. Abraham is called to a home where he has never been, as are Moses, Mary, the disciples, and many others. They leave a familiar place in order to take up a new place before God."⁷ The new home indicates a leap of faith in accord with divine love and providence in a radical dependence on God, understood within the ambience of "for God's sakeness but never as it pleases us." Theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez's entering into the other, to be that neighbor, resonates with Salier's proposal.

This possible shift of location from our whims towards God's will, with respect to the origin of hospitality, defines the difference between the modern distorted notion of hospitality and the abandoned Eucharistic hospitality in need of retrieval. "To say the liturgy is a home where none of us has been and to refer to God's beauty as always 'new' and 'strange' reminds us that God cannot be domesticated."⁸ It is easy to lose sight of who owns the work of hospitality or who controls it. With the least attention, God could be objectified and boxed into our whimsical framework. "God's hospitable can be 'inhospitable' by contemporary standards; it can make us feel not 'at home.' The process of becoming guests

⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁶ Don Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 105.

⁷ Newman, *Untamed Hospitality*, 57.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.



The dying Vincent receiving Viaticum.
Stained glass, Église Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, Rolbing, France.
Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online
<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



and also hosts of God is not necessarily easy and smooth.”⁹ The Eucharistic hospitality of a Trinitarian basis reflects this dual effect of attraction and awesomeness—attraction that invites us to come and eat, and after eating, when our eyes open, the startling imperative which impels us to leave immediately and share our experiences, as was taught by the two disciples at the Emmaus encounter.

The Eucharist provides a closer paradigm for a more profound understanding of the triad: God, humanity, and the world, through the incarnational lens. Robert Bellah understands this and posits that the Eucharist “is the supreme ritual expression of brokenness and death, of homelessness and landlessness. It consecrates all the good things of the earth and it promises renewal and rebirth not only for the individual but for society and cosmos. And yet it makes us restless on this earth: It makes us see the conditional, and provisional, and broken quality of all things human.”¹⁰ The participatory role of any community in the Eucharistic life of Jesus defines such community to be Eucharistic. The ecclesial community, therefore, is that known to keep alive the example given by Jesus, with the Eucharistic meal as its central ritual. Emphasis is laid here on community spirit and the centrality of the Eucharistic meal.

Community spirit denies not the vertical dimension of our spirituality; instead it points at the insufficiency of the vertical dimension and consequently lends itself as a

⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁰ Robert Bellah, “Liturgy and Experience,” in *The Roots of Ritual*, ed. James Shaughnessy (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 232.

proper complement. The complementarity of the vertical and the horizontal dimensions underlay the first Eucharist experience. It started with a thanksgiving to the Father by Jesus (vertical), then the breaking, the sharing, and the eating by the disciples (horizontal). The two planes, though distinct, are inseparable. But unfortunately modern individualism has infiltrated consciously or unconsciously into many of the contemporary Eucharistic communities, and gnawed injuriously on community spirit in order to dissect the two planes.

More recently, the vertical dimension has received greater emphasis to the detriment of the horizontal—the sharing. Incidentally, participation in the Eucharistic meal reflects an atomized aggregate of mutually suspicious individuals,¹¹ each person to himself and God for us all. There is a contemporaneous spirit that conflicts with the Mass dismissal empowerment, “Go and share the good news.” Commitment to individual duties often conflicts with or even obstructs this Eucharistic empowerment, thereby putting the will of God in constant competition with compulsive duties. It stands rationally correct why Mother Theresa of Calcutta reminds modern minds that “charity begins when duty ends.”

Once, I was terribly shocked that there was no single young person or child at a Sunday Mass, probably my very first experience in the United States. Curiously, I inquired from the pastor, but his reply did not help my perplexity: “The parents won’t bring them,” he stated. And why not I persisted? Then with a chuckle he said: “Everyone is busy here in the U.S., and moreover individual boundaries are meant to be respected.” Whatever he meant by these words, the memory is still strong and challenging. Based on this possible threat to community spirit, I would ask that we consider a pre-Christian hospitality practice that has persisted among the Igbo society (Nigeria) in an attempt to highlight the true meaning of a Christian Eucharistic community, expected in Eucharistic hospitality. By following this route, I do not intend to disparage or sound polemic to any culture but to share fragments of my earliest experiences that helped to inform my understanding of what Eucharistic hospitality might entail. It is, however, by no standard a better example but a mere clue to better appreciate Christian teaching. Hence, parallels between the two traditions cannot dissolve their differences.

For the Igbo people, reality is unitary. Everything else is seen from the relationship with the Supreme Being. “The Igbo world is deeply religious and integral. This explains the living unity between the spiritual and the material realms of existence.”¹² This particular Igbo cosmology differs not from the African universe often likened to “a spider’s web,” with human beings at the center of God’s creation and all other creatures spread out around the humans in a system of relationships that interact with one another. Thus, when a single thread is struck or pulled, the whole system is affected. It is right, then, to say that God is the fundamental source of the unity of all beings.¹³

¹¹ William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist, Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 12.

¹² A.M. Ngweshemi, “Rediscovering the Human: The Quest for a Christo-Theological Anthropology in Africa,” *Studies in Biblical Literature*, vol. 39 (2002), 11.

¹³ Michael I. Mozia, *Solidarity in the Church and Solidarity Among the Igbos of Nigeria* (Dissertation, Rome, 1982), 176.



The kola nut.

Public Domain



The traditional Igbo society is structured to promote communal fraternity, sorority, and being-with-others. Communion defines real existence to an extent that one dares not dream of severing from this integral web-like link. Communality pervades the entire fabric of the Igbo society anchoring at different levels or stages of interpersonal interactions. The scope of my paper might be too small for any elaboration of this claim, except for just one very important custom that possibly parallels the communal practice of the Eucharistic hospitality. In addition to the sustenance of communal spirit, it supports the primacy of hospitality. Like the Eucharist, it could be seen as both food and symbol.

Communal spirit is not only cherished in this particular society, but it is also highly ritualized through the sacred symbol of Kola nuts.¹⁴ It is a peculiar ritualistic gesture not so common to her neighboring people. The first shock that greets a stranger is the asymmetrical relationship between the kola nut and the profundity of respect or sacredness accorded it. For example, its denial to an individual or one's willful refusal to participate in it evokes a dangerous signal of severance from the web-unit. Kola nut is a locally grown multi-cotyledon nut, botanically known as *cola acuminata* and strictly distinguished from *cola nitida*.¹⁵ Ambrose C. Agu summarizes its function thus: "[F]irst and foremost, it fulfills a mystic union for the Igbos." For him, "it is a symbol of ritual communion of the living and the dead under the benevolent presence of God. It celebrates the oneness of those who partake of it, among themselves, and their unity with the spiritual world. As a social object, it is a primary sign of welcome to one's guests, and a pledge of benign intention towards those with whom one relates. Indeed, it expresses all that the Igbos envisage in communion with others... namely love, unity, togetherness, friendship, benefaction and so on."¹⁶

The famous Igbo writer J.U.T. Nzeako's articulation of Kola nut, though originally written in the Igbo language, captures the sacramental aspect. The translated version reads:

¹⁴ Victor Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 75.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁶ Ambrose C. Agu, *The Eucharist and the Igbo Communal Spirit* (Wurzburg: Echter Verlag GmbH, 2004), 76.

“Certainly, kola nut is small, but it fulfills many functions in our (Igbo) land, signifying the benevolent disposition (good intention) one has towards others, before the creator of humans, and before the ancestors, that is, those dead but worthy of remembrance. In view of these, where there is kola nut, there is respect, honor and good intention.”¹⁷ Among its polyvalent values, Nzeako omits life, which is central in the words of its blessing, and which Agu captures elsewhere. The blessing of the kola nut usually begins with words of appreciation, “who brings Kola, brings life.”¹⁸ The provider manifests the best of intentions for his guest, who qualifies for a xenophile. According to Damian Eze, “the kola nut assumes a new meaning after the prayer. It becomes a communion, a covenant meal. This trans-signification, or assuming a new meaning is a clear indication that the people become what they eat, or rather, they renew what they are—a people bound by a covenant.”¹⁹

Blessing of the kola nut comes second in the four stages of its ritual, before its consumption. The rest, respectively, include the presentation, often used to trace or familiarize the relationality of those present, the breaking, and finally sharing. Sometimes the sharing is done by the youngest, while the eldest says the blessing. But when the host does the blessing, he never omits to emphasize the mutuality expected between his guests and his hosting. Such words are used as, “May the visit of my guest(s) not bring my down fall and when he leaves may he not develop a hunchback on his way home.”²⁰ Having expressed these sentiments together, they can then share the kola nut, which bonds their friendship. “Those who share the nut, seal thereby a bond of friendship which, so long as normal conditions prevail, is not likely to be broken.”²¹ A reader might wonder what the significance of a hunchback can be. Hunchback is symbolic and derives from the possible effect of the weight of gifts that the stranger (guest) carries home, often (in ancient times) carried on the head or over the shoulder. The motif then can be understood that the honesty and innocence of the stranger assures his safety home, which echoes the biblical assertion of Jesus that, “truth will always set you free.” Nevertheless, the necessity of hospitality provides no excuses for emergencies or uninvited guests. The Igbo people’s motif of hospitality fits into this paradigm as couched in her popular idiom: “When my guest departs peacefully and satisfied, let my creditors come.”²² They can go the extra mile to satisfy their guests.

That kola nut knows no discrimination²³ is the key symbolism of this seed of communion, except for its gender divide among the ritual presiders, but not in the eating.

¹⁷ J.U.T. Nzeako, *Omenala Ndi Igbo*, cited in Agu, *The Eucharist and the Igbo*, 77.

¹⁸ Agu, *The Eucharist and the Igbo*, 77.

¹⁹ Damian Eze, *The Eucharist as Orikonso: A Study in Eucharistic Ecclesiology from an Igbo Perspective* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang GmbH, 2008), 115 .

²⁰ Anigbo Osmund, *Commensality: The Kolanut and the Stranger in an Igbo Community* (Enugu, Nigeria: Ministry of Information, 1988), 34.

²¹ G.T. Basden, *Niger Ibos* (London: Seeley, Service and Co. Ltd, 1938), 162.

²² Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 72.

²³ Agu, *The Eucharist and the Igbo*, 79.



Igbo people participating in the ceremonial sharing of the kola nut.

Public Domain



Primarily, it seeks a common wellbeing of its partakers. Another very important symbol is the material significance of this nut. “And as the seed is made up of lobes joined together by a cotyledonous ligament, so is kola nut seen in Igbo land as a symbol of unity.”²⁴ Its distinct lobes (between two and eight) image the constitutive nature of human society, made up of individual persons but also as ones in relation; as taught by Augustine. Like the Eucharistic wafers whose bits contain Christ in his fullness, every person is satisfied by the tasting of a small piece of kola nut. And similar to the Eucharist, its aim in the eating transcends the satisfaction of physical hunger. “Kola nut is not meant to satisfy hunger. The joy of it all is the *Koinonia*.”²⁵ In fact, after the kola nut ritual comes other forms of (hospitable) meals and drinks, but never before it. “It (kola nut) always comes first. It is the king.”²⁶ Eating and drinking together symbolize an existing bond of communion, which kola nut reassures by absorbing strangers into the web of existence.

Conversely, kola nut is not shared with one’s enemy, because the latter’s life constitutes a dangerous threat to the communal society. Once the centripetal link of harmony is suspected to have been strewn, probably through quarrel, communality is suspended. “The people quarrelling do not eat kola nut unless at the instance of reconciliation. But once reconciliation is achieved, the disputed parties can then offer kola nut to each other and eat it together.”²⁷ It is a gesture meant to reestablish the broken web-link. This, in sum, demonstrates vividly the spirit that underscores kola nut sharing.

However, kola nut sharing falls short of Eucharistic hospitality in many senses. First, and most importantly, is its Christological absence. Second, kola nut sharing segregates and excludes its enemies. Third, the ancestral connection of kola nut sharing can provoke suspicion for Christians. Fourth, kola nut sharing is a parochial practice while the Eucharist is universal. Nevertheless, one important value of kola nut sharing that parallels Eucharistic hospitality is its symbolism of communality, friendship and love. This love bond was emphasized by Bishop Joseph Ukpo, a non-Igbo Catholic cleric, during the second Nigeria

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 74.

²⁷ Agu, *The Eucharist and the Igbo*, 79.

National Eucharistic Congress at Owerri, Igboland, in 1992. He said, “Jesus celebrated the last supper within the context of a community meal.... The love manifested in the traditional breaking of kola nuts can enrich the Christian understanding of the Eucharist as a communion, as *agape*. We can offer the world a Christianity that is operational in Africa as a communitarian family where unity and peace reign supreme in justice and love....”²⁸

The spirit at work in the community is done in the form of *agape*, of love. In a most precise formula, Lucien Richard teaches that “love is the great leveler.” And “it is in the Eucharist” he argues, “that equality and reciprocity must be manifested.”²⁹ These two key words, equality and reciprocity, are very essential to a true Eucharistic understanding and practice. One alone cannot be enough since it is difficult to actually have one and not the other. They resemble two sides of a coin. Their mutual importance is felt at the absence of any or both of them. It is not strange, therefore, that the first biblical recorded conflict over the Eucharistic meal is a class/tribal conflict between the rich and the poor³⁰ (Hellenistic widows), informed Paul’s injunction in I Corinthians, 11:20-22. Also, Jesus’ personal experiences witnessed gross distortion of either equality or reciprocity or both. This is one reason I noted Richard’s Eucharistic love formula to be classic and timeless. The Eucharistic abuses which suppressed the communal (equality) and sharing (reciprocity) undergirded attacks inflicted on Jesus by either the Jews or the apostles, when they noticed how he interacted with the despised and marginalized in society. Even though these eventful moments (eating with tax collectors and chatting with the Samaritan woman) preceded the institution of the Eucharist at the last supper, the lessons were virtually the same since they highlight the opposition to communion and sharing.

But Eucharistic hospitality targets the despised and marginalized, which defines it as an apt interruption of a status quo that nurtures and perpetrates inequality and individualism. Eucharistic hospitality can be revolutionary; a reminder that the standard of the world is not enough but demands the “extra mile” towards the marginalized. “Those marginalized by social and economic injustice not only have a claim on God’s mercy but an equal potent claim on the Eucharistic community attention.”³¹ Monika Hellwig connects it to a broader reality as a full realization of God’s kingdom here on earth, where equality and reciprocity reign sublime.

The [Eucharist]... is in the first place the celebration of the hospitality of God shared by guests who commit themselves to become fellow hosts with God. It is the celebration of the divine hospitality as offered in the human presence of Jesus as Word, Wisdom and out-reach of God. It subsumes in itself the

²⁸ Matthew Kustenbauder, “Rediscovering the Eucharist as Communion Meal: African Contributions to the World Christian Church,” in *The Other Journal.com: An Intersection of Theology and Culture* (2006), 3.

²⁹ Lucien Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 50.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

grateful acknowledgement of God's hospitality in creation, but also the recall and renewal of God's liberating intervention on behalf of the *habiru* (Hebrews), the enslaved and depraved who had been kept from peoplehood, freedom and human dignity, and were therefore redemptively called anew to be the people of God, a witness and blessing to all peoples of the earth.³²

Understood as a meal, the Eucharist should not be only spiritualized as Angel F. Mendez Montoya warns.³³ Primarily the Eucharist is about food, about eating, but even more about sharing, for the food that the Eucharist is, is the "will of God" as Christ tells us.³⁴ Montoya reminds us that "we are currently facing a terrible food crisis, but the problem is not a lack of resources. The problem is the lack of sharing food with others."³⁵ Hence, hospitality does not require many resources; it does require a willingness to share what we have, whether food, time, space, or money. It often seems that the most gracious hosts are themselves quite poor.³⁶

The will of God as manifested in Jesus's Eucharistic hospitality bears on the bifurcated love of God and our neighbor; even if that neighbor qualifies in our standard as an enemy or stranger, who in the estimation of the Igbo society poses a threat to the coherence of her existence. The truth is that love for our neighbor is required for our love for God—the horizontal must bond the vertical to form a cross, a sign of salvation. The love that extends to the enemy seems contradictory when not anchored on God's love, which we only reciprocate.³⁷ This Johannine text provides the link: only those who love their neighbor can love God back. And only those who truly love God can share fully with others.

At this theological height, hospitality to the stranger becomes a bridge that connects our way to God and God's way to us, in such a manner that God is not in competition with the neighbor-stranger, but is the stranger. In the Eucharist, the dialectic of host-guest is sacramentalized and realized; communion happens.³⁸

The epitome of hospitality in the Good Samaritan model is worthy of recall. Compassion can only be enough in the Eucharistic hospitality as a starting point that invites for relocation in solidarity, an entering into space with the other.³⁹ The willingness to enter

³² *Ibid*, 18.

³³ Angel F. Mendez Montoya, *Dialogo* [A bilingual journal published by the Center for Latino Research, DePaul University] 16:2 (Fall 2013), 71.

³⁴ Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God*, 51.

³⁵ Montoya, *Dialogo*, 69.

³⁶ Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room, Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 116.

³⁷ I John 4:19-21.

³⁸ Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God*, 52.

³⁹ Luke T. Johnson, *Sharing Possessions* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 104-105.



Vincent de Paul kneeling in prayer, as theologians discuss the Eucharist.

A mural in the chapel of the Sorbonne, Paris, France.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



into the location of the other resonates with Montoya's desire of God to be with humanity; also humanity's participation in that desire.⁴⁰ However, Eucharistic hospitality includes food but extends to every human need. The Good Samaritan shared his three "T"s, "time, treasure, and talent," almost himself, just as Christ did. They were put into practice in his response to the wounded stranger. The action of the Samaritan also exposes the weakness of the traditional Igbo hospitality which requires a kola nut ritual to establish a bond of friendship before an expression of solidarity. But what could have been the Samaritan's motivation in the biblical context? One possible answer, even though contestable, might be to save the life of the stranger, which is a participation in the Trinitarian desire towards humanity. Otherwise, why should a despised Samaritan show love to his despiser, a Jew?

The uniqueness of Eucharistic hospitality combines two most difficult acts, forgiveness and repentance; each are vividly exemplified in two significant events of the Good Samaritan and the two disciples at Emmaus. While the Samaritan forgave and shared of himself, the two disciples experienced transformation at the breaking of bread by Christ and left immediately to share their experiences.⁴¹ James Loder's exegetical hermeneutics captures this '*metanoia*' dimension of the Eucharist:

As the men "take this [broken bread] in," they are not only exposed to the brokenness they brought consciously to the room, but they are also exposed in the false hopes they brought into their relationship with Jesus in the first place... Thus the broken body received from the risen Lord presents a whole new reality, a startling way of looking at things... Following Jesus' disappearance, the two men experience within and correlatively a power of new being.⁴²

As a practice of divine-love, hospitality, symbolized by the partaking of a meal, can set in motion a movement of awareness that leads to repentance. The Igbo society knows this

⁴⁰ Montoya, *Dialogo*, 71.

⁴¹ Luke 24:30-35.

⁴² James E. Loder, *The Transforming Moment* (Helmets & Howard Publishers, 1989), as quoted in Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God*, 52-53.



Kola nut bowl (okwa oji), Nigeria, Igbo people.

Early 20th century, wood carving.

Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin.

CC0 1.0 Universal



vital step and expresses it in the conciliatory practice, which heals a ruptured web-link in the communitarian framework. But the non-eating or non-sharing with whomsoever falls outside the web limits its efficiency and contrasts to Jesus' inclusive example, wherein, for instance, the latter fed Judas from his dish.⁴³ It is this love of enemy (stranger) that defines and differentiates it from other cultural practices, such as that of the Igbo society. And excepting that, as Christians our practice of hospitality is defined by Jesus's standard, we are not yet Eucharistic people.

The two operative words highlighted by Richard, equality and reciprocity, undergird Eucharistic hospitality. The Eucharistic standard lived by Jesus, especially love of enemies or suspicious strangers, qualifies the kind of hospitality being advanced. Eucharistic communion and sharing with strangers, enemies, poor, vulnerable, and friends and families truly represent what we become—"christs"—whenever we commune at Christ's table. Christ, the center point of a centripetal bond of invitation to eat, and the centrifugal mandate to share what we become, gives new meaning and renewed identity. "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."⁴⁴ Reciprocity must not be misread as "give that you may receive from the same person." Rather, give with the firm belief that you will never lack because God is superabundant.⁴⁵ Reciprocity also indicates that hospitality is not a reserve for a particular group towards others, but a universal mandate that switches the guest-host dynamism. The willingness to act in love makes all the difference, because whatever denies our freedom negates God's will made manifest in the Eucharist.

The shared meal was not only a social act of friendship but also a religious act of fellowship with God.⁴⁶ The peculiarity of Jesus's table that invites for emulation, contrasts with any form of exclusiveness. As the invitation to eating is open to all, so must sharing be, for Eucharistic hospitality in its uniqueness represents a great leveler of humanity. "The fullest meaning of Eucharist goes well beyond a mere attitude of thankfulness and

⁴³ John 13:26-30.

⁴⁴ Matthew 10:40.

⁴⁵ Montoya, *Dialogo*, 69.

⁴⁶ Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God*, 32.

presses with eager yearning for concrete outward evidence of gratitude that indicates the gift is effective and present.”⁴⁷

Eucharistic hospitality is practical Christianity. Christianity is first a journey towards Christ in response to God’s open invitation to all of humanity: “Come and eat without cost.”⁴⁸ Moreover, Christianity is a reaching out for Christ: “Go make disciples of all nations.”⁴⁹ Christ feeds us with his body and blood, and commissions us to go and do likewise for others. But the simple truth is that, for whatever reasons, we have failed Christ. Such is the modern disease of self-centeredness that if we had lived during the time of the crucifixion a large number of us might have sided with Peter in his denial and many with Judas in betrayal, while the rest would find solidarity with the crowd rather than Christ. But, in contrast, the Eucharistic hospitality is critically advanced and enlightened, the necessity of its two integral movements that challenge our utmost responsibilities. And like receptacles with outlets, the inflowing of God’s love in us opens up the outflowing of that same love towards others without any segregation. Hence, Christianity truly understood is Christianity lived as Eucharistic persons or community, where oneness, equality, and reciprocity prevail for the sake of Christ. For in Christ the vertical and horizontal dimensions of life perfectly intersect.



⁴⁷ Johannes Betz, “Eucharist,” in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 448.

⁴⁸ Isaiah 55:1.

⁴⁹ Matthew 28:19.



The dying Vincent receiving Viaticum.

Stained glass, Église Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, Rolbing, France.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





The kola nut.

Public Domain





Igbo people participating
in the ceremonial sharing
of the kola nut.

Public Domain





Vincent de Paul kneeling in prayer, as theologians discuss the Eucharist.

A mural in the chapel of the Sorbonne, Paris, France.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Kola nut bowl (okwa oji), Nigeria, Igbo people.

Early 20th century, wood carving.

Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin.

CC0 1.0 Universal



Section II

REFLECTIONS ON HOSPITALITY FROM THE FIELD



[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)



Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul: Reflection on Hospitality

EVELYNE FRANC, D.C.

section
II

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[next
article](#)

Hospitality

For Daughters of Charity, the concept of hospitality is intrinsically understood in our name and in our deep-seated call to service. We find it emblazoned in our motto imprinted on the Seal of our Company: “The Charity of Jesus crucified urges us.”¹ It is also clearly identified in our First Rule, which invites us to serve Christ “corporally and spiritually in poor persons....”² Our manner of being with those who are poor, as well as collaborating with those who share a similar desire to serve, is indeed central to who we are. It is in this sacred practice, and to these people, that we strive to visibly reflect hospitality in our present times. We strive toward interactions that concretely demonstrate the specific behaviors encouraged by Saint Louise de Marillac, namely: compassion, mildness, cordiality, respect, and devotion to those whom we are encountering. In a letter to Sister Barbe Angiboust in 1655, St. Louise explained that “our vocation of servants of the poor calls us to practice the gentleness, humility and forbearance that we owe to others. We must respect and honor everyone: the poor because they are the members of Jesus Christ and our masters; the rich so that they will provide us with the means to do good for the poor.”³

This experience for the Daughters of Charity of St. Louise’s time, as well as in the present, demands competence, generosity, and gentleness. St. Louise explicitly wrote to the Sisters at Richelieu in 1652, that “Gentleness, cordiality and forbearance must be the practice of the Daughters of Charity just as humility, simplicity and the love of the holy humanity of Jesus Christ, who is perfect charity is their spirit.”⁴ Hence one realizes that in order to carry out this holistic and reverent sense of hospitality one must be personally and firmly grounded in genuine virtues and skills. Through the recognition of our profound union with Christ the Servant, and by maturely integrating both the spirituality and wisdom of charity into our daily experiences, we endeavor to deepen our relationship with God, with one another, and with those whom we serve. All have the potential to evidence an authentic witness of God’s tender love for each — particularly those who are most poor and vulnerable. All, likewise, present hospitality in its truest Vincentian form.

The Practice of Hospitality

The total dedication of the Daughters of Charity to the act of charity, encompassed in the practice of hospitality, through God’s grace, allows our hearts to be transformed into those which are courageous, generous, and compassionate. We seek to love others as Jesus loves us, and we welcome them directly into our concrete experiences of caring. As

¹ *Constitutions and Statutes of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul*, p. 15.

² Document 149a, “Common Rules of the Company of Sisters of Charity, Called Servants of the Sick Poor,” Number 1, in *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, ed. and trans. by Jacqueline Kilar, D.C., Marie Poole, D.C., et al, 1-14 (New York: New City Press, 1985-2014), 13b:147.

³ Letter 424, “Saint Louise to Sister Barbe Angiboust at Bernay,” May 1655, *Spiritual Writings of Louise de Marillac*, ed. and trans. by Louise Sullivan, D.C. (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1991), 468.

⁴ Letter 377, “To My Very Dear Sisters, Daughters of Charity at Richelieu,” October 1652, *Ibid.*, 406.



Louise de Marillac and Daughters of Charity amongst the poor in Paris

Painting by Maillard, 1920. Saint-Laurent church, Paris, France.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



our personal union with God intensifies, we come to understand that genuine Vincentian hospitality nourishes the heart, mind, soul and body of each, allowing one to be both a giver and receiver. All are enriched by the encounter.

Specifically for us as Daughters of Charity, the values of simplicity and humility in these experiences are paramount. Our legacy of charity requires that we exercise it aware that the manner of our service — the personal and gracious way in which we extend ourselves hospitably — is as important as the particular service itself. Radical charity, as embodied in concrete form, requires courage and it also demands hard work. We believe that we must always strive to reverently serve from the heart, never allowing ourselves to adopt an attitude which is satisfied with simply getting the task done. Our tradition tells us that Saint Vincent de Paul reminded the first Sisters that the charity they were expected to share was indeed heavier than the kettle of soup and the bread that they were carrying to those who were poor; and that at times the poor would not express appreciation for these acts of generosity. Regardless of this reality, the Sisters must always continue to be faithful to their Vincentian call of offering themselves simply, humbly, and charitably in service. St. Vincent emphasized it is only because of the Sisters' love that those who are poor will be able to forgive them for the bread given.

Serving as Practitioner

Like St. Vincent, St. Louise, and all who have followed them, we often experience the world we live in as fractured, reflective of the many incidents wherein individuals and groups of people experience isolation, exclusion, alienation, abandonment, and eventual



Rosalie Rendu sharing her savings with the poor.

Engraving from *Les Soeurs de Charité: Histoire Populaire des Soeurs de Saint Vincent de Paul* by Léo Taxil and P. Marcel (1888).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



hopelessness. It is our desire that by responding to the graces which God sends, and through prayerful reflection, patient work, and positive and constructive dialogue, we as a community will be able to bring healing and renewed hope to our suffering and less-than-perfect world. When our hospitality (service) takes on tangible forms, as in seeking to address the unmet needs for those who are poor and vulnerable, our hearts are opened, and we are privileged to find Jesus in those whom we serve. Keeping our eyes fixed on the Lord, we are strengthened as we follow those examples given to us by the members of our Vincentian Family, both past and present.

A treasured piece of wisdom comes to us from advice that Blessed Rosalie Rendu offered to the Sisters of her local community. Repeating the recommendation given to her by her godfather, Reverend Jacques-André Emery, Superior General of the Sulpicians, she audaciously shared that "... a Daughter of Charity must be like a milestone on a street corner where all those who pass by can rest and lay down their heavy burdens." With this as a defining practice in her lived-concept of welcome and hospitality, Sister Rosalie consistently demonstrated humility and respect in her daily encounters with others. When she met those who were "less polite, imperious or demanding," she sought to receive them most cordially. There is no doubt that this originated from her deep convictions which advocated profound justice.⁵ In time, Sister Rosalie shared these heartfelt beliefs, her deep-seated wisdom, and her on-going encouragement regarding this manner of meeting the poor with Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and his companions, the newly-established Society

⁵ Louise Sullivan, D.C., *Sister Rosalie Rendu: A Daughter of Charity on Fire with Love for the Poor* (Chicago: Vincentian Studies Institute, 2006), 112-13.

of St. Vincent de Paul. We are aware that she recommended these young men approach those they visited with understanding, politeness, and a sense of "...patience which never considers the time spent listening to a poor person as wasted...."⁶

Today we continue to strive to remember this same advice. In a world which has come to be characterized for its non-personal/technological interactions and encounters, we are acutely aware that those who are poor and vulnerable deserve our respect and attention, our love and our caring. We are called to address the challenges we uncover during our connections with them with a spirit that portrays sensitivity, collaboration, creativity, and audacity in our responses. We desire to be those who authentically and joyfully witness to the Gospel day-by-day, convinced that it *is* the love of Jesus crucified which urges us. We find our hearts simultaneously filled with gratitude and a deep-seated call to simply but fully live out Mother Guillemin's challenge "to BECOME, what we claim to Be"; that is, to become *Daughters of Charity*!⁷ Indeed, we seek to share boldly a hospitality that visibly reflects our name and simultaneously calls us to more.



⁶ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁷ Mother Suzanne Guillemin, Annual Retreat Talk, March 1966.



Louise de Marillac and Daughters of Charity amongst the poor in Paris

Painting by Maillard, 1920. Saint-Laurent church, Paris, France.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Rosalie Rendu sharing her savings with the poor.

Engraving from *Les Soeurs de Charité: Histoire Populaire des Soeurs de Saint Vincent de Paul* by Léo Taxil and P. Marcel (1888).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Hospitality in the Manner of St. Vincent de Paul

J. PATRICK MURPHY, C.M., PH.D.

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[previous
article](#)

[next
article](#)

As Very Dear Friends: The Inestimable, Hospitable Vincent de Paul¹

- Are you feeling down? Vincent was depressed for three-and-a-half years.
- Are you a little tired? Vincent lived nearly 80 years, dying in 1660—died working. When asked on his deathbed what would he have done differently with his life, his single dying word was “more.”
- Are you disappointed with our sorry world? Vincent spent his entire life in a time of war, except for his final three months.

Vincent wrote the Common Rules for members of the Congregation of the Mission, and he taught them how to live:

Love, like that between brothers, should always be present among us.... For this reason there should be great mutual respect, and we should get along *as good friends*....²

These are the words that anchor his action of hospitality. Members of the Congregation of the Mission call each other confreres—a French word that means brothers-with. It is, perhaps, the root word of all of Vincent’s relationships.

What do Howard Schultz of Starbucks, Steve Jobs of Apple, Walt Disney, and Bill Marriott, Jr., have in common with Vincent de Paul? They demanded excellence in serving their customers, ridiculously defining standards and exhorting their people to exceed expectations, taking swift action and striving constantly for improvement. Did Howard, Steve, Walt, and Bill learn it from Vincent? They could have. Our job today is sense-making, both in terms of how Vincent made sense of his life and his world, and how we make sense of Vincent today. How do we discover Vincent’s theory and practice of hospitality in the seventeenth century and make sense of it in the twenty-first? Vincent was born in 1581, ordained at the age of nineteen, earned his bachelor degree in theology shortly thereafter, and was licensed in both canon and civil law too.

Karl Weick, the “father of sensemaking,” suggests that the term means simply “the making of sense.”³ It is the process of structuring the unknown. “....People use strategy ... in such a way as to give meaning, purpose and direction to the organization.”⁴ Leaders, he asserts, perform their main purpose in making sense of things for organizational members. In researching this topic I found that Vincent’s hospitality can be identified in five core practices: mission, passion, make friends, listen to your heart, and active hospitality. Let’s take them one at a time, and follow up with hospitality lessons for servant leaders.

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented at *Servant Leadership: A Conference on How to Get Great Things Done in Organizations*, All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland, 27 June 2014.

² Vincent de Paul, *The Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, VIII, Number 2 (Rome; Philadelphia: General Curia of the Congregation of the Mission, 1989), 129. Emphasis added.

³ Karl E. Weick, *Sensemaking in Organizations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995), 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Mission

Nearly everyone agrees that mission is central to nonprofit organizations, nothing is more important. What is the purpose of the organization and how will it make a difference? Vincent saw mission as the first principle of management.⁵ Indeed, he suffered through depression for three-and-a-half years and was only able to break out of it when he made sense of his life and found his mission at Châtillon. Vincent presents the purpose, his passion:

Come then, my dear confreres, let's devote ourselves with renewed love to serve persons who are poor, and even to seek out those who are the poorest and most abandoned; let's acknowledge before God that they're our lords and masters and that we're unworthy of rendering them our little services.⁶

Bill Marriott explains the mission, and how it is rooted, in detail.

Marriott's principal product is probably not what you think it is. Yes, we're in the lodging business. Yes, we sell room nights. But what we're really selling is our expertise in *managing the processes*—especially how we welcome our guests at check-in—that make those room sales possible. And that expertise rests firmly on our mastery of hundreds of tiny operational details.⁷

We are sometimes teased about our passion for the Marriott “way” of doing things. We're known in the hotel industry for our detailed procedures. The aim is to provide our customers with service free of hassles and surprises.⁸

Food must be at the proper temperature and well presented. Attention to detail is everything. The responsibility for taking care of the guest is the cardinal rule.⁹

At Starbucks Howard Schultz is mad about brewing the perfect cup of coffee and serving it with aplomb. With over 18,000 stores, Starbucks averages sixteen visits per month per customer. They estimate that they keep a customer for twenty years. Their stock is up 392% in the last decade.¹⁰

⁵ Thomas Fuechtmann, “‘There is Great Charity But...’ Vincent de Paul and the Organization of Charity” in *Vincentian Heritage* 23-25:2 (2005), 51.

⁶ Conference 164, “Love for the Poor,” January 1657, in *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, ed. and trans. by Jacqueline Kilar, D.C., Marie Poole, D.C., et al, 1-14 (New York: New City Press, 1985-2014), 11:349. Hereafter CCD. See: http://via.library.depaul.edu/coste_en/

⁷ J.W. Marriott, Jr., *Without Reservations How a Family Root Beer Stand Grew into a Global Hotel Company* (San Diego: Luxury Custom Publishing, LLC, 2012), 68.

⁸ Marriott, *Without Reservations*, 65.

⁹ Ed Fuller, *You Can't Lead with Your Feet on the Desk: Building Relationships, Breaking Down Barriers, and Delivering Profits* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 34.

¹⁰ Paul Tracy, “How the ‘Starbucks Effect’ Could Lead to 200% Gains,” Nasdaq.com, 22 February 2013: <http://www.nasdaq.com/article/how-the-starbucks-effect-could-lead-to-200-gains-cm220445>



Daughters of Charity caring for the sick. Engraving.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



In his Rule, Vincent did not hesitate to go into details on the manner in which the servants of the poor should work with the sick. “The lady who is on duty will bring the dinner and carry it to the sick. In approaching them, she will greet them cheerfully and with kindness.”¹¹ And Vincent went further with his recommendations, specifying the order in which the sick should be served: “One must remember to serve first those who have someone with them and finish with those who are alone, so that one can spend a longer time with them.”¹² Finally, a famous detail Vincent offered for serving the poor was “...when you serve the poor, put out a white table cloth....”¹³

What is significant for us here is the process of self-evaluation. Vincent was never satisfied that the work was the best it could be. He constantly examined it in the light of “experience” and sought to improve it. Just nine days before his death, he was still doing so.¹⁴

Passion

Modern researchers refer to Vincent’s life as “Vincent I” and “Vincent II.” Early in life he sought comfort and the financial resources to be independent and provide for his family. Vincent did not become a leader until the conditions of the poor grabbed hold of his conscience and would not let him go. Organizing a response to poverty became his passion. “After so many travels and shifts, with his goal finally attained, Vincent began to realize the emptiness of everything that he had wished so ardently to grasp: material ease,

¹¹ Bernard Pujo, *Vincent de Paul: The Trailblazer* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 72.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ John E. Rybolt, C.M., “The Story of the White Tablecloth,” DePaul University Office of Mission and Values Video Series, available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CgJVAC7Na8>

¹⁴ Louise Sullivan, D.C., *The Core Values of Vincentian Education* (Niagara, N.Y.: Niagara University, 1997), 28.

important titles, the company of the powerful. It was his work with the rural poor that brought him a sense of his own accomplishment.”¹⁵ He spent 25 years trying to control God and then, freed from his own rat race, embraced the poor.

The Wright brothers knew that their plane would fly one day, they just didn’t know which day it would be. Their passion for flying catapulted them out of bed each morning eager for the sun to rise to see if this would be the day. Or, as Wilbur said, “We could hardly wait to get up in the morning.”

A story by Bob Janis from DePaul University also illustrates such passion:

Let’s see... it is 4:00 pm on Sunday, any Sunday, so that means only 12 more hours before I get up and go to work again! This is not some dire sentiment. It is a sentiment of excitement and anticipation of a new workweek about to begin. It is a fresh chance to spend more time doing what I love to do—serve the DePaul community. Since the day I started, nearly 36 years ago, I experience this Sunday rush of anticipation and excitement of the week to come.¹⁶

The best leaders are the most passionate about their work, their organizations, and their disciplines. The most highly rated teachers are those who are most enthusiastic about their material.¹⁷

Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos, which he sold to Amazon for two billion dollars, said:

I made a list of the happiest periods in my life, and I realized that none of them involved money. I realized that building stuff and being creative and inventive made me happy. Connecting with a friend and talking through the entire night until the sun rose made me happy. I thought about how I enjoyed creating, building, and doing stuff that I was passionate about.

I didn’t realize it at the time, but it was a turning point for me in my life. I had decided to stop chasing the money, and start chasing the passion. I was ready for the next chapter in my life.¹⁸

Hsieh established a company-wide policy at Zappos: he would offer \$25,000 to any employee who wanted to leave the company. He did not want anyone who would leave for \$25,000; he wanted passion.

¹⁵ Pujo, *The Trailblazer*, 56.

¹⁶ Bob Janis, “Tough as Nails,” in Jenny Mohan and Mandy Sharp, *Leading in the Legacy of St. Vincent de Paul: Reflections on Vincentian Leadership Today* (Chicago: Vincent on Leadership: The Hay Project, 2010), 54. See: http://via.library.depaul.edu/hay_books/1/

¹⁷ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (Jossey-Bass, 2012), 416 pp.

¹⁸ Tony Hsieh, *Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2010), 53-54.

Bill Marriott explained the passion he brings to the job:

For 60 years, I have loved my job, without reservations. While many people my age look forward to their daily round of golf or a dip in the pool, I prefer to travel halfway around the world to inspect hotels.

I'm not proud of all the hours I spent away from my family during my career, but I am proud that my passion for the work I do inspired all four of my children to follow me into the hotel business.¹⁹

Mandy Sharp, a graduate assistant in the School of Public Service at DePaul University, reflected on her passion:

She [a speaker at DePaul University] asked us simple questions: What is your college major? What is your passion? What makes you hot?

....After two years in DePaul's School of Public Service, I found my own personal mission—to do what makes me hot with a fire that acts ceaselessly—by working in international development. Vincent and Louise worked tirelessly to address the unmet needs of the poor—perhaps the fire they exuded for their work is what sustains their organizations more than 350 years after their deaths. They lived for their mission, both their personal mission to serve the poor, and for the mission of long-withstanding organizations that serve communities today.

....I realize we must live with mission, purpose and fire to do what “makes us hot,” to ignite a lasting social change....²⁰

Where is our passion? Americans chase after happiness asking “Am I happy in life?” This is the wrong question. We can torture ourselves to death with this question. The World Health Organization says the United States is the most anxious nation on earth. It is because of the “rat-race to happiness.” Rather, we can ask whether we are doing what we have to do. Does it give us life? Leadership begins with something that grabs hold and won't let go; happiness follows.²¹

In a YouTube video, John Yokoyama, owner of Seattle's Pike Place Fish Market, describes the people who work for him: “People aren't numbers. This is management by inspiration, keeping the spirit and purpose alive. We have the best results, the best relationships I have ever had. I love them; they love me.”²²

Vincent did not become a leader until the condition of the poor grabbed hold of him and would not let him go. Although once focused on personal aggrandizement, organizing a response to poverty became his passion.

¹⁹ Marriott, *Without Reservations*, 11.

²⁰ Mandy Sharp, “Do What Makes You Hot,” in Mohan and Sharp, *Leading in the Legacy*, 3-4.

²¹ Kouzes and Posner, *Leadership Challenge*.

²² Irwin McGraw-Hill, “Management by Inspiration,” see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxQW5xgX8A8#t=399>



Vincent presents the Common Rules to members of the Congregation of the Mission.

From a series on the life of Vincent de Paul by Vignola.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



After pursuing wealth for years he wrote his mother to say that he thought he would have enough money in another year to retire, and that he would be able to take care of her then.²³ He was 27. “Vincent began to realize the emptiness of everything that he had wished so ardently to grasp: material ease, important titles, the company of the powerful. It was his work with the rural poor that brought him a sense of his own accomplishment.”²⁴

But how much is enough? Jesus told us to baptize the nations—all of them. Preach the good news to the poor—all of them. Vincent’s vision was to serve the poor—all of them. He did not stop at the gates of Paris or the borders of France. He sent missionaries to the ends of the earth: “Our vocation is to go not into one parish, nor into only one diocese, but throughout the earth. And to do what? To inflame the hearts of men. It is not enough for me to love God if my neighbor does not love him as well.”²⁵

Make Friends

“Love, like that between brothers, should always be present among us.... For this reason there should be great mutual respect, and we should get along as good friends.”²⁶

After thirty-three years of practice, Vincent offered this rule to the men who were members of his community, those he spent his life with: love one another as good friends. Bernard Pujo notes that Vincent was gifted early in life in making friends and generally charming people, especially women. “Already then, he had the gift of winning other people’s good will, and he would keep this gift all his life. His charm, no doubt, was a subtle mix—a mischievous glance, sparkling wit, the good cheer of a Gascon, and a wellspring

²³ Pujo, *The Trailblazer*, 41.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

²⁶ Vincent de Paul, *Common Rules*, VIII, Number 2, 129.

of optimism that survived even the hardest luck;"²⁷ "Vincent had an innate gift for striking up relationships that usually turned into friendships;"²⁸ "Vincent had a particular gift for making connections with people."²⁹

Professor Thomas A. Maier believes hospitality is rooted in approachability. Edward Udovic, C.M., suggests that Vincent's virtue of being meek can be suitably translated to twenty-first-century culture as being "approachable." Brother Leo Keigher, C.M., has worked with the homeless at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Chicago, for over twenty years and witnesses firsthand how they befriend each other, and also become friends to him.

Bill Marriott tells the story of a family who left their son's favorite stuffed toy behind. Frantic, they called the hotel to report the loss. Marriott associates located the toy and concocted a story that the toy had extended its vacation, then photographed the toy at the pool and elsewhere. They created a basket of remembrances and mailed all to the child endearing the Marriott brand because they acted like friends to the family. Edwin Fuller of Marriott declares, "In short, relationships are the currency of every culture."³⁰

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, in *Le Petit Prince*, taught us about building interdependencies as servant leaders. The Little Prince says: "'I am looking for friends. What does that mean, tame?' 'It is an act too often neglected,' said the fox. 'It means to establish ties... If you tame me, then we shall need each other.' 'You become responsible for what you have tamed.'"³¹

At Disney World when the Wilderness Lodge was built, the family restaurant, Whispering Canyon Café, was to be different. The design of the menu, space, and service focused on the children rather than the parents. Wait staff paid attention to the children and would often put parents into embarrassing positions of, for instance, riding a stick horse around the restaurant to the absolute delight of the kids. Befriending the kids as a way to the hearts of the adults makes for family entertainment par excellence.

Ron Ramson, C.M., writes that "Frédéric Ozanam viewed his involvement in the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul as interplay between friends for friends.... The members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul were friends helping friends."³²

Kathy Slover of the St. Vincent de Paul Center in Chicago tells the story of Kim:

Kim was a Homeless Outreach client for eight years. He came to us each Monday morning, ready for a shower and a change of clothes. He spent the rest of his week hustling money to pay for his drug and alcohol addictions.

²⁷ Pujo, *The Trailblazer*, 31.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁰ Fuller, *You Can't Lead with Your Feet*, 17.

³¹ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., 1943).

³² Ronald Ramson, C.M., *Hosanna! Blessed Frederic Ozanam: Family and Friends* (Bloomington, IN: West Bow Press, 2013), 90.

Each Monday, we greeted him with a smile and asked if he wanted to talk. The Outreach Coordinator always told him he was smart, capable, and that he could handle a job and apartment if he was ready to try rehab. After five years, Kim decided he was ready to try rehab. He tried three times before becoming clean and sober. Now he is a dependable volunteer in the Homeless Outreach program. He was baptized two years ago at the age of forty-seven. He has a part-time maintenance job at his church. Kim says this is all because we treated him with respect. A smile, a shower and trust in his abilities during the eight years he was our client convinced him to try a new approach to his life.³³

Listen to your heart

“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eyes.”

— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

“The central ingredients of heart are your understanding of your business, and the internal compass that develops after years of experience.”³⁴

Malcom Gladwell tells the story of the town of Roseto, Pennsylvania, where the inhabitants were free of heart disease. Researchers studied diet, ancestry, and all possible reasons why this could be. Inhabitants, they found, had healthy hearts because of the common lives they lived.³⁵

Vincent spoke with an open heart, evoking the example of a man known to all in order to urge his audience to unburden their hearts of the weight of past faults. Still profoundly moved himself, he spoke to his countrymen like a man of the country; son of a peasant, he spoke to them in their language. The effect was extraordinary!³⁶

Meekness [or, approachability, as suggested by Maier and Udovic] consists of showing great affability, cordiality, and cheerfulness of countenance to those who approach us, so that we may be a consolation to them. Some, by their smile or their friendly greetings, please everyone.... These individuals seem to offer you their heart and ask yours in return.³⁷

³³ Kathy Slover, “We Must Give Them a Life Worthy of the Name,” in Mohan and Sharp, *Leading in the Legacy*, 74.

³⁴ Marriott, *Without Reservations*, 126.

³⁵ Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008), 3, 10.

³⁶ Pujo, *The Trailblazer*, 60.

³⁷ Serafin Peralta, C.M., *Reflections: Last Ten Years in the Life of St. Vincent de Paul* (Manila: Adamson University Press, 2009), 58.



Vincent de Paul holding a copy of the Common Rules.

Painting; original in the Vincentian motherhouse, Paris, France.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Jesus then goes on to connect treasure and heart which, ultimately, is the reason why he warns against earthly treasure. He wants our hearts to be focused on the Father, not distracted by the things money can buy. It is our hearts, after all, that connect us to God.³⁸

Relationships are what we value instead of earthly treasure. This is where the real work of Jesus, Vincent, Louise, and Frederick is done. It is in relationships that hearts are changed, both our own hearts and those to whom we relate.³⁹

Divine Providence

Vincent waited thirty-three years before he wrote and promulgated the Common Rules for the Congregation of the Mission. He offered this explanation: “Firstly, I wanted to take our Savior as a model. He put things into practice before he made them part of his teaching.”⁴⁰ He was able to show that the Congregation could live up to them, because they had. “...I must say how pleased I am that you do live by them and that they have enabled you all to help one another.”⁴¹ This approach was counter-cultural in France, a country that favored theory to form practice rather the other way around. Several years after his death the French Revolution would result in multiple versions of the constitution, for instance, before the nation settled into a post-monarchical society.

Bill Marriott said it this way regarding his decision to acquire the Ritz Carlton hotel chain: “Research and analysis should give you the hard data you need to debate a decision

³⁸ Mark Pranaitis, C.M., “Wherever Your Treasure Lies There Also Your Heart Will Be,” *Vincentian Heritage* 19:1 (1998), 135.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁴⁰ Document 117a, “Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission,” 17 May 1658, CCD, 13a:430.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 431.

with intelligence and insight, but facts alone aren't always enough to make a correct decision.... Which brings me to my third rule of decision making: listen to your heart."⁴²

It took Vincent a year to decide to accept the gift of the Priory of Saint-Lazare, a property on the outskirts of Paris with revenue attached, because it was too big (75 acres), too monastic, because it would change the nature of the Congregation. It had housed the mentally ill, prisoners, lepers, and monks. He was right, it was all those things. But it also improved and strengthened the Congregation and its work because it provided the capacity to grow and the opportunity for Vincent to develop his practice of active hospitality. It transformed Vincent, his people, and his work. He attributed it all to the Providence of God—and it was—in the sense that Vincent considered the offer for a year while gathering data and listening to his heart and his God.

Active Hospitality—Make it your entire task

Vincent was a man of action. Once he decided on a proper course, he demanded what we might call pro-active service. Pujo says of Vincent, "He believed in the virtue of action and he loved to use this succinct motto: *Totum opus nostrum in operatione consistit* (Action is our entire task)"⁴³

Vincent set the tone for those visiting Saint-Lazare: all are very welcome. He mentored those who worked there to practice "active hospitality." He taught them not to wait and see what guests needed, but rather to actively seek them out, welcome them, and ask what they need. As an extension of hospitality Saint-Lazare provided over 600 rooms. Over 13,000 (500+ per year) priests were ordained at the priory, and more than 20,000 lay people participated in retreats there. Saint-Lazare became a hospitality center for all of France. Vincent organized fund raising and programs to deliver services at no-cost or reduced fees, and he paid for the retreats and training.⁴⁴ It all started at Châtillon, where he learned that, although there was great charity for serving the poor, it was not well structured. His response was to organize, to take action to change the world for the better.

Depaul International, now 25 years old, currently provides services to the homeless in six countries. The senior management group is designing strategies and best practices to welcome the homeless into their centers. They base these strategies in part on Vincent's words, cited earlier: "...let's devote ourselves with renewed love to serve persons who are poor, and even to seek out those who are the poorest and most abandoned; let's acknowledge before God that they're our lords and masters and that we're unworthy of rendering them our little services."⁴⁵

In practical terms this means redesigning waiting rooms into welcoming centers, replacing the clipboards and forms for the homeless to fill out with a cup of tea and

⁴² Marriott, *Without Reservations*, 127.

⁴³ Pujo, *The Trailblazer*, 251.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴⁵ Conference 164, CCD, 11:349.



Howard Schultz of Starbucks, Bill Marriott, Jr. of Marriott International, and Steve Jobs of Apple. Innovative business leaders of our era that have placed a premium on excellence in customer service.

Public Domain images



conversation, welcoming the poor as guests and very dear friends. Today hospitality experts like Bill Marriott, Jr., teach their associates to anticipate the guests' needs, to exceed their expectations. "True excellence includes taking care of the smallest details, even when they're not visible to your customers."⁴⁶ Vincent was a Marriott of charity before Bill Marriott had served a single meal.

Howard Schultz said of Starbucks, "We are what we are—but the question is, what are we going to do about it and how are we going to fix it?"⁴⁷ Vincent could delve into great detail on the means of carrying out their mission as seen in this lesson in basic nursing:

She will set up the tray on the bed, place on it a napkin, a cup, a spoon, and some bread, wash the patient's hands, and then say grace. She will pour the soup into a bowl, and put the meat on a plate. She will arrange everything on the bed tray, then kindly encourage the patient to eat for the love of Jesus and His holy Mother. She will do all this as lovingly as if she were serving her own son—or rather God, who considers as done to Himself the good she does for persons who are poor.⁴⁸

Acting on their culture of Vincentian hospitality and institutional values, DePaul University made conscious architectural decisions to plan the DePaul Center in Chicago's Loop to be open and inviting to the community. The university embodied its mission as urban and Vincentian by extending hospitality via building design, reducing boundaries to better serve students and welcome the public.

⁴⁶ Marriott, *Without Reservations*, 65.

⁴⁷ Howard Schultz, *Onward: How Starbucks Fought for its Life Without Losing its Soul* (New York: Rodale, 2011), 61.

⁴⁸ Document 126, "Charity of Women (Châtillon-les-Dombes)," November-December 1617, CCD, 13b:13.

Hospitality Lessons for Vincentian Leaders

1. Make sense: get our house in order. There is great charity but it is poorly organized. Organizing people is one of the greatest services leaders can offer—making connections between personal and organizational vision, values, and mission.
2. Focus on mission: great work is its own reward. Developing a personal mission and connecting it to the organizational mission is key to personal effectiveness. Modeling the way for others to help them make the same connection is inspirational.
3. Lead with passion: create a culture of values. Tell stories to teach and motivate. If we are, like Vincent, on fire for our cause of serving the poor, show it. Motivation comes from personal passion.
4. Make friends: nobody does it alone. Vincent worked hard and sometimes that work ethic overshadowed his genius of making friends, connections, and enabling the mission through others. He became friends with the best minds and spiritual luminaries of the time and used them as mentors.
5. Listen to the heart: Vincent was quick to teach others to depend on Divine Providence. He searched for the will of God in his personal life and organizational endeavors. He found his search for self in the search for God. He took twenty-seven years, but once he started listening to his heart he became himself.
6. Act. Make hospitality your entire task: something must be done; what should I do? Vincent was constantly seeking ways to improve service to the poor in all his organizations. He set action as the key component to his spirituality and service.

Do these leadership principles seem a little embarrassing, too much like motherhood and apple pie? If they are, then it is about right; we can be a little embarrassed to have passion, make friends with the poor, fuss over the details of service. Leaders are already “dancing naked on the table;” there is no use pretending they are wearing clothes.

Jenny Mohan, a graduate assistant in Vincent on Leadership: The Hay Project at DePaul University, described how service works for her:

It is through story telling that I convey my values, beliefs, morals and give insight into who I am as an individual. It is an opportunity for me to open myself and welcome others to be part of my life. Stories provide people with an avenue to understand each other and a way for us to relate to one another. St. Vincent de Paul used stories to communicate his mission, vision, and values. He took his life experiences and shared them as stories to teach others.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Jenny Mohan, “The Telling of Stories,” in Mohan and Sharp, *Leading in the Legacy*, 36.

Conclusion

“Once you share a common set of values, you can go and be yourself.”⁵⁰

Malcom Gladwell, in *Outliers*, offers the 10,000 hours rule: we have to devote 10,000 hours to master something. Vincent mastered service of the poor because he put in the hours. The Beatles became popular so quickly, so it seems, because they had put in so many hours perfecting their music, playing over 1,200 times in second-rate German clubs in less than two years. They burst forth on the world scene because they had already become so good together.⁵¹ John Lennon described it:

We got better and got more confidence. We couldn't help it with all the experience playing all night long. It was handy them being foreign. We had to try even harder, put our heart and soul into it, to get ourselves over.

In Liverpool, we'd only ever done one-hour sessions, and we just used to do our best numbers, the same ones, at every one. In Hamburg, we had to play for eight hours, so we really had to find a new way of playing.⁵²

Bill Gates is another example of someone who put in extraordinary hours as a child, performing real-time programming as an eighth-grader.⁵³ Both are important, the many hours along with great coaching or mentoring. What do Bill Marriott, Jr., Howard Schultz, Bill Gates, the Beatles, and Vincent have in common? All were motivated by a love of what they did, their passion and their vision. They also benefitted from the money earned, the for-profit factor. Except Vincent. His love for the poor was selfless. He gave his life savings to the poor to free himself for service. All were inspired by their missions, and all benefitted personally—except Vincent. His beneficiaries were the poor.

We can judge the effectiveness of Vincent's work not only by what he did during his lifetime, but more by the fact that it continued after his death without missing a step. Indeed, it expanded exponentially throughout the vast Vincentian Family, so that even more services for the poor continue growth today, over 350 years after his death. He changed France during his own lifetime; and he has changed Slovakia in our lifetime thanks to DePaul Slovakia.⁵⁴ Vincent built on a solid mission, created a formal organizational foundation and structures to enact that mission. His was a results-focused leadership.⁵⁵

Vincent achieved so much because he did so much. He wrote over 30,000 letters in his lifetime, using a technique of management by memo, and he sent his missionaries all

⁵⁰ Fuller, *You Can't Lead with Your Feet*, 37.

⁵¹ Gladwell, *Outliers*, 47-49.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵⁴ Post-Russian Slovakian government had to change its structures and regulations to allow Depaul Slovakia to open shelters for the homeless.

⁵⁵ See: Fuechtmann, “There is Great Charity,” 49-50.



Vincent de Paul sending out missionaries.

Stained glass window by Laurent and Gsel, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



over the world while remaining actively engaged in leading, managing, and mentoring. Proportionately, Vincent had as many failures and made as many mistakes as others. It is just that he did so much more than most. Thomas Fuechtmann writes:

Vincent's early biographers were impressed with his "prodigious activity."early writers were "unable to escape the magnetic field of Vincent's ceaseless energy. Vincent's activity continued to overshadow his interiority."⁵⁶

Vincent worked longer days than most, and lived more years than his contemporaries. He listened to his coaches and mentors, some of the best minds in Europe, his confreres, and he put in the hard work to formulate a charity of hospitality. Vincent, Bill Gates, and the Beatles all started their careers early in life. They logged their 10,000 hours, and they were welcomed on the world stage because they were in the right place at the right time, and because they were so well-practiced. Vincent's work continues growing all over our world nearly 400 years later.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.



Challamel d'après Jules David.

Fondation de l'hospice des Enfants trouvés.

Vincent de Paul and the foundling hospital.

From a series of engravings in Augustin Challamel, *Saint-Vincent de Paul* (1841).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Daughters of Charity caring for the sick. Engraving.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Vincent presents the Common Rules to members of the Congregation of the Mission.

From a series on the life of Vincent de Paul by Vignola.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Vincent de Paul holding a copy of the Common Rules.

Painting; original in the Vincentian motherhouse, Paris, France.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Howard Schultz of Starbucks, Bill Marriott, Jr. of Marriott International, and Steve Jobs of Apple. Innovative business leaders of our era that have placed a premium on excellence in customer service.

Public Domain images





Vincent de Paul sending out missionaries.

Stained glass window by Laurent and Gsel, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



A Reflection on Hospitality From DePaul Ireland

CHRISTINE LITTLEFIELD

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[previous
article](#)

[next
article](#)

Who We Are

Depaul Ireland was established because there was unmet need in Ireland and Northern Ireland. There was a significant population of people who were homeless and known to have an active addiction. As a result, although homeless, these individuals were denied access to critical services that were otherwise provided to the homeless. Thus, those who needed the support of homeless services the most were denied access or excluded once the nature of their need and addiction was identified. In 2002, Depaul Ireland was founded to address this unmet need and to ensure that this marginalized population was given the support and services that it so desperately needed. Depaul Ireland is now a leading cross-border organization in Ireland and Northern Ireland, providing services in both jurisdictions. Hospitality is at the forefront of the work and service that Depaul Ireland offers. By serving those people who are most in need in society and providing them the opportunity to realize their true potential, Depaul Ireland has made a significant contribution to the lives of those they have served.

Our Approach and Who We Support through Hospitality

Our approach and ethos stem from our Vincentian values, which are rooted in the work of Saints Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, who were both champions of justice. We are therefore part of a 400-year tradition of hospitality and service to those who are the most marginalized in our community. Our core values, which we have developed from the work of Vincent de Paul, form the foundation of our hospitality praxis and include the following:

- Celebrate the potential of people.
- Put our words into action.
- Aim to take a wider role in civil society.
- Believe in rights and responsibilities.

Our vision, mission, and values clearly define us as a charity. We aim to be inclusive, never exclusive, to help those on the margins of society, and to help the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in a fully respectful way in order to develop and create a new vision for themselves and their future. Our vision is that every person should have a place to call home and a stake in their community. Depaul Ireland operates low threshold services, with the aim that this approach will help to maintain the admittance requirements of each of our homeless services at such a level so that as few people as possible are denied access to any one service. This approach also recognizes that those who are the most difficult to work with are often the most in need. We aim to be respectful and inclusive in our services, and offer care and support to people who have experienced times of isolation and often been turned away many times.

Depaul Ireland works to create difference rather than conforming to a particular model of addressing homelessness. We strive to be innovative and influence structural change in the homeless sector, putting the people we serve at the core of what we do.



Vincent de Paul caring for the poor.

Oil on canvas. Castleknock College, Dublin, Ireland.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Our Work: Hospitality in Practice

Our work is also defined by our Vincentian values, and our staff teams and volunteers fully understand our organizational ethos. Hospitality is at the forefront of our services. By creating a community in which residents and staff work together to support one another, Depaul Ireland is continually fostering an environment in which hospitality is practiced every day. The following are some of the key components to our hospitality praxis:

- *Community:* Developing a collaborative and inclusive community plays a key part in our ability to manage the challenges in accommodating individuals with diverse and multiple needs and in helping them progress to independence. We continually strive to cultivate the appropriate culture, environment, mutual understanding, and trust in order to facilitate a community where residents feel at home and where both residents and staff can work together. Maintaining a community that is focused on respect and hospitable service creates an environment in which residents become neighbors with one other. Our staff fills the gap by offering support when and as required — and sometimes when it is not wanted at all — in order to encourage residents to stabilize their life, stay well and safe, and move out of homelessness.
- *Leadership:* In order for Depaul Ireland to effectively serve the community, our management teams demonstrate leadership and clear strategic direction in the implementation and provision of our homeless services. In this way, our approach to hospitality and service is embedded and understood by everyone across the organization, including our paid staff and unpaid volunteers. Our emphasis on leadership ensures that we all work together in a respectful, consistent, and flexible manner so that the people we serve feel welcomed and supported by our services.



Residents enjoy a Halloween party at Sundial House in 2011.

Courtesy: <https://depaulirelandvolunteerblog.wordpress.com/tag/depaul-ireland/>



-
- *Collaboration:* A collaborative approach to service and hospitality is crucial. Collaboration among those we serve, our staff and volunteers, the local community, as well as our statutory partners and stakeholders, is necessary at all times and contributes hugely to our organizational approach. For Depaul Ireland, hospitality is a collaborative project that involves all participants, including those who provide services and those who receive them.

Individual Reflections on Hospitality

At Depaul Ireland, we have been working hard to make sure our values—working with the most vulnerable people in society—aren't diluted by expansion [of our outreach]. Collaborative working is vital as well as continual learning and improvement of our approach as an organization to make sure we are at all times true to our values and supporting those most in need in our community.

—Kerry Anthony MBE, CEO of Depaul Ireland

Depaul Ireland derives its strength from our original partnerships with the Vincentian Family. That partnership has enabled us to stay true to our Vincentian values and ensures we remain action focused and prepared to take risks where others would not. Those touched by our hospitality offer the following reflections:

Nobody can do it on their own, from statutory funders to the Vincentian Family to friends and supporters.... Depaul Ireland has always been fortunate to have a strong community of support.

—Frank Allen, Chair of the Depaul Ireland Board of Trustees

Sundial House is very good. The staff are great. It's like a hotel. I have my own room and privacy which is very important. There is plenty of space and its more easy going. I have a good chance to do art and keep busy. It's better than being on the streets and I now have a starting chance.

—Resident of Sundial House, Dublin, Ireland

It has been nothing but positive since I came here to Foyle Haven, it has given me confidence and I am now taking pride in my home. Coming into Foyle Haven has been for the better.

—Day service participant, Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland

Foyle Haven has made me more outgoing and helped me to mix with other people. I used to live in the day and now I look forward to the future. The project staff at Foyle Haven has a down-to-earth friendly approach and there is no pre-judgment.

—Day service participant, Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland

I love living here, I have support for me and my daughter and finally feel some stability. I feel I am getting the help I need to prepare to move on and live independently through work I have done with my keyworker especially around budgeting.

—Resident of Cloverhill family service, Belfast, Northern Ireland

I came from a very bad place in my life, I've been through homelessness and addiction. I thought there was no hope after leaving prison. I had a bumpy road but I suppose you have to go through the ups and downs in Tus Nua to get where you want to get.

—Resident, Tus Nua, Dublin, Ireland





Vincent de Paul caring for the poor.

Oil on canvas. Castleknock College, Dublin, Ireland.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Residents enjoy a Halloween party at Sundial House in 2011.

Courtesy: <https://depaulirelandvolunteerblog.wordpress.com/tag/depaul-ireland/>



Reflections from the Road: Vincentian Hospitality Principles in Healthcare Education for the Indigent

JOHN M. CONRY, PHARM.D., BCPS, AAHIVP¹

¹ I would like to acknowledge my beloved St. John's University colleagues and students, and Project Renewal colleagues and patients, who have inspired and taught me throughout my career. A special thank you to Dr. Jennifer Bhuiyan for her permission to use her academic service-learning reflection.

[previous
article](#)

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[next
article](#)

Introduction

Hospitality and health care are clearly connected, both etymologically and practically. Health care has traditionally been delivered in hospitals. In fact, the word hospital is derived from the Latin *hospes*, meaning guest, visitor, or stranger.² Similarly, hospitality, the relationship between guest and host, is also derived from *hospes*. In the practice of hospitality, the guest is generally welcomed, respected, and treated as an equal by the host, while also provided with necessary and/or requested services. As such, hospitality is, or should be, an integral part of health care, in which patients (i.e. guests/strangers) who seek medical services are welcomed with compassion, respect, and dignity, and provided appropriate high-quality medical treatment by health care providers and staff (i.e. hosts). This focus on caring for the individual patient is captured in the oaths/pledges taken in most, if not all, health professions. In contemporary health care, this hospitality has extended beyond the walls of the hospital and expanded into the community in the forms of hospice, medical offices, clinics, pharmacies, and other ambulatory care settings.

Hospitality is rooted in approachability and the concept that we are all God's people, one people, and thus should remain open to receiving and serving all people. Personally, this concept of hospitality recalls a theme of my parish men's Cornerstone Retreat, which I participated in several years ago. At the retreat, we studied and greeted each other with the following: "The God in me salutes the God in you," similar to the Indian expression and symbolic gesture, "*Namaste*." In recognizing the divinity in each of us, we may more readily practice and foster unconditional love, compassion, respect, equality, and service of and for our neighbors.

Utilizing the work and teachings of Saints Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, we may apply the Vincentian charism to this concept of hospitality. It is a charism rooted in God and in service to others, with a preferential option for the poor. It is focused on a shared vision of integral human development and the creation of sustainable solutions to issues of social justice. It is important that those who work in healthcare understand and remain committed to Vincentian and hospitality-based health care, particularly for the indigent and marginalized. This population is an overlooked, under-served and vulnerable patient population. It is well-documented that disparities of care exist when comparing the indigent to those who are financially stable and sufficient, with the indigent often receiving less than optimal care. Furthermore, it is critical that we engage our current and future health care students in caring for the indigent/underserved in their educational experiences, so that they may identify and understand this as a professional responsibility and can, in turn, teach successive generations of health care professionals.

Vincentian Health Care History and Principles

Louise Sullivan, D.C., noted Vincentian scholar and an expert on seventeenth-century France, has written a comprehensive and instructive work on Vincentian health care entitled:

² Cassell's Latin Dictionary.

Vincentian Mission in Health Care.³ This work provides a detailed historical overview of the formation and operationalization of Vincentian health care and identifies essential attributes. The foundation of Vincentian health care largely stems from the Daughters of Charity, founded by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac in 1633. While not limited to health care, service of the “sick poor” was central to the Daughters of Charity vocation from the very beginning. Both Vincent and Louise had significant personal experiences both in being sick and in working with the sick poor, which appears very likely to have inspired their dedication to this patient population, along with their abundant faith. It is important to note that from the very beginning Vincentian health care was intentionally holistic, meaning that it was to serve the sick poor “corporally and spiritually,” to minister to the body with physical care, the mind with psychological care, and the spirit with spiritual care.

A full historical review of Vincentian health care is beyond the scope of this article and expertise of its author. Briefly summarized, though, Vincentian health care in the seventeenth century was largely the work of the Daughters of Charity and involved a variety of health care services, including nursing care and pharmacy-related services at hospitals. Responsibilities in hospitals included nursing and pharmacy services management, and a variety of direct patient care measures such as proper nutrition, medication distribution and administration, bloodletting and purging, dressing of wounds, hygiene initiatives, psychological interventions, and others. Aside from the hospital setting, the Daughters were involved in home health care; care of the mentally ill; care of the elderly; and crisis intervention (e.g., care of the wounded on battlefields). Vincentian health care, therefore, demonstrated a wide scope of health care services and settings but always remained highly focused on the poor and indigent as its core and unwavering mission.

In addition to the diverse array of health care services provided by the Daughters of Charity to the poor and marginalized, Vincentian health care distinguished itself for its innovative structure and methodology. Vincent and Louise recognized early that organization and continuous evaluation was a necessity to ensure a successful and sustained service to the sick poor. They provided explicit structure and guidance in their rules and roles so as to make sure they were focused and clear. Vincentian health care was conceived, and remains, as an integrated service that is patient-centered. The efforts and responsibilities of all involved in health care (e.g., administrators, health care providers, staff, chaplains, etc.) are directed to high-quality patient care. This focus on patient-centered care and continuous quality improvement remain critical areas of focus in modern health care, almost four centuries after the development of Vincentian health care.

In her article, Sr. Sullivan was able to adeptly identify eight essential attributes of Vincentian health care. These attributes remain as relevant today as they were in seventeenth-century France and provide us with guidance for continued Vincentian health care. The

³ Louise Sullivan, D.C., *Vincentian Mission in Health Care* (Daughters of Charity National Health System, 1997). Available at: http://famvin.org/wiki/Vincentian_Mission_in_Health_Care



Vincent de Paul, with Louise de Marillac and Sisters, catechizing elderly poor at Nom de Jesus hospice. Oil on canvas by Frère André. Located at Sainte-Marguerite, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



attributes are clearly aligned with a hospitality-based practice of health care. In her words, the attributes are as follows:

1. *Spiritually rooted*: Vincentian health care recognizes the patient as a privileged place of encounter with God. Those involved in it form a “family of faith” which strives to serve the sick with cordial respect, compassion, and gentleness.
2. *Holistic*: From its origin Vincentian health care has sought to serve the sick “corporally and spiritually” that is to minister to body, mind, and spirit.
3. *Integrated*: Vincentian health care is patient focused, integrating all services, regardless of level, to provide comprehensive care and blending the humanistic with technical competence.
4. *Excellent*: Vincentian health care places quality at the center of its mission. The health care providers must not only be competent but efficient and dedicated.
5. *Collaborative*: By the gratuitousness of their patient centered service, those involved in Vincentian health care strive to be a bridge for unity in the multiple partnerships formed to insure better care for the sick. Vincentian health care seeks by such alliances to collaborate rather than to merely compete with other health care facilities.
6. *Flexible*: Vincentian health care is ever ready to reach out beyond institutional walls to serve the sick where needed and to intervene in crises when necessary.
7. *Creative*: Vincentian health care is ever seeking new or renewed ways to meet the changing needs of the sick while maintaining a clear “sense of the possible.”
8. *Focused*: From its origin for the service of the “sick poor,” Vincentian health care has viewed a preferential option for the poor as central to its mission. It thus strives to integrate this vision into all aspects of its service and to keep the primacy of it alive among all those who share in their ministry of care of the sick.⁴

⁴ *Ibid.*

Health Care and Health Inequities

Worldwide, incredible advances in health care have been made since the seventeenth century and the conceptualization of Vincentian health care. These improvements in overall health care are a consequence of a multitude of factors and events, including, significant advances in scientific research, education, and technology. This increased knowledge has led to numerous paradigm shifts in health care over time, with a central goal of improved health for people. Similarly, health care professional education has also experienced significant paradigm shifts resulting in new and expanded health care professional/support staff roles and responsibilities, with a goal of developing highly-qualified and dedicated professionals and staff to meet the health care needs of the public. While health care continues to encompass the provision of medical care for people who are acutely ill, there has been increased recognition, responsibility, and resource allocation for supportive care, chronic disease state management, health promotion, and disease prevention initiatives. Consequently, people living in the United States and many other countries have experienced an overall improved quality and duration of life. As an example of this emphasis on population health and the related continuous evaluation, since 1979 the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services has developed a detailed national 10-year plan for improving and measuring the health of all Americans. The most current iteration, *Healthy People 2020*, has identified more than 1,200 distinct objectives to achieve its goal, and provides interventions and resources to assist in attaining these objectives.⁵ Some of the topics focused on in *Healthy People 2020* are disease-specific such as diabetes mellitus, cancer, and HIV infection, while others are focused on broader areas such as access to health services and public health infrastructure.

In addition to the tremendous scientific advancements and achievements made in health care, there has also been an increased emphasis on hospitality in modern health care. Health care buildings such as hospitals, clinics, physician offices, and pharmacies, are commonly designed to be aesthetically pleasing and welcoming to patients and families. A “home-like” experience is pursued for the patients. In fact, some hospitals have focused on providing hospitality services for their patients and family/visitors that can, at times, rival hotels. Health care providers, administrators, and staff are keenly aware of the importance of providing hospitality-based service/practice to their patients/clients.

Health care establishments routinely survey patients regarding quality of care and hospitality measures following their experiences, and they evaluate these surveys to assess and improve the patient experience. In addition to the concern for their patients, the hospitality focus is emphasized due to the competitive nature of the business of modern day health care (wherein, often, numerous health care establishments offering similar services vie for the same patients). It is important to note that while advances in medical and overall health care have largely been fruitful in the promotion of health, care does not

⁵ “Healthy People 2020,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available at: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/about/objectiveDevelopment.aspx> (accessed 17 June 2014).

come inexpensively. In 2011, U.S. health care expenditures were estimated at \$2.7 trillion, essentially doubling, since 1980, the percentage of U.S. gross domestic product to 17.9%.⁶ Health care in the U.S. has become an increasingly complex system and continues to draw attention and concern from those who receive, provide, and finance it.

Despite significant advances in modern health care, health inequities clearly exist on both a national and global scale. High-quality and hospitality-based health care is available for some, but certainly not all. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health inequity as “systematic differences in the health status of different population groups.”⁷ The WHO cites numerous examples, generally intertwined with poverty, and I have included some examples below for consideration. Everyday more than 21,000 children die before their fifth birthday, many from conditions easily treatable with modern medicine. Children from the poorest 20% of households are almost twice as likely to die before their fifth birthday as children from the richest 20%. Approximately 99% of maternal deaths and 95% of tuberculosis disease deaths occur in developing countries; these are deaths and disease largely preventable with modern medicine/health care. Providing further evidence of the impact of poverty on health inequity, the average life expectancy in low-income countries is fifty-seven, while in high-income countries it stands at eighty.

This health inequity has not gone unnoticed. At the United Nations Millennium Summit in the year 2000, leaders from 189 countries signed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) declaration.⁸ The MDGs provided eight detailed goals with measurable targets and explicit timelines for improving the lives of the world’s poor. Three of the eight MDG goals are health-related and have specific targets for the year 2015: reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. Although lauded as perhaps the most successful global anti-poverty initiative in history, the likelihood of meeting their health-related goals threatened by poor health service delivery to hard-to-reach populations. I am continuously inspired by the great global health work of the WHO and non-governmental organizations such as Catholic Relief Services, Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders, and Partners In Health. They each strive to eradicate health inequity by providing care directly to those in need, continuously exploring and evaluating new models of care to help the underserved and demonstrating to the world that it can and must be done.

Although frequently associated with the poorest developing countries, problems of health inequity and poverty also exist within the U.S. Despite its position as a globally powerful and wealthy country which offers the opportunity for state-of-the-art high-quality and hospitality-based health care, the fact is that many people within the U.S. do not have access to or cannot afford health/medical care and/or treatment, let alone hospitality-based

⁶ Hamilton Moses, David Matheson, E. Ray Dorsey, et al., “The Anatomy of Health Care in the United States,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 310:18 (2013), 1947-63. See: <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1769890>

⁷ “10 Facts on Health Inequities and Their Causes,” World Health Organization (2011). Available at: http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/health_inequities/en/ (accessed 17 June 2014).

⁸ “United Nations Millennium Declaration,” United Nations: Resolution by the General Assembly 55/2. Available at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> (accessed 17 June 2014).



Engraving of Daughters of Charity providing care at a military field hospital.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



care. The Commonwealth Fund estimated that in 2012, there were 47.3 million people uninsured and an additional 31.7 million people who were underinsured within the U.S.⁹ These access barriers have led the country into a continuous national debate on how best to provide health care to its residents. Recently, the U.S. has seen the passage and early implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which is intended to provide Americans with improved access to affordable, quality health insurance while reducing the growth in health care spending. It is the most significant health insurance expansion and market reform since 1965, when Medicare and Medicaid were enacted. The success of the ACA is a matter of fierce debate within the country, and its assessment at this time appears to be largely based on political affiliation. In reality, we will likely need further experience with and analysis of the ACA outcomes before it can be determined if it has been successful at achieving its intended goals.

Reflections from the Road:

Health Care for the Homeless/Indigent and Incorporation into Pharmacy Education

A 2013 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) study, using data from a count conducted by homeless shelters within the U.S. on a single night, found that 610,042 persons were homeless, 65% of whom were sheltered and 35% of whom were unsheltered.¹⁰ Recognizing the cyclical nature of homelessness, the total number of people who experience homelessness during the course of a year is likely significantly higher, with some estimates ranging as high as 3.5 million people. Homelessness is clearly pervasive in the U.S. and has multiple root causes. It threatens the welfare and dignity for those whom it affects and is a detriment to society at large. I have spent much of my professional career

⁹ C. Schoen, S.L. Hayes, S.R. Collins, J.A. Lippa, and D.C. Radley, "America's Underinsured: A State-by-State Look at Health Insurance Affordability Prior to the New Coverage Expansions," *The Commonwealth Fund* (March 2014). Available at: <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/fund-reports/2014/mar/americas-underinsured> (accessed 17 June 2014).

¹⁰ Meghan Henry, Dr. Alvaro Cortes, and Sean Morris, "The 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, Part 1: Point-in-time Estimates of Homelessness," U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Available at: <https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/AHAR-2013-Part1.pdf> (accessed 17 June 2014).

as a pharmacist and an educator working closely with the adult homeless and indigent population of New York City, mainly in relationship to health care. The remainder of this paper is largely based on my experiences with this vulnerable and special population.

A subset of the indigent, the homeless are an especially marginalized population and face significant obstacles to seeking and obtaining health care. The lack of financial and housing stability and sufficiency force those who are homeless to focus on responding to immediate needs such as shelter, food, and safety. Health becomes a secondary priority despite the fact that time and again there are significant medical needs. When the homeless consider seeking health care, it is regularly based on an acute pressing medical need rather than the management of chronic medical conditions or preventative care needs. Complicating this situation further is the potential lack of health care insurance or an ability to pay for medical care. For those homeless who are fortunate enough to be eligible for Medicaid or alternative health insurance, and have successfully navigated the fairly complicated application requirements and received coverage, they may still find it challenging to find a primary care provider and to see them regularly. There is a national shortage of such providers in health care today. Thus, many homeless have limited options to access care and therefore seek care in the emergency departments (ED) of hospitals. This additional patient volume for typically busy ED's can be overwhelming, chiefly because many times the care requested does not require specialized urgent and emergency care and further strains the limited resources of the hospital. After being treated in the ED, patients may, if needed, be discharged with a small supply of medications and/or prescriptions for medications. When homeless patients are prescribed medications they can be challenged by the cost of them at the pharmacy and therefore may be unable to have the prescription filled. This lack of treatment can then potentially exacerbate their medical problems and cause them to return to the ED, where the cycle begins all over again. It is evident that health care of the homeless can be very challenging, particularly considering that some patients may also suffer from psychiatric and/or addiction illnesses.

Fortunately, a variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations have focused on assisting and providing care and health care for the homeless. These organizations generally are focused on preventing or managing the problems previously identified for homeless populations. For the past twelve years, I have had the privilege of working closely with one such organization, Project Renewal. I serve as their Clinical Coordinator of Pharmaceutical Care Services, in conjunction with my full-time academic appointment in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at St. John's University. Although Project Renewal is a secular organization, I do believe it is an excellent example of an organization that effectively provides high-quality hospitality-based health care directly to the urban homeless/indigent population. I also believe the organization encompasses the vast majority of the previously identified attributes of Vincentian health care.

Project Renewal has a forty-seven-year history of providing care directly to the homeless of New York City. Its mission is to end the life cycle of homelessness by empowering

men, women, and children to renew their lives through health, homes, and jobs.¹¹ This is a challenging mission considering that there are more than 50,000 homeless people estimated to be living in the city.¹² The organization offers a wide array of successfully integrated programs and services to achieve its goal. One of the hallmarks of Project Renewal is that it is focused on meeting the homeless where they are, bringing their services directly to people in need. It operates a variety of shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing for its clients throughout New York.

Project Renewal also offers a variety of health services to the homeless and indigent population, for which it has rightfully received numerous awards and national recognition. In 2013, more than 11,000 people received health care at Project Renewal. It operates health clinics within its shelters which provide primary care services, psychiatric care, dental care, eye care, HIV care, and other services. Project Renewal further fulfills its mission by innovatively bringing health care directly to the homeless where they live, on the streets and in shelters. In 1986, Project Renewal launched the “MedVan,” a state-of-the-art mobile medical clinic staffed by a team of medical providers and staff. The MedVan became a national model for health care delivery to the homeless. Today, Project Renewal operates a fleet of five such mobile medical vans that maintain a specific schedule throughout the week (Monday-Saturday), providing medical care at soup kitchens and shelters throughout New York. The vans consist of private exam rooms, medical equipment for patient examination, and a confidential and secure electronic medical records system. Many health services are offered in the vans, including: primary care, urgent care, HIV-screening, immunizations, health screenings and other preventative care measures, and a network of referral-based care, within and outside of Project Renewal. Additionally, the vans have staff who assist patients in attaining health insurance when eligible.

As the pharmacist at Project Renewal, I help to oversee medication-related issues on the vans and within the HIV-clinic. My work includes assisting providers in determining the most appropriate treatment for patients, answering drug information questions, educating patients on their medications, monitoring medication storage and inventory, clinical research, and other duties. I have the privilege of welcoming to Project Renewal, teaching, and supervising doctor of pharmacy students from St. John’s University studying in their ambulatory care experiential course. This is a 4-week, full-time, course for senior pharmacy students who are immersed into the care provided at Project Renewal, mostly on the vans and in the HIV-clinic. The pharmacy students are active and integrated members of the health care team throughout their experience. The students and I assist medical providers by collecting medical and medication histories prior to the patient’s being seen by them. When ready to see the patient, we accompany the provider into the examination room and actively participate in the assessment and development of a plan for the patient.

¹¹ Mission Statement, Project Renewal. Available at: <http://www.projectrenewal.org/mission/> (accessed 17 June 2014).

¹² Facts about Homelessness, Coalition for the Homeless. Available at: <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/pages/basic-facts> (accessed 17 June 2014).



Daughters of Charity serving as pharmacists for the poor.
From a series of engravings on the lives of the Daughters.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



If that patient's plan includes medications and the patient has no insurance, the health care team has a limited stock of medications available on the van from which we can provide (at no cost to the patient) the most appropriate treatment. If the patient has insurance, they are provided with an appropriate prescription. The students and I provide detailed medication counseling to all patients receiving medicine or prescriptions from the medical providers.

As a proud member of the Project Renewal health care team, I can attest to the dedication of its medical providers, its staff, and the *excellent* high-level health care the patients receive. It is to me the definition of hospitality-based Vincentian health care, aside from the spiritual care aspect. From its onset, Project Renewal has been focused on providing care to the homeless poor. It delivers care in creative ways that maximize outreach, such as the use of medical vans that reach out directly to the poor. Patients are welcomed onto the van by friendly and competent staff and providers. The consistency of the van schedule and providers assigned to them and to clinics allows for an appropriate continuity of care, with patients frequently being seen by the same medical provider(s) each time they receive care. Patients are treated with respect by the health care team and are not judged on their appearances, behaviors, or medical problems. Patients are provided ample time when being interviewed, evaluated, and cared for by the health care team and are encouraged to ask questions and be engaged. Guided by the highly qualified medical providers and staff, the patients play a central role and participate in all treatment decisions. Project Renewal truly provides patient-centered care and patients typically form a strong bond with the health care team, as relationships are cultivated over time and experience with each other. The health care team works in a flexible, integrated, and collaborative way with each other and any other outside providers, as needed for the patient. Although not providing spiritual care, Project Renewal does aim to provide *holistic* care in the sense of caring for both mind

and body, especially critical for this patient population.

For pharmacy students at St. John's, the ambulatory care experiential course at Project Renewal is an academic service-learning course. It is an opportunity for students to apply the learning objectives and competencies learned in the didactic instruction of their pharmacy program. Academic service-learning at the university is a classroom/experiential site-based program that involves students in some form of required community service that benefits the common (public) good and uses service as a means of understanding course concepts. The service activity meets course objectives, and through reflection students examine issues pertaining to social justice and responsibility.¹³ Pharmacy students are provided with the opportunity to be an integral part of an inter-professional team of health care providers providing competent, dedicated care for the underserved that includes physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and staff. Curricular inclusion of caring for the underserved, and guidance for it, has long been called for in academic pharmacy studies and other educational fields of health care.¹⁴ Through engagement with and service to the poor, I hope that pharmacy students participating in this course will better realize the Vincentian mission of our university, and also develop a fervor for applying their unique pharmacy knowledge and skills to the underserved.

Reflection is an important component of academic service-learning. I have my students write several guided reflection papers prior to, during, and at the completion of their course at Project Renewal. With the permission of a former student, I will share a final reflection paper below. I have chosen this paper as it provides a glimpse of the Project Renewal experience and its impact on pharmacy students, and it is fairly representative of the themes included in all the reflections I have received from students while teaching at St. John's:

A strange thing happened to me on the A train ride downtown Friday afternoon. A man walked into the middle of the train with a paper cup in his hand, announcing to commuters that he was homeless and hungry. He looked unkempt, but not dirty. He wore a slightly tattered coat, blue jeans, and a baseball cap. Standing by his pole, he began to sing the 1970s Bill Withers classic, "Lean on Me." He sounded great.

For a while, I did what I (and most others) usually do in these kinds of situations. I sat tightly in my seat with a lowered gaze, and continued to read my book and browse through my iPod, patiently waiting for him to exit into the next car or onto the platform at the next stop. But my old routine had failed me; I couldn't concentrate on the passages, and couldn't hear the music through my headphones. I could only ask myself, "How much longer will I ignore the needs of the indigent, and the harsh reality they face on a daily basis?" I knew sitting

¹³ Academic Service-Learning, St. John's University. Available at: <http://www.stjohns.edu/faith-service/service-opportunities/academic-service-learning> (accessed 17 June 2014).

¹⁴ A. Zweber, V.F. Roche, M. Assemi, et al., "Curriculum Recommendations of the AACP-PSSC Task Force on Caring for the Underserved," *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* 72:3 (2008), Article 53.



Vincent and Daughters of Charity on the streets of Paris helping the poor. The Sacred Heart can be seen above him. Postcard after the painting by Luigi Morgari, Comprovasco, Switzerland.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



quietly wouldn't change anything, and giving money wouldn't necessarily help him either (depending on where it was going). Finally, I spoke up and said, "Excuse me, sir."

He leaned towards me, and under the bill of his cap I saw a pair of kind eyes. I paused for a moment, and then told him that for the past month I had been working with an organization called Project Renewal. I spoke about the MedVan, and the medical services it provides to the homeless and uninsured. He had heard about the organization before, and told me he stayed mostly uptown, in Harlem. I gave him the address to our [Harlem] site, and encouraged him to visit the MedVan on Monday afternoons and Friday mornings for free medical care. "I can help you this way," I said. He thanked me, said, "God bless you," and walked away.

It was at that moment I realized just how much I had matured, both morally and professionally, over the past month. I felt as if it was my duty, as a moral individual and as a provider of health, to reach out to that man, and I thank Project Renewal for instilling that belief within me. The organization has given me the opportunity to view the indigent people of New York City through an honest and intimate lens without which I would have remained ignorant to their humanity, their needs, and the unfortunate injustices they face in our society.

I was most moved by the case of MC, a 54 year-old African-American female who presented to the MedVan with an ulcerative wound covering the entire lower left leg. Since the infection started last August, she had gone to several private hospitals where she had received care for a few days, but was ultimately sent away because she did not have health insurance. Unable to pay

for services, MC took it upon herself to care for her wound; however, she fell short. Upon examination, the infection was so extensive that we were unable to provide adequate on-site care, and called EMS [Emergency Medical Service] to send her to the ER at [...] Hospital. Because of her past experiences, she initially refused to be taken to the hospital, not believing us as we informed her of [the hospital's] mission, as a public institution, to serve the uninsured and that she would not be denied care. As I watched [the] Dr. re-dress her wound before the EMS arrived, I noticed that MC began to weep. To this day, I am incapable of accurately describing the painful, hopeless look in her eyes. She seemed disillusioned by the healthcare system, betrayed by her society. It was an unfortunate incident, a heartbreaking sight. I kept thinking how preventable this was, had her circumstances been different, had she been insured. On the subject of healthcare and human rights, Paul Farmer once said, "The thing about rights is that in the end you can't prove what should be considered a right." For the cynics of a universal healthcare system, this is proof.

I leave Project Renewal with a heightened sense of awareness of what is being done to cope with the inadequacies of today's healthcare system. I am comforted by having met providers like those aboard the MedVan and throughout the organization's various clinics; they serve their patients with incredible skill, passion, and compassion. It is also encouraging to know that Project Renewal's office administrators practice their profession in the same way, giving hope to the future of this organization and the people they serve. With shared values and common beliefs, I now feel a moral and professional responsibility to carry on their ideals in my own practice of pharmacy, and to fight against the injustices I have seen to provide a better standard of care for the indigent population of New York City.

Conclusion

Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac developed the concept and practice of Vincentian health care, demonstrating a preferential option for the poor. The practice of hospitality was an essential part, wherein the poor were welcomed and respected while receiving high-quality health care. The need for Vincentian and hospitality-based health care remains relevant and necessary in contemporary society, as there remains health inequity, particularly for the poor. It will require hard work and dedication to ensure that the indigent receive appropriate health care. However, as Vincent taught us, "Let us love God, brothers, let us love God, but let it be with the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brows; for very often many acts of love of God, of devotion, and of other similar affections and interior practices of a tender heart, although very good and desirable, are, nevertheless, very suspect if they don't translate into the practice of effective love."¹⁵

¹⁵ Conference 25, "Love of God," in *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, ed. and trans. by Jacqueline Kilar, D.C., Marie Poole, D.C., et al, 1-14 (New York: New City Press, 1985-2014), 11:32. See: http://via.library.depaul.edu/vincentian_ebooks/37/



Vincent presents a Sister to the suffering Jesus.

German holy card.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



In reflecting on this paper and my position in the field of health care I have continued to ask myself the Vincentian question: “What must be done?” Regarding the “what,” I believe that we must provide Vincentian- and hospitality-based health care to the poor and underserved. With regards to “how,” we are fortunate to have numerous models of Vincentian health care in existence today from which we can learn, improve, and expand upon. Additionally, this is a time of dynamic health care reform, which may provide greater health care access to the poor. It is imperative that we expose and immerse students of the health professions into this charism of caring for the poor to inculcate professional responsibility. I believe these experiences provide an ideal opportunity for students to be sensitized to, inspired by, and better able to care for the poor and to similarly teach future generations of health care professionals. *Namaste.*



J. Jacot L'Apprenti Engraver

Vincent de Paul Soignant des pestiférés

1841-2369

Challamel edit 4 R de l'Albay F.S.G.^{ma}

Vincent de Paul and the plague stricken.

From a series of engravings in Augustin Challamel, *Saint-Vincent de Paul* (1841).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Vincent de Paul, with Louise de Marillac and Sisters, catechizing elderly poor at Nom de Jesus hospice. Oil on canvas by Frère André. Located at Sainte-Marguerite, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Engraving of Daughters of Charity providing care at a military field hospital.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





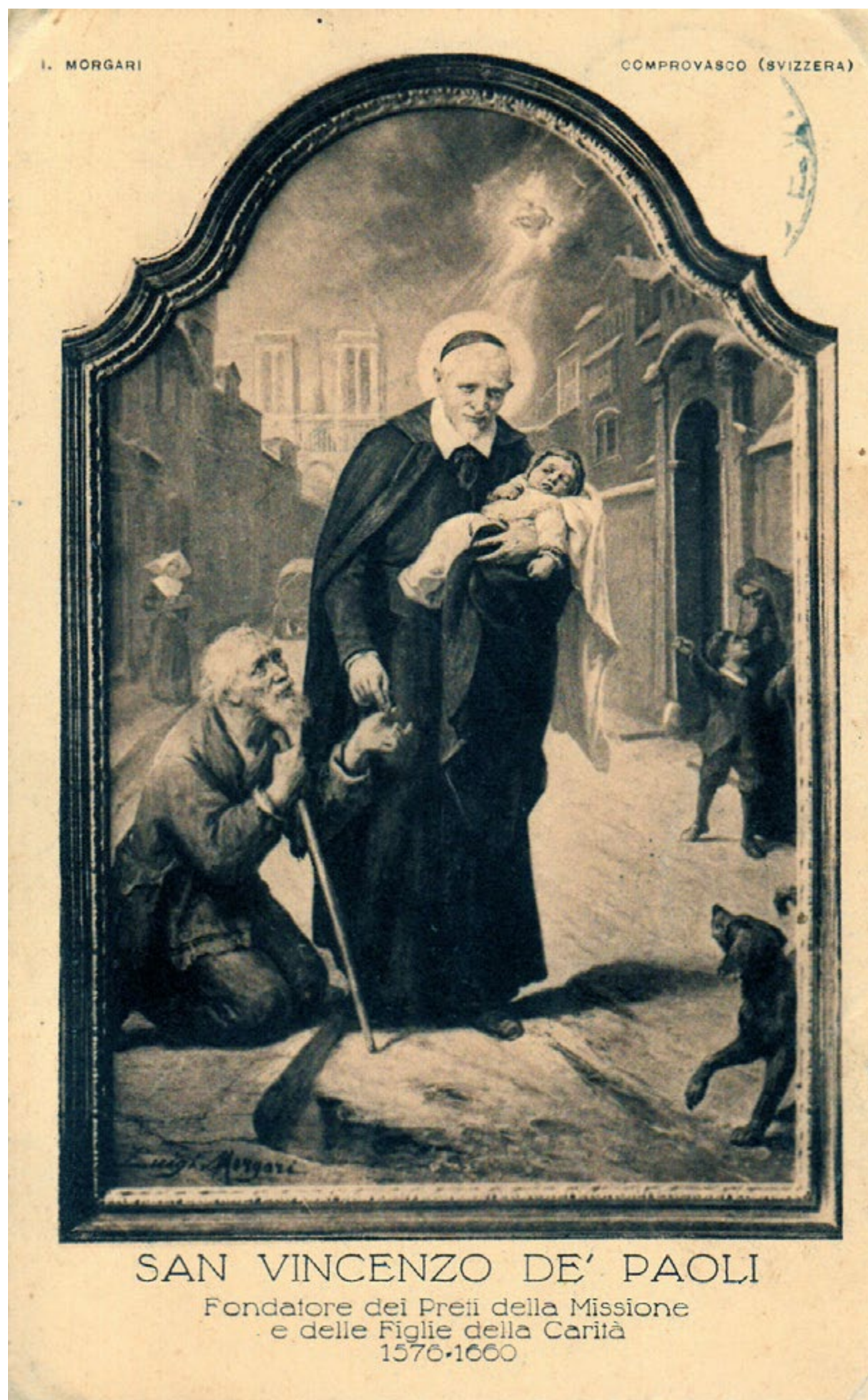
Daughters of Charity serving as pharmacists for the poor.

From a series of engravings on the lives of the Daughters.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Vincent and Daughters of Charity on the streets of Paris helping the poor. The Sacred Heart can be seen above him. Postcard after the painting by Luigi Morgari, Comprovasco, Switzerland.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Komme, Du getreue Dienerin,
Gehe ein zu Deines Herrn Freude.

DRUCK UND VERLAG VON FRANZ SCHEMM, NÜRNBERG.

Vincent presents a Sister to the suffering Jesus.

German holy card.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Would You Like Fries With Your Borscht?

KELLI MCGEE
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, DEPAUL USA



[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)



Introduction

In April 2012, Depaul International hired me to conduct a 20-month consultancy project with Depaul Ukraine—still a very new organization—to evaluate operations and make recommendations for growth. I was to point out efficiencies and suggest how to grow the organization, a typical American approach to consulting. A subsidiary of Depaul International, Depaul Ukraine exemplifies its parent's values of innovation, action, and responsibility, catering to local culture. The story of Depaul Ukraine shows how it is possible to leverage cultural attributes and build an organization that answers the call of the homeless in the post-Soviet cities of Odessa and Kharkiv.

As homeless people and homelessness practitioners are from the same culture, different aspects of the culture may be positively or negatively influenced by practitioners' abilities to effectively deal with homelessness. As the old saying goes, "the doctor doesn't have to be ill to cure the patient"; but what if he is? And conversely, how can managers recognize the aspects of culture with the highest potential of positively shaping issues influencing homelessness?

The Context of Hospitality Found in the Face of Others in Need

My previous work in the region (two years in Moldova and a brief stint in Romania) had warned me that organizational change would occur only at the rate that host-country nationals would change. I knew I would need to learn more about post-Soviet culture if ever I was to effect change there, both with my colleagues and with the homeless. These two groups seemed to overlap sometimes, adding another layer of complexity.

My immediate task was to build upon the trail-blazing work of Vitaliy Novak, C.M., Catholic priest and chairman of Depaul Ukraine. Novak was fearless. In 2006, he had charged into the unknown, oftentimes challenging cultural norms in his own country, to serve the poor and start up Depaul Ukraine in Kharkiv. In a redeveloping nation such as Ukraine, where needs are as high as obstacles, until someone would give him money for a building in Odessa, a big bus would have to do. Still in the bureaucratic process of officially registering the bus as a project of the seven-year-old Depaul Ukraine, Novak decided it was more important to address the urgent need, risking legal troubles, than to wait. Thus, in 2011, he began by dispensing borscht—the local, traditional beetroot soup—from a bus, amounting to 30,000 bowls a year.

Novak, who spent his childhood in Ukraine, seven kilometers from the then Czechoslovakian border and was educated in Bratislava, developed a creative approach to designing an NGO for the homeless in Ukraine. But questions began to arise regarding how to build upon this approach and give it some stable, sustainable, organizational shape. In my approach, I was greatly helped by the thinking of Geert Hofstede, a Dutch social psychologist and author of *Culture's Consequences*. In this book, Hofstede explains several of his "Dimensions of National Culture." Hofstede developed a system of metrics,

analyzing and assigning numerical values to countries including the United States and Russia, and demonstrating large divergences in the two countries' cultural norms. Three attributes rang out clearly:

1. Power Distance, measuring the distribution of power across society;
2. Individualism versus Collectivism, demonstrating a society's affinity for social framework; and
3. Uncertainty Avoidance, measuring comfort with ambiguity and the future.¹

Application of these particular dimensions improved my understanding of me, my fellow Americans, my Ukrainian counterparts, and those we served. Applied to homelessness and to the staff of Depaul Ukraine, these dimensions help us to understand how to work more effectively with homeless individuals, to prevent homelessness, and to provide long-term support to those in need.

Culture and Hospitality

Ukrainians, like Russians, diverge widely from Americans in their attitudes toward uncertainty, individuality, and power. As a "Generation X" American, I never question my right to express individuality, to walk into the boss's office and make a suggestion, or my right to dream the future of my choice. As an expatriate in Ukraine, however, the local culture required me to use the proper forms of speech for elders and superiors; to focus attention squarely on the present; and to dress stoically and act like a proper Ukrainian lady. Yet I soon realized that this was no way to cultivate creativity, take advantage of the talent and skills of staff, or move the organization forward.

Life in the eastern Ukraine city of Kharkiv, site of the organization's first projects and main work, presented classic examples of the behaviors cited in Hofstede's analysis. While Novak, raised in the western side of the country, was looking to the west and grasping for Euros, Eastern Ukraine was snuggling closer to Mother Russia and bearing down against uncertainty. The legacy of culture in this former Eastern Bloc country, in which half of the population controlled the other half, can be found in Hofstede's three attributes. Individuals with power are a class apart, separate and distinct from workers. A fierce sense of loyalty binds individuals in a group. Individuals value information, details, context, procedure, and structure. Uncertainty is uncomfortable. We, as Americans, are on the other end of these spectrums: individuality is celebrated; management structures are trending flatter every day; and higher education degrees in planning, creativity, and leadership are readily available at any local university.

¹ Geert H. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations* (SAGE, 2001), 29. See: https://books.google.com/books/about/Culture_s_Consequences.html?id=w6z18LJ_1VsC



People wait in line for a meal from Depaul Ukraine outreach services.

Courtesy: <http://www.depaulinternational.org/news/ukraine-crisis/>



Getting Direction

With the aims of reviving the spirit in which Novak had built the organization, recruiting new talent, and improving the quality of services, three evocative questions arose:

1. What change can we help our service-users achieve if our own employees dread and avoid change and uncertainty?
2. How can we empower line staff and cultivate managerial skills and behaviors when they feel so far from power?
3. How can we recruit top talent when staff feels they can only trust known individuals or those connected to the adjoining Catholic Church?

When I arrived in Ukraine, all project staff and volunteers worked across all projects, rotating between them. There was no real ownership of particular projects, and the system worked like a machine with no one making any effort to find efficiencies or trying to offer the homeless more. After several months of observation and cultural assimilation I announced my first change: in a few months' time, I would promote four staff members as project managers. Before assuming full responsibility they would become specialists in their newly assigned projects, practice managerial behaviors, and develop work-plans for each project. This was, on my part, a conscious move away from one end of the spectrum of Hofstede attributes, with a goal of enabling people to gain power, face uncertainty, and receive recognition for individual roles and contributions.

Starting to Shift Towards Practicing Hospitality Towards Others

A year later, people responded differently and it seemed to me that changes occurred along a spectrum commensurate with age and longevity within the organization. Younger,

newer staff adapted to the more open, flatter managerial relationships. Older employees of longer tenure struggled to develop creative problem-solving skills or a vision for the future. One, for example, insisted she wanted to be a manager, oversee and guide her projects, and respond to the job requirements. Despite intensive training and development, she failed to meet the organization's expectations and follow through with her responsibilities. She willingly accepted power but resisted duties and ideas of non-managers. Furthermore, she did not "think outside the box." I asked myself, "How could someone who rejects change bring about change in the lives of the individuals who come to us seeking it?"

By contrast, when it came to working with Ukrainians and the homeless, Sister Victoria, a nun and volunteer, said, "If people are here and talking, they want change, something different." Our employees needed to recognize this mentality. In Ukraine, it is important to explain, offer examples, demonstrate, reassure, convince, teach, inspire, and light the way. Sister Victoria explained to me, "When people trust you, when they feel they are in community, they will try. Then it will be no problem if something doesn't go right." I could not do enough to live her wisdom.

Hofstede argues that by the age of ten, individuals already have nation-based, unconscious, unchangeable values linked with social anthropology. Social class and occupation come later in life. Business and organizational cultures are more malleable, learned post-puberty, in the 20s and beyond. Here was my angle: while changing the culture of individuals is impossible, establishing a strong organizational culture would be effective. As Hofstede said, "National cultures... can be understood, respected, and treated as assets."² As Sister Victoria pointed out, I could build trust and a safe place to try new ideas. Novak had been building this organizational culture, and he leveraged his assets, too. When hospitals refused homeless persons, Novak provided priest or nun escorts and facilitation payments to ensure treatment. When beat cops extorted bribes or favors from vagrant street youth, Novak appealed to police and city officials to suggest how Depaul Ukraine could get them off the street. When children escaped orphanages in deference to street life and Depaul Ukraine services, Novak set up programs in orphanages. My job was to revive and reinforce this culture.

Gaining Momentum

We then went through a rough patch, with two unpleasant dismissals, followed by the resignation of a key leader. At the same time, however, the opportunity arose for hiring talent unaffected by the history of the organization's change process. In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city and home to nearly thirty colleges and universities, economic and political conditions made for a rich talent pool. Depaul Ukraine's values include

² "The influence of organizational culture on business," Hofstede Conference (2012), YouTube, Hofstede Insight, 19 June, at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=14W3qqV05Jp5c (accessed 7 August 2013). The link is no longer active as of July 2015.



A man receives medical assistance from Depaul Ukraine outreach services.

Courtesy: <http://www.depaulinternational.org/news/ukraine-crisis/>



recognizing potential, taking responsibility, and putting words into action. We set out looking for positive attitudes, strong interpersonal skills, and values that matched ours. Not only did we need fresh ideas and attitudes, but, at a more personal level, I wanted to vindicate myself after the personnel disruptions.

Following the turnover, staff needed an infusion of energy, hope, and solidarity. Three speakers delivered a mini-series of talks aimed at development and bringing the team together. Four new employees elevated the organization, imbued with excitement about working in the emerging charity in Eastern Ukraine. After all, no one was working with the homeless like Depaul Ukraine, they would say. Staff also anticipated the arrival of five people in our summer internship program for international students.

During the recruitment process, members of the community circulated job descriptions (rarely used in Ukraine) and worried about who would apply. Senior management tended to avoid resumes that included experience with tax authorities, law enforcement, or political offices. The applicant pool eventually revealed candidates with compassion for the vulnerable, befitting experience, and enthusiasm about the organization's uncertain future. New employees were not Catholic, some were smokers, two were married, and one had grown children—all qualities that drew attention to them as individuals.

By setting a tone with open recruitment, a behavioral interview, and a trial volunteer period, employees started with new expectations. Our organizational culture was developing slowly. At first new staff piqued the interest of their colleagues, with positive attitudes and new ideas; others scrutinized their interactions with senior management. Gradually the team gelled, and the nuns on staff hosted an end-of-summer picnic. Nothing forges friendships like a Ukrainian barbeque.

Obstacles that arose during that year of change kept pointing back to people's tendency to avoid uncertainty. When employees stagnated or resisted change, I thought of Sister Victoria. We reinforced the organization's evolving and strengthening culture by providing training and building trust and power. As an American and a speaker of only passable Russian, my teaching style was simple: listen, give feedback, and get out of the way. We



The faces of some of those who have been helped by Depaul Ukraine.

Courtesy: <http://www.depaulinternational.org/our-services/ukraine/stories-from-our-clients/>



learned to trust each other, complementing each other's strengths and weaknesses. Where employees could maneuver the inner workings of social agencies, I could offer ideas on improving operations, developing programs and strategy, and managing finances. They learned confidence with their new power, speaking up when my language skills prevented me from doing so. Change emerged from necessity, exactly as Novak had designed it: a slow transfer of power under the guise of simply helping a person in difficulty.

Fitting In and Finding Hospitality

In the Ukraine, families are close-knit; several generations may live under one roof. People turn to friends and family during times of trouble, and not just at weddings, funerals, and birthday parties. In Ukraine, as opposed to in America, managers hire people solely on the basis of their relationship to a person of power inside. When I began work, despite being a non-religious and non-government organization, only one employee was unaffiliated with the church. While this comforted the in-crowd, the church's talent pool was limited, and Catholics are a religious minority.

Most people know that being homeless during the era of the Soviet Union was illegal, punishable by incarceration. Decades later, the effects of being different are equally punishing: hospitals have rejection policies for the homeless, and businesses avoid hiring ex-offenders and those whose address is known to be a shelter. Someone without connections, a person who lost a job or a person with an addiction or broken relationships, is isolated. These are the homeless. These paths lead to homelessness. One of Depaul Ukraine's first projects was providing first aid to the homeless. We developed an informal policy

of accompanying people to a medical facility. Similarly, because of rejection, we began meeting young men in prisons in order to prepare them for life outside. Depaul Ukraine breaks through bureaucratic barriers, repairs relationships, and, as they say among staff, “restores people back to society.”

For the homeless, the prevailing mentality in Ukraine means people who are a part of a “we” society may be afraid to break from tradition. They may be reticent to pursue and demand their rights as American counterparts would. This mindset is deeply engrained in older people. After 23 years of independence, and 70 years under Soviet rule one Ukrainian told me, “We don’t want to be individuals... we don’t want to be alone.” But this line of thought can also have its strengths, as I was about to learn. Several housing projects in the Kharkiv region use a shared-room model. Coming from American society where individualism is valued and encouraged, I resisted having Depaul Ukraine double the number of mothers and babies in rooms. Staff insisted and argued that the new mothers needed to help and support each other; they were no longer individuals but, rather, part of a family. The project manager said, “If they live separately, then when one girl messes up her borscht, the others laugh and say, ‘See? She can’t do it either!’” When two moms and two children shared a room, she said, “They open up to each other more, help each other, and become friends. This is the value we want to instill in their families.” This argument trumped my attempts to defend sleep, assure privacy, and quarantine germs.

Balancing Power

While Americans enjoy collaboration across an equal playing field with direct access to the boss, Ukrainians, it seems, maintain distance from persons in power and are more skeptical of collaborative relationships with management. This means that, in a bureaucracy, the customer is already in a position of a lesser amount of power than the worker. The homeless have it even worse. They may be unshaven or un-showered; they may not be able to read for lack of eyeglasses; they may be ashamed to speak because of bad breath or rotten teeth; they may be without money or identification documents; they may struggle with chronic illness or disabilities. Serving tasty borscht is good, but it is not enough. Without basic dignity, people cannot access medical services, apply for a job, or enroll in government entitlement programs.

Depaul Ukraine found difficulty in providing more than soup and underpants from a bus constantly victimized by the harsh elements in the country. In Odessa 2013, we opened a day center where the homeless could clean up and sit down with social workers. The clever staff went one step further, making Depaul Ukraine identification cards for the homeless. The homeless henceforth belonged to something. However simple the illusion, it worked. They no longer felt like rejected individuals standing outside mainstream society looking in; those little IDs opened doors at hospitals and employers. Creative inspiration in the organization, born first with Novak then instilled in others, was catching on. Establishing within the organization the collective ideal of our culture was crucial: staff and homeless



The central panel of the altarpiece in the Vincentian provincial house, Kiev, Ukraine.

The icon depicts Vincent, Louise de Marillac, and Vincentian saints and blesseds mourning the suffering Christ.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



were on the same team. Depaul Ukraine earned respect within the community. We had the opportunity to shine light on our people. They needed that, and we had to change ourselves to meet that need.

Once staff confronted uncertainty, change was fun and creative. Photoshopping a black eye off of a man's ID picture was part of the service, for instance. Our tactics generated energy and momentum. Staff had the courage to speak to management. People working directly with those facing homelessness generated new ideas. Staff used their power to drive the organization.

Beyond the Borscht

Borscht from a bus—30,000 bowls. But what is it that Novak was really sharing with others? Inspiration, love, compassion, creativity, and joy. He transformed seemingly unchangeable cultural attributes into the organizational culture prescribed by the needs of the homeless. It was this that I had to build on, and build *in*.

All of the charities that form the Depaul International Group continue to work in the spirit of the seventeenth-century Frenchman, Vincent de Paul: in a practical and non-judgmental way, with a focus on responding to need through action, organization, and innovation. The spirit of Vincent de Paul has us tend to the unique needs of each person. Yet, sometimes a group of individuals in a community shares the same needs. Vincent teaches us to organize and meet those needs. In the 1980s, Depaul International (then the Depaul Foundation) answered the call of mischievous street youth who stole and crashed a car, founding a driving school in response. Depaul Ireland answered the call of street drinkers and founded a wet shelter with a self-harm reduction program. Depaul USA responded to unemployed, homeless men by founding a social enterprise called Immaculate Cleaning

Service. Depaul Slovakia answered Bratislava's call to prevent the homeless from freezing to death in winter by renovating an airplane hangar into a 175-bed shelter.

Vincent famously told a dying colleague, "Love is inventive to infinity."³ Depaul Ukraine must continue to love and invent, and love to invent: cutting hair, shaving faces, securing jobs, comforting the sick, distributing adult diapers, buying bulk underpants, buying medicine, liaising with foreign consulates, obtaining identification documents, and meeting the needs of poor people in the community, wherever they are, through whatever culture.



³ Conference 102, "Exhortation to a Dying Brother," 1645, in *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, ed. and trans. by Jacqueline Kilar, D.C., Marie Poole, D.C., et al, 1-14 (New York: New City Press, 1985-2014), 11:131.



People wait in line for a meal from Depaul Ukraine outreach services.

Courtesy: <http://www.depaulinternational.org/news/ukraine-crisis/>





A man receives medical assistance from Depaul Ukraine outreach services.

Courtesy: <http://www.depaulinternational.org/news/ukraine-crisis/>





The faces of some of those who have been helped by Depaul Ukraine.

Courtesy: <http://www.depaulinternational.org/our-services/ukraine/stories-from-our-clients/>





The central panel of the altarpiece in the Vincentian provincial house, Kiev, Ukraine.

The icon depicts Vincent, Louise de Marillac, and Vincentian saints and blessed mourning the suffering Christ.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Cultivating Interior Hospitality: Passing the Vincentian Legacy through Immersion

JOYANA DVORAK

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[previous
article](#)

[next
article](#)

Introduction

The Vincentian spirit is “caught” not “taught.” DePaul University undergraduate students have been catching the Vincentian spirit through service immersions each spring and winter break for nearly twenty years. Host communities, including many Vincentian Family members, welcome students to share their reality and ministry.

The Vincentian in Action (VIA) Service Immersion program is housed in the Vincentian Community Service Office under University Ministry at DePaul. The vision of DePaul VIA service immersions is to create long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships with host communities who open their doors and hearts to students. In this welcoming, hosts and students build intentional relationships and respond to community needs. Short-term immersion experiences offer students a taste and glimpse of how to live Vincentian hospitality in their daily lives. Through the external welcoming of students into communities and a way of living, an interior space that embodies the Vincentian way and heart is cultivated. A mutual transformation unfolds through encounters, shaping students to be both guest and hosts for years to come.

During the spring of 2013 the coordinator of VIA performed a program evaluation from the perspective of the host communities. Methods used to gather data included: phone interviews with the main host community partners, paper surveys with community agency staff, and on-line surveys with DePaul undergraduate student participants. The study focused on the perceptions, objectives, needs, outcomes and expectations of host communities who partner with VIA service immersions. This research was intended to inform the effectiveness of the VIA curricula used with students before, during, and after their service immersion experiences. It also uncovered factors that contribute to a positive university-community partnership.

This article will focus primarily on the qualitative data about the role of Vincentian partners as co-formators. Voices from both community partners and students are shared. The research calls to light the incredible gift of Vincentian hospitality host community partners offer for transformational education of DePaul students. Through these immersion experiences concentric circles of hospitality are formed that deepen layers of community. The Vincentian legacy is passed in a meaningful way to the next generation through moments of Vincentian hospitality with their peers, Vincentian hosts, and encounters with the community during the immersion experience.

DePaul University Vincentian in Action Service Immersion Program Overview

Currently over 170 undergraduates participate in VIA to serve, live, and build relationships within seventeen marginalized communities throughout the United States and the Americas. Housed in the Vincentian Community Service Office (VCSO), Division of Student Affairs, VIA’s mission is:



Reflecting and building community on the 2011 Spring Break Service Immersion to Father McKenna Center in Washington, D.C.

Courtesy of the author



...to provide students with transformational short-term service immersion opportunities that incorporate community, spiritual reflection, simplicity, and increased awareness of social injustice. Integrated throughout the immersion experience are the Vincentian in Action ways of awareness/appreciation, dialogue and solidarity. It is in these experiences that we hope to inspire growth and change in a way that resonates back home through the sharing of stories and action toward systemic change.

Students participating in seven to ten-day service immersions are introduced to the VIA reflective framework that provides specific learning outcomes for values-based leadership development rooted in faith and action. The model uses “The Way of Awareness, Dialogue, and Solidarity,” a document based upon the writings of Theodore Wiesner, C.M.¹ Vincentian values of community, spirituality, and service are integrated in a formation process which empowers students to make meaning of their experiences.²

At the heart of the VIA Service Immersion program is building relationships, especially with marginalized communities and persons living in poverty. Preparation emphasizes a paradigm of community service rooted in being versus doing, listening to the needs of communities before responding, working with versus doing for, discovering root causes, and reflection moving towards action. Beforehand most students do not know the people in their group. They practice cultivating spaces of hospitality first by building a community together during pre-trip meetings months before the immersion. This happens through group meetings and intentional ‘dates’ to get to know each other in a more intimate one-on-one setting.

Not designed simply to complete tasks, the VIA model values several key elements of Vincentian hospitality: presence, relationship building, and recognizing the dignity of every person. Students are invited to delve into the Vincentian virtue of simplicity to remove

¹ See Theodore Wiesner, C.M., “Experiencing God in the Poor,” *Spiritual Life* 33:4 (1987), 213-221. See also, Philosophy Document at: <http://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/student-life/community-engagement/service-immersion-trips/Pages/default.aspx>

² See Siobhan O’Donoghue, & Karl Nass, “Vincentians in Action: An Interfaith Model for Civic Learning and Spiritual Growth,” *Journal of College and Character* 7:6 (2006).



Conversation with civil rights leaders at an annual supper during the 2015 Spring Break Service Immersion to Resurrection Parish in Montgomery, AL.

Courtesy of the author



interior clutter and be ready to receive. During a week or more of immersion students practice the Vincentian virtue of humility as they patiently and deeply listen to another's reality. By solidarity with their hosts and persons living in poverty they move beyond an 'us' and 'them' mentality. By 'being with' and building relationships before 'doing' and completing tasks they learn about various social issues with a personal face.

Kim Marie Lamberty, who works for Catholic Relief Services and is the author of *Eyes from the Outside: Christian Mission in Zones of Violent Conflict*, describes this new approach to partnership with a perspective that resonates with VIA values: "A spirituality of accompaniment begins with recognition of the dignity of the self as well as the other as created in God's image. It is expressed in presence, relationship, community, and service. Accompaniment can also be expressed in a gift of material resources to assist a suffering community in rebuilding its future."³

Another goal of the program is to bring to life the legacy of Saints Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, whose mission began over 350 years ago. Stories of Vincentian Family members are integrated into reflections throughout. Vincent de Paul believed we could learn from the poor and that we "can't see someone suffering without suffering along with him, or see someone cry without crying as well. This is an act of love, causing people to enter one another's hearts and to feel what they feel."⁴ VIA embraces this philosophy and believes that the communities, who welcome DePaul students with Vincentian hospitality, as well as persons served, are co-educators during students' immersion experiences.

Dynamic partnership is consistent with a Vincentian understanding that we form and shape each other; every person encountered, especially those living in poverty, contribute to making you who you are. Service learning can accommodate asset-based community development—the community has much strength to build upon. Community hosts are critical partners for a Vincentian education that opens up reality, including systems and structures that contribute to social injustice. VIA service immersions strive to build

³ Kim Marie Lamberty, "Toward a Spirituality of Accompaniment in Solidarity Partnerships," *Missiology: An International Review* 40:2 (2012), 188.

⁴ Conference 207, "Charity (Common Rules, Chap. II, Art. 12)," 30 May 1659, in *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, ed. and trans. by Jacqueline Kilar, D.C., Marie Poole, D.C., et al, 1-14 (New York: New City Press, 1985-2014), 12:221.

lasting partnerships with communities who usually host students only once a year. Each year different students arrive to renew DePaul's commitment. As communities receive the presence and service of students they reciprocate by providing accommodations, site coordination, and educational or cultural presentations.

Vincentian Connection

Over the past five years VIA has strategically reached out to more Vincentian partners. This may be a Vincentian parish, the Daughters of Charity, or Sisters of Charity, or the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The hope is that intentionally partnering with communities in the Vincentian Family will deepen younger generations' understanding of the Vincentian spirit and charism. The study confirms that this approach is effective and meaningful for both the students and the Vincentian host communities.

Vincentian hosts spoke energetically about their desire to "share the charism with the next generation" and to "pass it on." Their hope in welcoming is to widen the Vincentian Family, with an emphasis on serving the poor. The primary motivation to receive students is to infuse the Vincentian charism and pass on the legacy through their example and the encounter with the poor. One Daughter of Charity expressed that the mission "comes across in storytelling and it comes across in witnessing why we do what we do."

Vincentian partners who also receive groups outside of DePaul's commented on how there is a different sense of excitement, of being relaxed, when we join them. The opportunity to speak the same language of community and spirituality is refreshing when welcoming the "extended" Vincentian Family.

These folks are here because their hearts are open to learning, and I don't know if I can even put words on some of this, but there is definitely just an ease of it. I think by the time they came this time, it was even like, oh, it's DePaul! It is like some sense of they are our people.

In a post immersion assessment, students were asked: "After your VIA Spring Break Service Immersion experience, how do you hope to connect more deeply with the Vincentian legacy in your daily life?" Respondents reported wanting to learn more about their Vincentian identity. Immersions that had direct contact with the Daughters of Charity, or other Vincentian Family, noted how valuable it was to learn about Vincentian history: "St. Vincent stood up proud and confident to defend others and I want to be able to stand up for myself and actively take part in my life." Another respondent said, "This trip made me more curious about the lives of Vinny and Louise, so I hope to continue to learn about their missions and about Vincentian values."

The common language, foundation, mission, and values make Vincentian connections a natural partnering. Continuing programs such as the VIA service immersions are a key strategy to continue the over 350 year legacy of St. Vincent and St. Louise.



Home visit to listen to *la realidad* during the 2010 Winter Break Service Immersion to El Salvador.

Courtesy of the author



Entering as Guest

Another theme partners articulated was the importance of students knowing from the beginning that they will be guests in community for the week. One explained, “If they grasp that idea, that they are in somebody else’s house, then there’s a certain amount of respect that comes with that and it seems to keep everybody in good shape around here.” With that comes an understanding that “you come as a student; you don’t come as a bountiful person who has things to give to people.” Another partner also emphasized the importance that students are aware they are coming to a community: “they are not just going to come in and out of our house. We are living here and we are a part of your experience for the week.” Several partners stressed attentiveness to the context. This is especially important to avoid the trap of poverty tourism:

One of the things we talk to the group about upfront is that we’re guests [too] and we hope that they start to get comfortable walking through the neighborhoods, but as they get comfortable, to not let that have them end up singing and dancing and being loud through the streets. And still to be attentive to what their surroundings are, who’s there, and being a guest instead of being a spectator.

Setting some of these expectations and sharing particulars of the community before students arrive is helpful. Also reiterated is the importance of students anticipating what it will mean to live and work as a team for the week. Vincentian partners commented on how helpful it was for students to arrive with a common language of intentional community and reflection:

...when you talk about community, you are not starting from scratch.... The fact that faith is an element of this and that it is an important element is not new news to them. And I think their preparation and their openness to do whatever; ya know, we always say, ‘to do whatever presents itself...’

Host Community Hopes: Long-Term Integration

Community partners hope that students will not “relegate this experience to that one week of their lives,” but that their experience of receiving Vincentian hospitality will have a “lasting impact.” There is the hope that students will, “Connect their experience to the rest of their lives,” and “remain committed to service to the poor.” Long-term engagement could be realized through student’s vocations and on-going service and justice work. A partner commented that she hopes that by receiving Vincentian hospitality students “have some sense of their own giftedness” and realize the capacity they have to make a difference. Included in this is the importance of “just continuing to ask good questions about, ‘what did I experience and what am I going to do with it? How can I take this and make something of it in my life? How am I called to respond?’” Regardless of what vocation students choose, it is possible for them to continue to “look through Vincentian eyes”; this in turn can “help other people be aware that there’s a change that needs to be made.”

Continuing to volunteer and to live out a lifestyle that is “Not all about them, or selfish” was another hope for engagement. Through experiencing both the joys and challenges of service, there is a hope that students continue coming together for “a greater purpose.” Vincentian partners hope that students will “be willing to walk with the poor and love the poor” and “find God’s goodness even amongst the poor.”

Benefits of Hosting Vincentian in Action Immersions

Community partners were asked to identify benefits to them in welcoming DePaul students for a week, any positive or negative unintended consequences they witnessed, and if the relationship with DePaul is mutually valuable. Partners agreed that student presence for just one week is absolutely worth it, and is mutually beneficial given the impact on students’ lives. One partner was convinced that “if we can just change one person’s head and heart, you know, to say ‘I’m going to look for the poor, or maybe not turn my face when I see a homeless person in my area,’ then we’ve done our job.” Others recognized that the impact from the week may not be realized for years to come.

Vincentian Hospitality Deepens Layers of Community

The experience of Vincentian hospitality begins long before students get in a van to drive hours to their destination. Intentional pre-trip preparation creates a space for student leaders to offer Vincentian hospitality to new participants. Building intentional community is an explicit learning outcome for students. During pre-trip formation, students build community with icebreakers, setting safe space guidelines, sharing different spiritual practices, and taking the time to get to know each other. For some students it is their first time building authentic relationships and being appreciated for who they are. One student reflects, “All of my group members affected me strongly. The group would not have the same dynamic without each one of them. They inspired me and helped me to open up.”



DePaul students serving breakfast at The Midnight Mission during the 2010 Winter Break Service Immersion to Los Angeles, CA.

Courtesy of the author



Students are encouraged to live in the virtue of Vincentian simplicity, stripping back the layers that keep them from being their authentic selves and striving to practice honesty and transparency with those in their group.

Community partners also notice that “students get a great deal out of forming community” with each other and those they encounter, and also recognize how student presence opened opportunities to “deepen... [a] sense of hospitality” for students and hosts alike. One partner articulated the various facets of community that grow during the week:

When we talk about community we talk about how they will work with a community, they will live in a community, and they will be part of a larger Vincentian Family community. You know they will be on a team, and that’s community, they will go out to each service site and form community with those people at some level, and they will come home at night and have the total community.

Vincentian hospitality, therefore, deepens several layers of community, including intentional community living, encounters with the broader community, and home visits.

Intentional Community Living: Role Models of Vincentian Hospitality

Hosts who provided accommodations for groups reiterated the theme of students entering fully into their community living. Partners consistently mentioned not wanting to just be a hotel for students: “I decided that we didn’t have the capacity here to run a youth hostel.” The intention is to invite students to live in community with the hosts, and to share their experiences and reflection process. Several hosts are intentional about utilizing dinnertime as the space to build community with students. This often results in an exchange across generations. A community of Daughters of Charity emphasized the benefit of really getting to know young people:

I think that they are all very interesting, they come from diverse backgrounds. And you know the sisters are always interested in finding out who are you, what's your major, you know that kinda thing. The diversity of them is kinda fun for the sisters.

Students also noticed the mutual gift of building relationships with the Daughters of Charity:

I believe that the sisters at the house that we stayed at are forever grateful for having us around. They seemed as if they were just so happy to talk to and be around young people. I think that they were excited to tell us all about their experiences and their choices in life to become Daughters of Charity.

Stereotypes about religious and young people are often dissolved. "Before this experience I had never actually met a religious sister before. I was surprised that they have a sense of humor and could actually relate with me." This intentional space of hospitality results in deepening relationships. "Anytime where there is an intersection of generations who are committed to similar ideals or goals, there is a richness in that sharing [and] I think for us it is encouraging." One student reflects on the difference the host community made in her life:

The sisters that we lived with gave me so much. Having the time to speak with the Daughters about everything and anything helped me... Their tenderness and care for all humans gave me a deeper appreciation... Their attention to us never stopped. Their love really did a number on me.

By sharing in this intentional community students learn the Vincentian way. When asked how community partners contribute to the formation of DePaul students, the most frequent response from partners was simply by their model and example. Students see the host's motivations, their simple lifestyle in community, their faith expression, summarized by one partner as, "I think they see our heart." "Just by being ourselves," community partners transmit their value systems to students. Partners make it clear that they are "not there to preach to them... but to kinda just be another voice." In return, this role modeling also conjures a deep respect in partners for the students, their backgrounds, and their struggles. One explains, "You know I think that they know that we are affirming them too, that we are thrilled that they are giving up their time in coming. I think they see our openness to them." Another expresses what it means to walk with the students for the week: "Honestly I think part of it is we really try to love these young people, because... they are so good."



Sharing dinner and stories about life as a Daughter of Charity and DePaul student in Bladensburg, MD, in 2011.

Courtesy of the author



Students too affirm the positive impact of role modeling and the hospitality of their hosts:

Staying with the Daughters of Charity was very impactful, their benevolence and kindness is something to aspire to. Their conversations, advice, and wisdom, were great things to experience all week. The Sisters made me more kind-hearted; they really did bring out the best in me.

We were living the lives of the Daughters every day doing service, becoming more aware and living inside of a community of women. I will never forget those women and all of the love and caring that they gave to me and taught me to have for other women—my peers.

Hospitality Encounters with Community & Home Visits

Through the relationships formed with those encountered in the broader community students also learn about generous hospitality, openness, and faith. A contribution the host's offer to the students' Vincentian formation is the particular access and trust the partner holds within the community. Because of this trust, students are immersed into the lives of those in poverty in an intimate way that 'outsiders' may not be welcomed to. "We open them to some of the lives of the poor, the lives of the poor that they might not get." A partner declared, "there is plenty to be learned by the people here." In one community, when visiting homes, students heard how a family functions on \$12,000 a year. The host partner noted that because of the DePaul students' backgrounds they find common ground with the families: "at the same time, college students are very poor... a lot of them struggle. It is like a reciprocal sharing."

Home visits are one of the purest symbols of the Vincentian charism. Often in this home space people confide their stories of struggle and hope. In VIA formation students are encouraged to listen for the dignity found in every story they encounter. Parishioners at a Vincentian parish once requested, "when it is time, please ask me to host the students at my home." The home visit is an opportunity for parishioners to bring their whole family together in preparation to provide hospitality for the students.

The impact these moments of Vincentian hospitality have on student's lives is profound. One student reflected on her recent experience being welcomed into the home of a Vincentian parishioner:

No amount of money can pay for the amount of love, kindness, hospitality, and vulnerability that go into allowing strangers to share a meal with them. Maria warmly greeted us as though we were family. She opened the door, hugged us, and asked us to sit as she would serve us the meal. We insisted that we could serve ourselves and asked if she needed help with anything to just let us know... Doña Maria had put so much work into providing such a wonderful meal for us that I cried at the thought that this felt like a Christmas or Thanksgiving for their family, the one special time they get to splurge on food and eat something beyond the rice, beans, and potatoes.

After enjoying and feeling so at home with all my taste buds savoring every last flavor, Maria shared with us her story. She talked about her experience of living as an immigrant in New York, a place with one of the worst minimum wage and housing availabilities in the nation. I teared because I know that as a 1st generation Latina my family and I have been blessed. So many of my friends have family members who have been deported, who haven't been able to attend college because of their immigration status, who go to work everyday and night in fear that they will not come back.

Doña Maria let us into a part of her life that is a blessing for me to have heard and push me through my future to help those in need. But, the sadness didn't end up taking over me and I wanted to share how proud I was of Eduardo, Adrian, and Daisy for being honor roll students even after all their family has experienced. Living in a rough neighborhood, constantly seeing your parents struggle paycheck to paycheck, and seeing others get caught up by the system around them can be difficult, but they have managed to overcome all that and make their parents proud.

One Daughter of Charity exquisitely articulated the contribution of the community:

...the [students] bring the best out of us too, we are happy people... Even though situations could be looked at as impossible, we don't think about that, our people don't think like that... so I guess we bring hope, we are people of hope and people of joy and the people live out who we say we are... and we do that through storytelling. And just being who we are, and sharing what we have.

The heart of Vincentian hospitality and the immersion experiences are these invitations to share stories and life experiences, whether in the projects of New York, at a bonfire in the hills of Appalachia, or in a homeless shelter in Washington, D.C. Through direct service,



Dominic Buchmiller and Samantha Vela building a garage during the 2012 Spring Break Service Immersion in Cranks Creek, KY.

Courtesy of the author



students learn to both receive and offer hospitality: “The quality time that we spent with the family we worked with was the most meaningful. It allowed for the roles of ‘server’ and ‘receiver’ to be challenged and for a community to be fostered.”

Often, as a culminating event at the end of the week, students will prepare a dinner and invite all of those they encountered throughout the week to join them. After receiving Vincentian hospitality, they feel compelled to offer it back as a way of saying thank you. In Tuba City, Arizona, this brought together both Navajo and Hopi people deepening the social fabric of the community. In East St. Louis a student taught her peers to make homemade perogies, an important tradition in her family. In El Salvador students invited their host families to experience an American meal of spaghetti and hot dogs. It is amazing how, in just a week, intimate relationships can be built with simple acts of hospitality.

Spiritual Transformation & Discovering Brokenness

Hosts also pass their Vincentian legacy by cultivating hospitable spaces for sharing faith and spirituality. If possible, students join the community for worship: “I was highly impacted by our first trip to a local Vincentian parish, where the congregation welcomed us with open arms and prayed over us. It was a great way to start the trip.” DePaul students come from diverse spiritual and religious backgrounds. The immersions are an opportunity for them to dialogue about how they create meaning in their lives. Host partners are very open to receiving students from all backgrounds, including different faiths, and support and believe in the youth no matter where they are on their journey. One host recognized the opportunity to connect across diverse faith backgrounds “in sharing our Vincentian faith, and I say faith, but I mean in a larger context really sharing, looking through Vincentian eyes.”

Partners contribute to student formation by affirming and encouraging students in their efforts to serve, and to wrestle with meaningful questions during reflection. When partners join students in reflection they sometimes contribute by pushing students to explore faith more explicitly, delving into the meanings of selfless service. “What I find with a lot of groups... is that the faith envelope is not always one that’s easy for them



2012 Winter Break Service Immersion to Tuba City, AZ. Learning the story of Margaret Louise Brown, D.C., and the St. Jude's food pantry.

Courtesy of the author



to open.” By openly sharing their perspectives on faith, partners contribute to students’ formation. One student reflects:

I learned quite a bit about the Daughters of Charity and I really appreciated their hospitality and loving open arms. They were wonderful women and I am so glad we had the opportunity to immerse ourselves into their lives for a week. Although I grew up in a church, I know very little about the Catholic religion so while we only touched the tip of the iceberg I am glad that my learning has begun.

Sometimes, students have profound spiritual experiences as communities of faith welcome them. They receive the building blocks they need to continue on their own spiritual journey and embrace their own brokenness.

My moment of spiritual enlightenment unexpectedly took place in the small town of Bladensburg, MD, right outside of Washington, D.C. Traveling around the country through my different service experiences I had interacted and connected with dozens of people. As each person opened up and shared their story, I was able to see their brokenness. At this point, I had just begun to see my own brokenness as well. Before walking into the Daughter’s home, I had been personally struggling with the question “What makes me feel most alive?” and “How was I centering myself in my everyday life?” I almost felt lost and disoriented, not fully knowing how I could connect with my spirituality. Experiencing the Vincentian hospitality of the Daughters of Charity offered a safe space in which I can explore my own spirituality and how I could, in fact, connect with myself.

Hearing the Daughter’s stories and their passion for social justice and life in general was so inspiring. I was able to see firsthand, how the Sisters pulled strength from their relationship with God. This awoke my own curiosity about

my own spirituality. After years of not questioning what God meant to me and what role I wanted Him to play in my life, I prayed, reflected, and ultimately recognized that the struggles of a broken family and the realities of needing to look for a different support system in my life was a part of my story. It wasn't all bad and it wasn't all good, but connecting with the Sisters helped me realize that I was grateful because those moments of brokenness were the ones that had gotten me to step through the doors of the Sisters' home.

Embracing their own vulnerability invites students to connect in a deeper way with the brokenness of others they may encounter in our world. An interior space is cultivated and carried with them beyond the week immersion. This sensitivity and awareness results in students learning to provide Vincentian hospitality in their daily lives, and how to better connect in meaningful ways.

I feel that after talking with the various people in the communities we were in, I stopped to think about my own life and actions. One particular interaction that made a difference in my life was when I was washing a man's feet. As soon as he sat down in the chair, we began talking as if we were old friends talking over a cup of coffee.... My whole interaction and conversations with this man made me begin to question and wonder about my own ideas that I usually have when I think about homeless people. This experience has gotten me to see all people, whether they are homeless or not, on the same level—as an old friend.

Because of the Vincentian hospitality they experienced during their immersions, students expressed a change in their worldview, their inner selves, and their understandings of their own identity.

I just developed this stronger sense of self-worth. Seeing people whose situations economically, physically, medically etc. were dramatically different than my own, and they had such strong faith and hope in themselves really showed me that I have the potential to do anything... my roadblocks may be considerably less daunting than theirs so I owe it to myself to be courageous and face my fears and anxieties because if they can do it, so can I.

Finally, one student's recent experience of staying at the House of Charity sums up the gift of Vincentian hospitality and its ability to be a vehicle to pass on the Vincentian legacy:

I was really affected on my first service trip to New Orleans by the Sisters we stayed with. Their graciousness and love that they showed me really allowed



Encounter during the visit to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Elderly Center in San Salvador, El Salvador.

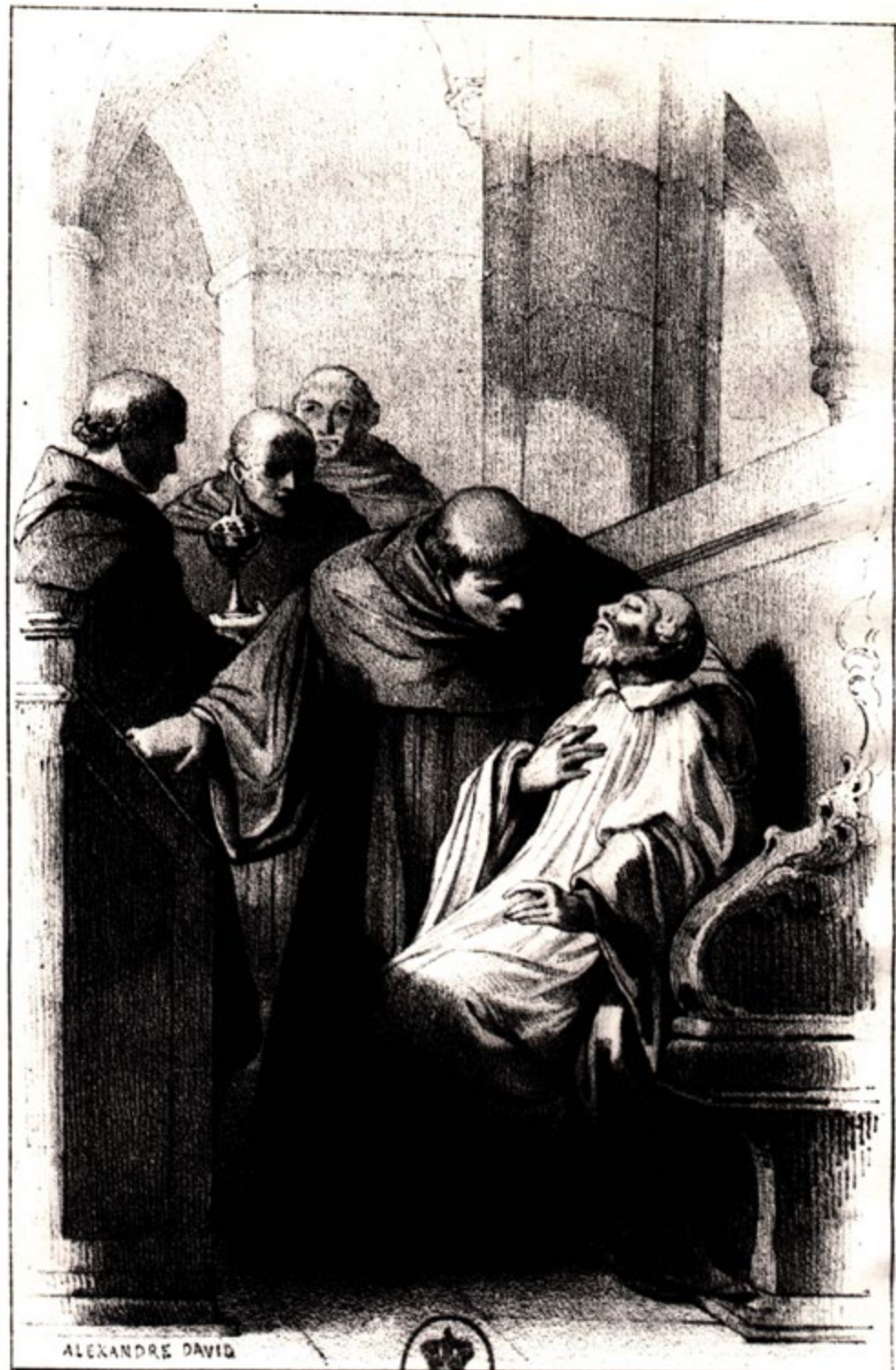
Courtesy of the author



me to feel at home in a place that was completely new to me, with a group I was just getting to know. Their making sure I was comfortable from the moment we arrived was key in getting me to focus on the many social injustices occurring in New Orleans. Instead of worrying about how I was all by myself in a brand new environment with people I had just met I was able to focus on getting to know those around me and understanding I could make a difference in a community ravished by a hurricane and abandoned by the government.

I will also never forget the respect and grace with which Sister Monica engaged with the people she had us meet. And this only encourages myself to do the same, seeing how much more people were willing to open up to you when you don't put yourself over them, but beside them. Sister Monica showed me how to be one with my community, both small and large. Knowing how welcome the Sisters in New Orleans made me feel, I know that providing such an environment will give those around me a chance to open up further and be themselves. Though stepping out of your comfort zone is important in growing, we as people can only learn so much as others are willing to give us. The more comfortable a person is, the more they are willing to reveal of themselves. I would like to take my previous service and make a sincere effort to create such an environment for my peers and those that I interact with. I will always strive to be as gracious to those around me as she has been to me and to our group.

Vincentian hospitality cultivates a space for students to feel at home with themselves and with the realities of our world. Because of these transformative experiences a new generation of Vincentians is being shaped and formed. The Vincentian hospitality offered to students during these immersion experiences is a way for them to catch the Vincentian spirit in meaningful ways. As one Daughter of Charity explains, "Because of these young people's presence, I trust that the Vincentian charism will live forever. We may have fewer Daughters of Charity or Vincentian priests... but we have many Vincentians!"



1892.



Emil Weller, del.

Mort de Vincent de Paul.

Challamel edit 4, R de l'Abbaye, F. S. G.

The death of Vincent de Paul.

From a series of engravings in Augustin Challamel, *Saint-Vincent de Paul* (1841).

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>





Reflecting and building community on the 2011 Spring Break Service Immersion to Father McKenna Center in Washington, D.C.

Courtesy of the author





Conversation with civil rights leaders at an annual supper during the 2015 Spring Break Service Immersion to Resurrection Parish in Montgomery, AL.

Courtesy of the author





Home visit to listen to *la realidad* during the 2010 Winter Break Service Immersion to El Salvador.

Courtesy of the author





DePaul students serving breakfast at The Midnight Mission during the 2010 Winter Break Service Immersion to Los Angeles, CA.

Courtesy of the author





Sharing dinner and stories about life as a Daughter of
Charity and DePaul student in Bladensburg, MD, in 2011.

Courtesy of the author





Dominic Buchmiller and Samantha Vela building a garage during the 2012 Spring Break Service Immersion in Cranks Creek, KY.

Courtesy of the author





2012 Winter Break Service Immersion to Tuba City, AZ. Learning the story of Margaret Louise Brown, D.C., and the St. Jude's food pantry.

Courtesy of the author





Encounter during the visit to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Elderly Center in San Salvador, El Salvador.

Courtesy of the author



Reflections from the Field: Table Grace and A Biblical Call to Hospitality

TIMOTHY GEORGE
BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

[previous
article](#)

[about
VH](#)



Vincent de Paul, as the patron of charity, blessing his good works from heaven.

Oil on canvas. Original in the Vincentian motherhouse, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



Christian hospitality has long been recognized as a vital aspect of the way of Jesus; but as Elizabeth Newman¹ has pointed out, hospitality often has been divorced from the life of worship of God's people and distorted in many ways. It can be spiritualized, privatized, and politicized. Hospitality can be sentimentalized as the art of courtly manners, or reduced to rules of how to give a nice dinner party. The art of being friendly, nice, and welcoming in social situations certainly has its place, but hospitality in the Bible is much deeper than that. The Scriptures talk about hospitality in many different ways, but the following three instances are fundamental to everything else.

First, the gift of hospitality is just that—a gift freely bestowed by the triune God. The bedrock of true biblical faith is this: We worship and serve a hospitable God. From all eternity, this one God is within himself a holy community of giving and receiving, of mutuality and reciprocity. The eternal triune God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit has chosen to share his divine life with us in the most tangible of ways: as a baby in a manger, as a man on a tree. We are the face of God in the face of Jesus Christ, not only in his teachings, miracles, and example, as wonderful as they are, but also in the fact “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”² The mystery of the Incarnation, that “the Creator of the universe tucked himself into the womb of his creature,” is matched only by the wonder of the cross. On the cross, Jesus died as he had lived, with his arms outstretched to the world, his hands held there not by nails but by wondrous love.

Second, because God has chosen to share his life with us through the “unspeakable gift” of his love in Jesus, all who follow the path of Christ are called to share that same love with one another. St. Paul put it this way, “Be kind and compassionate to one another,

¹ Elizabeth Newman, *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers* (Brazos Press, 2007), 236 pp.

² John 1:14.

forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”³ In a world marked by division, disunity, and inhospitality Christians are called “to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”⁴

Third, and lastly, throughout the Bible, God’s gracious love and hospitality for his people is meant to be shared with all others: with unbelievers, with strangers, with the poor and disposed. Such hospitality is not calculating, but unstinted. “Evangelism”, said D.T. Niles, “is one beggar telling another beggar where to find a piece of bread.”⁵

These selected Biblical passages highlight the call to reflect on hospitality, to look closer at God’s word not merely as an academic exercise but in order to be transformed by it. We can then come together to listen to one another, learn, confess, praise, worship, and give thanks.



³ Ephesians 4:32.

⁴ Ephesians 4:3.

⁵ See Richard Stoll Armstrong, *The Pastor as Evangelist* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 26.



Vincent de Paul, as the patron of charity, blessing his good works from heaven.

Oil on canvas. Original in the Vincentian motherhouse, Paris.

Courtesy St. Vincent de Paul Image Archive Online

<http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>



About Vincentian Heritage



[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Vincentian Heritage is the journal of the Vincentian Studies Institute of the United States. Founded in 1979 the Institute is dedicated to promoting a living interest in the historical and spiritual heritage of Saint Vincent de Paul (1581-660) and Saint Louise de Marillac (1591-1660), the patrons of the wide-ranging Vincentian Family including the Congregation of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity, the Ladies of Charity, the Sisters of Charity, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and a number of other congregations, communities, and lay movements who share a common dedication to serving those in need.

Vincentian Heritage welcomes manuscripts, poetry, and other expressions of Vincentian themes that meet the publication criteria. All articles should relate directly to topics of Vincentian interest, be researched and documented in a scholarly fashion, and directed toward Vincentian oriented groups in the reading public and the Vincentian family. Ordinarily, articles should not exceed thirty typewritten pages and should be submitted twelve months prior to anticipated publication.

All manuscripts and editorial correspondence should be addressed to:

Mr. Nathaniel Michaud
Director of Publications
DePaul University Vincentian Studies Institute
Office of Mission & Values
Suite 850F
55 East Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604
nmichaud@depaul.edu

Unless otherwise specified, all published articles are copyrighted by DePaul University. Quotations from such material beyond fair use as defined in Sections 107-108 of the United States Copyright law require permission of the Director of Publications of the Vincentian Studies Institute

© Copyright 2016 DePaul University Vincentian Studies Institute

ISSN 0277 – 2205

Vincentian Heritage is published bi-annually by DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, under the direction of the Office of Mission and Values and assisted by an Editorial Board whose members include the following:

Rev. Edward R. Udovic, C.M., Ph.D.

Senior Executive for University Mission
DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois

Sr. Regina Bechtle, S.C.

Sisters of Charity, New York
Bronx, New York

Rev. John E. Rybolt, C.M., Ph.D.

Vincentian Scholar-in-Residence
Office of Mission and Values
DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois

Simone Zurawski, Ph.D.

Associate Professor
Department of Art and Art History
College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences
DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois

Sr. Betty Ann McNeil, D.C.

Province of St. Louise
Vincentian Scholar-in-Residence
Office of Mission and Values
DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois

Scott P. Kelley, Ph.D.

Assistant Vice-President for Vincentian Scholarship
Office of Mission and Values
DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois

Alison Forrestal, Ph.D.

History, School of Humanities
NUI Galway, Galway
Ireland

Nathaniel Michaud

Director of Publications
Vincentian Studies Institute
DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois

The Institute can be found online at vsi.depaul.edu.

Subscriptions are now provided gratis for all interested parties. Future editions of *Vincentian Heritage* will be available for download to your iPad, Kindle, tablet, or computer. From this point forward, to receive the book free-of-charge, please contact us at nmichaud@depaul.edu and provide your preferred email address. When future editions are published you will receive an email including links to download the new full color, fully illustrated e-volume.