

Homily  
Memorial of Saint Vincent de Paul, Priest  
Friday of the 25<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time  
September 27, 2024

I struggle with humility. We are all called to be humble before God. How can we not be, when we consider the God of the Universe, the creator of all things, seen and unseen. Yet, I struggle with being humble, meek, docile, graceful. It's hard to admit when I'm wrong, and I'm wrong so often.

In the first reading, Paul reminds us of how many of us are not so wise or powerful, yet these are the ones God chooses. It is the meek, who are in Christ, who can boast in God. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells us, "...for when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Cor 12:10b

The Responsorial Psalm reminds us to fear the Lord, because it is through God we are richly blessed and without God, we are nothing, we are truly poor, we lack what we need.

Jesus is the ultimate servant, truly humble, fully engaged in helping those in need. And He sees the need for more like Him, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few." He is calling us to be humble servants, looking out for those around us in need.

St. Vincent de Paul was such a servant. He was born in 1581 to peasant farmers. He was ordained a priest at age 19 and dedicated himself to serving the poor. He co-founded the Congregation of the Mission, also known as the Vincentians. These Vincentian priests, with vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability, were to devote themselves entirely to the people in smaller towns and villages. He was renowned for his compassion, humility, and generosity. Although he was, by his own admission, a grump, he worked and prayed hard to overcome his disposition. He said that except for the grace of God he would have been "hard and repulsive, rough and cross." But he became a tender and affectionate man, very sensitive to the needs of others. He died in 1660 and was canonized by Pope Clement XII in 1737. His body was found incorrupt, although destroyed in a flood. His heart remains incorrupt and his bones are enclosed in a wax figure which is on display in a glass reliquary in Paris. He is the patron of all charities. The Saint Vincent de Paul Society was founded in 1833 and is active in 153 countries today.

To be a servant requires humility. Humility requires a sincere and faithful assessment of ourselves, which is difficult and sometimes even painful. It may hurt to look so deeply at ourselves that we see who we truly are. We might be fearful of what we see, but that's okay; God sees us for who we truly are and He loves us anyway. And in our failures, in our lacking, God calls us to be laborers for His harvest. And it is through the Sacrament which we are about to receive that we become one with Christ. And it is then that we can become Christ for one another.