



**Conference News and Notes**  
**for Wednesday, December 29, 2021**  
**Sent to all Vincentians & Staff**

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***Vincentian Reflection for the Solemnity of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God  
Saturday, January 1, 2022***

**Gospel: (Luke 2:16-21)** The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them. When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

**Reflection:** Because Mary's conception and giving birth happened under such extraordinary circumstances we might think that Mary took all this for granted and that it was easy for her. The central lines to the gospel suggest other wise: "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." This suggests that Mary's on-going yes to God wasn't really very easy at all. The only way she continued to be faithful was that she took a contemplative stance: reflecting, pondering, praying. Mary shows us the way: fidelity to God's way means we, too, must adopt a contemplative stance before God and the mystery of salvation. (*Living Liturgy*, p.30)

**Vincentian Meditation:** Vincentians are called to be contemplatives in action and apostles in prayer. Prayer and action go hand in hand in a healthy Vincentian spirituality. St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac were incredibly active, but they were also persons of deep prayer. An apostolic spirituality is at its best when it holds prayer and action in tension with one another. The person who loves God "with the sweat of his brow and the strength of his arms" as Vincent said, knows how to distinguish between beautiful theoretical thoughts about an abstract God and real personal contact with the living Lord contemplated and served in his suffering people. (Maloney, *Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*, p. 176)

**How does Mary inspire your Vincentian vocation? Your faith? Your Life?  
How can you become a better "contemplative in action" this year?**

**Our Call to Prayer**

**Mary, to you who are the Mother of God, we now pray:  
help us to see and hear what God is revealing in our lives.  
Mary, wellspring of grace and peace,  
help us to take time to ponder and reflect.  
Mary, you who are a "contemplative in action",  
help us to contemplate Jesus in his suffering people.  
Amen.**

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## Vincentian Reflection for the Epiphany of the Lord Sunday, January 2, 2022

**Gospel: (Matthew 2:1-12)** When Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ...Herod sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child..." After their audience with the King, they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**Reflection:** The three Magi from the east must have been men of means; they traveled a long distance to find the "newborn King of the Jews" and to offer him precious gifts, trusting in only the star's guidance. They must also have recognized the prior generosity of God, for their initial response in finding the Child was to "do him homage." The symbolic meaning of their treasures is: giving the gold was a response of sharing their possessions; giving the frankincense was a response of reverence and gratitude for God's gifts to them; giving the myrrh was a response of sharing of obedience in following God's revelation in the star. (*Living Liturgy*, p.32)

**Vincentian Meditation:** The Magi came to worship the newborn king. Are we capable of that ourselves? Are we willing to bow down before the Lord and pay him homage? Are we able to make Christ the *absolute center* of our lives? Or do we clutch alien gods as Herod did? These are manifold: power, popularity, security, comfort, only to name a few. Most such gods are reflections of our inner selves. They mirror forth our own desire to be the center of the universe. Unlike Herod, the Magi bowed down before the Lord and worshipped him. May we also bow down before him in the person of the poor, who are - in a phrase we use so often that it can easily lose its meaning - our "Lords and Masters" as Vincent said.

(Maloney, *Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*, p. 81)

**How can we better serve "our Lords and Masters" the poor?**

### Our Call to Prayer

O Lord, bring light to the darkness as we search for you,  
Let your light shine upon us.  
As the Magi bowed down in homage,  
May you be the absolute center of our lives.  
May we, like the Magi, offer you our gifts each day,  
As we discover you in the lives of the poor.  
Amen.

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### Our Holidays Schedule

Please note our Neyer Outreach Center's - and your Conferences Support Team's - special holidays arrangements for this week:

- Tues, 12/28 - Thurs, 12/30/2021 - open normal hours, 8am-4:30pm
- New Year's Eve, Fri, 12/31/2021 - Sun, 1/2/2022 - closed
- Mon, 1/3/2022 - reopen for normal hours

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### We Reflect Upon 2021...and Leap Forward into 2022

Let's refresh ourselves with the message of *It's a Wonderful Life*. George Bailey has invested his God-given gifts for the good of all those around him...and in so giving has surrounded himself with a beautiful family and an abundance of friends...and yet finds himself in deep despair as he becomes burdened with the weight of what he hasn't (or

perceives he hasn't) accomplished to the point he loses sight of all he has. Clarence, his goodhearted, aspiring guardian angel, intercedes to show George what his community and those he loves most would have experienced if not for George's presence. Clarence reopens George's eyes, heart, and soul to how incredibly impactful his life has been...how truly rich he has become...and the promise of today & all the tomorrows God will grant him.

Do you feel a connection to George Bailey?

You've / we've poured ourselves into this Vincentian vocation in 2021. Through your embodiment of faith, friendship, and service, you have positively touched so many neighbors, fellow Vincentians, and prospective Vincentians - sharing Christ's care, hope, & inspiration. And yet, we too - like George Bailey - can/do become so immersed in what we haven't done yet that we lose sight of what we have. And in so doing we risk losing touch with the *joy* that is the fuel that propels our faithful actions.

And how about Clarence?

Despite - or perhaps because of - his own humble strengths and shortcomings, what an invaluable gift he bestows upon George! Yes, Clarence earns his wings.

We thank you for all you have so generously shared. And we pray that you find some quiet moments this week to rest, to reflect upon your impact, to reunite with what & whom you value most, and to savor the joy of a wonderful and wonder-filled life. If this leads you to a new year's resolution or two, please know that we are eager to walk with you and support you as you transform resolutions into blessed, joyful reality. We journey on together. Could there be any greater gift here on earth?

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Your *Conference News and Notes* will return next week with more of our current informational content to help engage and serve our neighbors, each other, and God.

STAY CONNECTED

