



Joyful Witnesses

Reflection on Pope Francis' message for 4th World Day of the Poor

Advent Week 3

Already we are celebrating Gaudete Sunday, Rejoicing Sunday, the 3rd week of Advent.

The 1st Reading in this Sunday's liturgy is from the prophet Isaiah.

"The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up broken hearts, to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord."

We find these words in the passage from St Luke's Gospel (Lk 4:18), where Jesus reads this text and then, rolling up the scroll declares, *'This text is being fulfilled even as you listen'*. Jesus speaks of his ministry to those trapped in poverty. He challenges those listening to him in the synagogue open their hearts to their sisters and brothers in need. As Christians, as Vincentians we bring this text to the present day and say, *'This text is being fulfilled even as I read'*. Jesus challenges each of us today to open our hearts to our sisters and brothers in need and to bring them good news.

In his letter for the 4th World Day of the Poor, Pope Francis tells us, *'The Word of God allows no complacency; it constantly impels us to acts of love.'* (8), in other words, this text from Isaiah leaves **US** no option. Today, in December 2020, we have been appointed to bring 'good news' to those who are poor....no matter what poverty they carry. We are the ones invited to bind up broken hearts and to free our sisters and brothers from anything that imprisons them.

This can sound bit dramatic! All God asks, is that we allow Him to work through us. He will do the unbinding and releasing, but he needs us to be His instruments. We need to be witnesses of Joy, bearers of God's love.



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As you read again the text from Isaiah ask the Lord what acts of love does he want you to share on His behalf. Even the smallest acts of kindness can bring more joy than we can ever imagine.....so go and bring joy to those around you as you share the Good News of God's love.