

I Can
Make
Difference



A Collection of
Reflections

Just for
youth

***Make a difference, Be the difference &
Share the good news!!***

Everybody, Somebody, Nobody and Anybody

Once upon a time, there were four people named Everybody, Somebody, Nobody and Anybody.... When there was an important job to be done, Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. When Nobody did it, Everybody got angry because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Somebody would do it, but Nobody realised that Nobody would do it. So it ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done in the first place!

By **Chris Osgood**

*taken from 'Spiritual Reflections' –
Compiled by **St Vincent de Paul Society,**
Parramatta Diocese, 2003

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Which of the people featured in the story do you associate with the most?
- Which person do you feel you need to challenge in your life?
- What are some actions you can take to change this?

In our backyard

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How does this poem challenge your perception of those experiencing homelessness?
- Are you challenged to see God in the people that we meet?
- What makes you comfortable/challenged with the idea of seeing God in the person described in the story?

Where is he today?

He is black

And beat

To pulp on the King's Cross street.

He falls off the toilet seat

Dead

With needle marks in his arms

He stands on a corner, wine-soaked.

He is twenty people living in one tenement room

He is ten persons living in a ghetto shack.

He is this and more.

Do not be afraid of him!

He is a woman, old and wrinkled and dirty and

Smelling of wine.

With sneakers and torn sweater and a

Handbag cracked and torn.

Smoking a just rolled cigarette.

Do not be afraid of his language

Or the look of him

Or the smell of him

He is your God.

*Adapted from Listen Pilgrim, **Christopher Jones.**

A Pebble

Drop a pebble in the water: just a splash,
and it is gone;
But there's half-a-hundred ripples circling on
and on and on,
Spreading, spreading from the centre,
flowing on out to the sea.
And there is no way of telling where the end is
going to be.

Drop a pebble in the water: in a minute you forget,
But there's little waves a-flowing, and there's
ripples circling yet,
And those little waves a-flowing to a great big
wave have grown;
You've disturbed a mighty river just by
dropping in a stone.

Drop an unkind word, or careless:
in a minute it is gone;
But there's half-a-hundred ripples
circling on and on and on.
They keep spreading, spreading, spreading
from the centre as they go,
And there is no way to stop them, once you've
started them to flow.
Drop an unkind word, or careless:
in a minute you forget;
But there's little waves a-flowing,
and there's ripples circling yet,
And perhaps in some sad heart
a mighty wave of tears you've stirred,
And disturbed a life was happy ere you dropped
that unkind word.

Drop a word of cheer and kindness:
just a flash and it is gone;
But there's half-a-hundred ripples
circling on and on and on,
Bearing hope and joy and comfort on each
splashing, dashing wave
Till you wouldn't believe the volume of the one kind
word you gave.

Drop a word of cheer and kindness:
in a minute you forget;
But there's gladness still a-swelling,
and there's joy circling yet,
And you've rolled a wave of comfort whose sweet
music can be heard
Over miles and miles of water just by
dropping one kind word

By **James W. Foley**

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How often do you stop and think about the consequences or positive outcomes of your actions?
- What effect do you think your work with the Society has had on those you assist?



Faith Must Be Lived

A rabbi and a soap maker went for a walk together. The soap maker said, “What good is religion? Look at all the trouble and misery of the world after thousands of years of teaching about goodness, truth and peace – after all the prayers, sermons and teachings. If religion is good and true, why should this be?”

The rabbi said nothing. They continued walking until he noticed a child playing in the gutter. Then the rabbi said, “Look at that child. You say that soap makes people clean, but see the dirt on that youngster. Of what good is soap? With all the soap in the world, the child is still filthy. I wonder how effective soap is after all.”

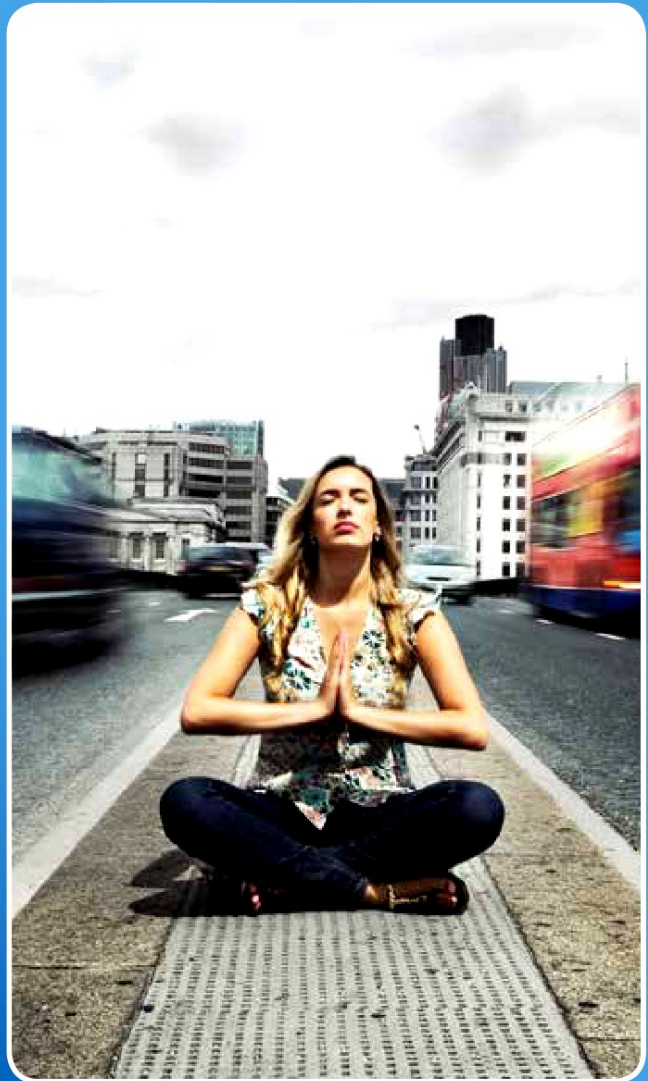
The soap maker protested and said, “But rabbi, soap can’t do any good unless it is used.”

“Exactly,” replied the rabbi. “So it is with Judaism or any other religion. It is ineffective unless it is applied and used.”

*Taken from ‘Stories’ Vinnies Reflection Resource 2008

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do you regularly keep your faith in “use”?
- How can you better “use” your faith and values in your life?



"If we are really called to carry the love of God far and wide, if we are to inflame the nations with this fire, if we have the vocation of setting the whole world on fire, if it is so, then how much I must myself burn with this fire"

St Vincent de Paul

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What makes you want to set the whole world on fire?
- What issues are you really passionate about?
- Where do you get your energy to try and change the world?

"Christianity is not about ideas but about deeds inspired by love"

Bl Frederic Ozanam

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Is love and compassion more important than physical assistance? Why / Why not?
- Can we help those who need assistance if we don't respect and love them?
- What difference does it make?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are the 'deeds' or works that you do to live out your Christian faith?
- How does your faith provide a foundation for the work you do?
- Are 'deeds' equally valuable when they are not inspired by love?
- Are 'deeds' still Christian if they are not inspired by love?

"Be kind and love, for love is your first gift to the poor"

Bl Rosalie Rendu

be the
CHANGE
you want to see
in the
WORLD



Making Connections

ACTIVITY

1. Working in groups of three or four. Read the following Gospel passages and quotes.
2. Then discuss with the group your thoughts, feelings and reactions.
3. Then, on your own, write your personal experiences as a young person that relate to those same passages.

COMPASSION

Matthew 9:36

Mark 1:40-42

"To feel the pain of another"

"It is our duty to prefer the service of the poor to everything else and to offer such service as quickly as possible."

St Vincent de Paul

SOCIAL JUSTICE

James 2: 15 -17

Micah 6:8

"Justice demands a consecration of each one for the welfare of all and especially for the protection of the weak."

Frederic Ozanam

INCLUSIVENESS

"To respond to the needs of the individuals"

John 4:1-10

"It is a struggle between those who have nothing and those who have too much. The violent clash of luxury and poverty is shaking the ground under our feet."

Frederic Ozanam



REFLECTIONS

SELF-CENTRED – Write down the ways you focus only on yourself, on your needs and desires, throughout the day/month/year.

CHRIST-CENTRED – Write down all the ways you focus on the needs of others, how you gave yourself to others, throughout the day/month/year.

Some role models you could look at – Frederic Ozanam, St Vincent de Paul, St Louise de Marillac and Mother Teresa.



Reflection on the story of the Good Samaritan

The story of the Good Samaritan is one of the many inspiring stories in the gospel. If you happen to see the tomb of Frederic Ozanam you will find a painting of the story of the Good Samaritan around the background of the tomb. If you ever heard the story of the Good Samaritan you will know that the Samaritan helped a man who had been attacked by robbers and left for dead. Unlike the priest and the Levite, the Samaritan helps the poor man.

Frederic Ozanam and St Vincent De Paul were both like the Good Samaritan. They did not ignore the disadvantage they saw as the priest and the Levite did. Instead they acted as Jesus would have and helped the person in need. Frederic Ozanam and the Society's members, volunteers and staff work together to address needs within local communities.

The story of the Good Samaritan is an inspiring story of charity and different paths individuals can decide to take when confronted with disadvantage and need. For all Vincentians this story should guide our daily actions and decisions and not ignore a need when we see it.

Luke 10: 25-37

Act

as if what you do makes a

difference.

It does.



Home



When a young Sudanese boy Abdul said to his little sister they were going home from a Vinnies Camp soon his little sister replied: “What do you mean ‘home’?”

In the eyes of a small child expressions such as this can be taken as literal and affected by individual values and life experiences of their “home”.

The word “home” has many meanings; in sport it means ‘a place where a player is safe from attack’ such as home base in baseball or a ‘home’ game is using your own grounds rather than travelling to the other teams.

In search and rescue it can mean zooming in and narrowing in on the targeted location.

At the St Vincent de Paul Society we do “home” visitation in which we visit those we serve face-to-face in the place where they reside, this can be a hostel, aged care facility, university campus... sometimes even detention centres and prisons. What looked like an obvious expression from Abdul, which was not really open to multiple interpretations all of a sudden takes on so many different meanings and colours.

Take a moment to think about where home is for you. Can you think of where this little girl was imagining when she was asked this question? Do you know the answer she hoped for?

Think about your own faith and place of nourishment; where would you say your beliefs are most at home?

Quietly write or draw a prayer for all those who are your “home”. Thank the Lord, for giving you this place to feel safe, warm and comforted and pray for the thousands who are “home”less tonight. Where do their hearts call “home”?

“If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you”

Matthew 10:13



LOL, TTYL and FYI.

As technology advances further and further it has begun to dictate not only how we communicate with each other (method) but also the way we communicate.

Text messaging provides the instant gratification of feedback and praise from a friend with an emoticon ☺;??? or we all know the usual **LOL**, **TTYL** and **FYI**.

When Frederic Ozanam said “embrace the world in a network of love” he had no idea we’d be sending virtual hugs and liking, pinning, tweeting and trending our joys and sadness across the world. He had no idea that in the 21st century the term “network” would have a whole different meaning that potentially means each and every person in the world is only a few cables and an internet connection away.

While there are many positives of such ease of access to communication such as organising social events, remembering birthdays and tweeting celebrities there are also the downfalls which can have drastic consequences.

The impact of your words can either be positive and build people up or negative and tear people down. Sometimes we don’t realise the impact our words on social networks can have. Social media has its own set of social rules and language. However the instant nature of social media can result in less respectful interactions than face to face communication.

Before we send an email, write something on someone’s wall or tag someone in a tweet we must stop and THINK.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What impact either negative or positive might this comment, post or tweet have on the individual or others who view these?
- Could my comments etc. be seen by someone as cyber bullying?
- Could this post be offensive?
- A comment or post that we believe is funny or a personal joke by one person could offend someone else.

T - Is it the **T**ruth?
H - Is it **H**elpful?
I - Is it **I**nspiring?
N - Is it **N**ecessary?
K - Is it **K**ind?

If you are experiencing cyber bullying; don’t think it will just go away or need to talk to someone. Reach out to friends, have some laugh with those around you and most importantly talk to someone.

You can also call the Kids Help Line for Teens if you would like to talk to a professional counsellor about these issues.

Teen-Line Ireland 1800 833 634

In the Corinthians God speaks to His people reassuring them that when they are experiencing hard times and others are unkind to them His power of comfort, strength and guidance is at its strongest and most perfect.



It's almost like God powers up when people are being unjust to others. He stands by the person suffering and believes in them and that they deserve better.

God becomes a positive light within us and we are the ones who need to harness that light and take action.

Following the example of God Blessed Frederic Ozanam, cofounder of the St Vincent de Paul Society said; "Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveller who has been attacked. It is justice's role to prevent the attack."

Corinthians 12:9-10

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

PRAYER

Dear God,

Be the strength in other's words that they may be kind and honest with no intent to steal the spirit of others.

Be the strength in my words that they do not willingly hurt others just as I have wished them not to hurt me.

It comforts me to know that You have such far-reaching, kind-hearted, Fatherly love for us.

Even in this networked world we live in Your love knows no limit.

Help me keep logged into Your powerful love and signed out from harshness to others.

Amen.

Author unknown.

Switching off technology activity:

Sometimes we get so caught up in online life that we forget to enjoy and experience things around us and connect with our friends and family. Give yourself some time to enjoy life through taking the switch off technology challenge.

1. Make one day a week your "switched off" day. That means phones are on silent, no facebook or instant messaging (you can check it occasionally in case it's something important but no unnecessary replies); close your laptop and sit with a family and friends.

Talk to your parents about the ways they communicated with friends and organised social events when they were young. You'd be surprised how much more you can get done in just one 'switched off' day.

2. Around or on your computer and phone wallpapers place words and quotes to keep you positive and mindful of how you talk to others online.

Maybe write your own THINK formula and keep it near your computer

3. Think about a time you may have felt persecuted or insulted by other's actions and words. How did you feel? Keep this in mind and remember that not only is God's power felt in all its perfections during these persecutions but it can also be felt more as a nudge to be kind and to THINK before we speak.

**DO WHAT
IS RIGHT,
NOT WHAT
IS EASY**

The Heart of Success: Commitment

A young woman lost in the desert made her way to an old weather-beaten, abandoned, home in the distance. Searching for water, she came upon a pump outside the house and began pumping furiously for water. After several attempts and seeing nothing flowing, her eye saw a small jug topped with a cork and a hastily scribbled note underneath. "You have to prime the pump with water first. When you're finished, refill the jug for someone else."



The young woman sat and pondered her options. If she drank the water, her thirst would be gone, but if she followed the note's instructions, all the water could be lost on a pump that might not work. Sweating profusely, she listened to her frightened pounding heart and chose to...

Inside each of us is a person who wants something. Like the woman we can drink from the jug ensuring primary satisfaction or we can choose to prime the pump, helping ourselves and those likely to follow. Similar to the young woman, we have to decide and then commit to a plan of action. Then you will see your life shift and begin to move as magic unfolds. If you're in sync with your greatest purpose, it's your destiny to succeed.

...and chose to pour the entire jug of water down the rusty pump and furiously pumped! After some time water gushed forth. She was so grateful, she corked that jug after filling it full again. Then added these words to the note: "Just do it. It really, really works!"

National Storytelling Network newsletter

By Angela Davis



You! Yes, you

You are
AMAZING.
You are
IMPORTANT.
You are
SPECIAL.
You are
UNIQUE.
You are
KIND.
You are
PRECIOUS.
You are
LOVED.

The scorpion and the old man



One morning, after he had finished his meditation, the old man opened his eyes and saw a scorpion floating helplessly in the water. As the scorpion was washed closer to the tree, the old man quickly stretched himself out on one of the long roots that branched out into the river and reached out to rescue the drowning creature. As soon as he touched it, the scorpion stung him. Instinctively the man withdrew his hand. A minute later, after he had regained his balance, he stretched himself out again on the roots to save the scorpion. This time the scorpion stung him so badly with its poisonous tail that his hand became swollen and bloody and his face contorted with pain.

At that moment, a passerby saw the old man stretched out on the roots struggling with the scorpion and shouted: "Hey, old man, what's wrong with you? Only a fool would risk his life for the sake of an ugly, evil creature. Don't you know you could kill yourself trying to save that ungrateful scorpion?"

The old man turned his head. Looking into the stranger's eyes he said calmly, "My friend, just because it is the scorpion's nature to sting, that does not change my nature to save."

Retold by Henri Nouwen

<http://www.hsuyun.org/index.php/features1/dharma-teachingstories/569-scorpion.html>



The Story of the Cracked Pot

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole, which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water, at the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

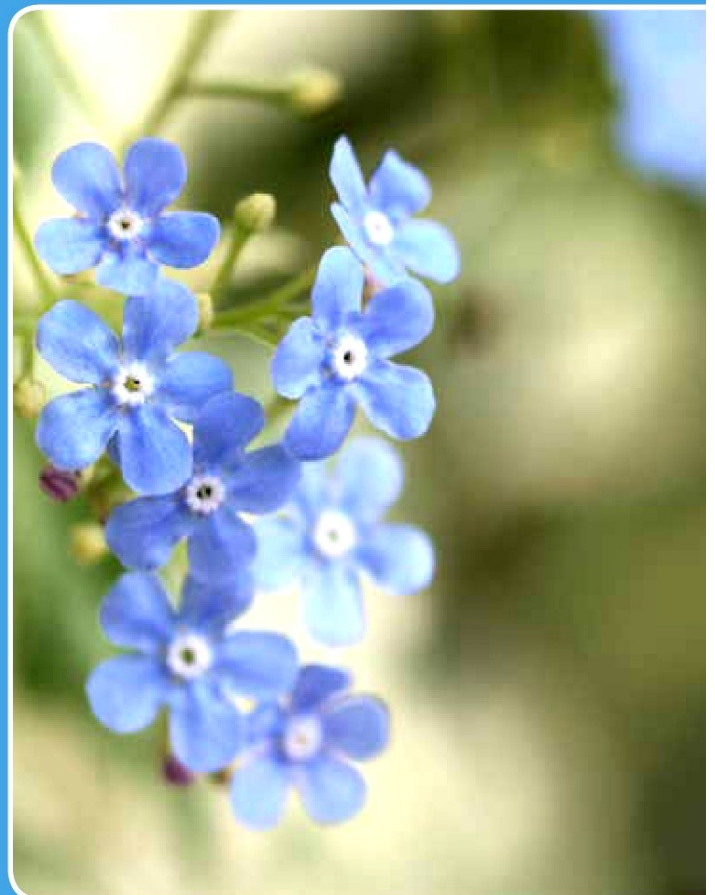
After 2 years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house."

The old woman smiled, "Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side?" "That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Traditional

The moral of this story: Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. In this world, nothing goes to waste. You may think like the cracked pot that you are inefficient or useless in certain areas of your life, but somehow these flaws can turn out to be a blessing in disguise. This kind of makes you proud of being a cracked pot, doesn't it? Look around and you will see all the lives that you have touched/watered.

But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them.



"You got the love"

Sometimes I feel like throwing
my hands up in the air
I know I can count on you
Sometimes I feel like saying "Lord I just don't care!"
But you've got the love I need to see me through

Sometimes it seems the going is just too rough
And things go wrong no matter what I do
Now and then it seems that life is just too much
But you've got the love I need to see me through

When food is gone you are my daily meal, oh
When friends are gone I know my saviour's
love is real
You know it's real

You've got the love, you've got the love,
you've got the love
You've got the love, you've got the love,
you've got the love

Time after time I think "Oh Lord what's the use?"
Time after time I think it's just no good
'Cause sooner or later in life,
the things you love you lose
But you got the love I need to see me through

You've got the love, you've got the love,
you've got the love
You've got the love, you've got the love,
you've got the love

You've got the love, you got the love,
you got the love
You've got the love, you got the love,
you got the love

Sometimes I feel like throwing
my hands up in the air
'Cause I know I can count on you
Sometimes I feel like saying "Lord I just don't care!"
But you've got the love I need to see me through

By Florence and The Machine-
Lungs (Deluxe Version) 2009.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What line remains with you/ speaks to you? and why?
- Do you/ Can we believe in a world described in the song?

Mix together all the thoughts that you have heard during our time together. Add the yeast of your own desire - that strong desire to serve the poor. Moisten the mixture so that it will be drawn together in order to get it in shape for the moulding of your daily life in the future. Knead the mixture well! Keep working at it until you feel that the lump has been saturated not only with your strong desire but with your determination to serve those in need. Leave the mixture to set a while: In quiet prayer before the Lord, ask for the courage to serve those in need. The dough will rise in proportion to the strength of your desire and the consistency of the mixture. Then bake your loaf! Have the temperature just right and wait to see what happens. Taste it - has it come up to your expectations? Share it and pass it on! That's your contribution to the Society. If each of us bakes and share our loaf, the homemade bread will never run out.



BE
WHO
GOD
WANTS
YOU
TO
BE,
NOT
WHAT
OTHERS
WANT
TO
SEE

be fearless in
the pursuit of
what sets your
soul on fire.

For every
set back,
God
has a
major comeback.

What you are is God's gift to you,
what you become is your gift to God.

Be a reflection of what
you'd like to receive.
If you want love, give love.
If you want truth, be truthful.
What you give out will
always return.

**GOD
MADE**
YOU BEAUTIFUL,
AND THAT IS
FAR MORE
VALUABLE THAN
ANY AMOUNT OF
LIKES
YOU COULD
EVER GET
ON A PHOTO
ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The best teachers are
those who show you
where to look, but
don't tell you
what to see.

Alexandra K. Trenfor

There's a lot that is
good in your life—don't
take it for granted.
Don't get so focused on
the struggles that you
miss the gift of today.

Change the
way you see
things and the
things you see
will change.

Be
brave
with
your
life



Let us encourage the generosity which is
typical of the young and help them to work
actively in building a better world. Youth do
not solely need material things. Above all,
they need to have those non-material values
which are the spiritual heart of a people...
spirituality, generosity, solidarity,
perseverance, fraternity, and joy.

— Pope Francis —

Thoughts, reflections and people
who inspire me...