from [*an Advent letter of G. Gregory Gay, C.M.*](https://cmglobal.org/en/files/2018/06/VT-2004-06-ENG-ALL.pdf), former Superior General.

A person posed a question raised by my reminder that St. Vincent calls us to be a part of the Universal Church. It was asked what we should do in situations where the people with whom we work and share our ministry are in conflict with the teachings of the official Church. What is our stand before them?

My response to this person is my response to each of us who desires to live the Gospels in a radical way. We are called to be compassionate to all. In our relationships we see first the person, as Jesus did, and we share from our hearts the love he has for him or her. When I was in the seminary someone once made a comment about the “uniqueness” of our Vincentian formation. **We are taught first to see and love the person as person and later help that person come to understand what the Church’s doctrine is with regard to his or her own situation.**

**During Advent we are to deepen our reflection on the Incarnation of God’s Word: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). The Gospels reveal with clarity that the greatest expression of God’s love for humanity is in God’s becoming one like us. We are called to reflect God’s love to humanity in and through our signs of compassion, our passion for and with those who suffer. Let this time of Advent be a time of reflecting on the quality of our compassion, especially to the most abandoned.**

