



Vincen-tian Family
Young Vincen-tian Meeting



Young Vincen-tian = Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)

Reflection document in preparation for the Vincen-tian Youth Gathering Madrid 2011

Although we are removed from this story by more than two thousand years, yet even today this parable continues to be most relevant and also continues to provide us with powerful inspiration. This parable helps and sustains us in our service that is modeled on that of Saint Vincent de Paul.

We will reflect on the assistance that the Good Samaritan provided by examining six different perspectives that will serve as reference points that ought to be internalized by young Vincen-tian men and women as they engage in ministry and serve others.

- **First perspective: an individual who is aware ... able to see**

A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler, who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight (Luke 10:30-33).

The three individuals in this parable “see” the unfortunate man but each one sees him with different eyes and a different heart. The priest and the levite, who were conditioned by their religious vision of a vertical relationship with God and further conditioned by the demands of the law and cultural expectations, *passed by the wounded man and moved to the opposite side of the road.* Yet the Samaritan paused because he was guided by the movement of the heart.



- **Second perspective: compassion, *he [the Samaritan] was moved with compassion***

The Samaritan allows his external sense of seeing to be influenced by an interior response and so he allows himself to be moved and questioned by what he sees.



Compassion comes from the Latin *cum passion* = to suffer with. This does not mean that we are moved by some pious feeling or a sense of superiority but rather than we allow ourselves to be moved and touched by the wounds of another.

The relationship with effective assistance is based on the development of interior attitudes such as compassion, sensitivity, and stimulation in order to guide and inspire such action.

- **Third perspective: closeness, *he approached the victim***

It is not enough to be aware of the fact that the heart is touched by images that disturb and question us; interior sensitivity without external action is meaningless and useless.

To approach another means that we are willing to break free of the geographical and/or cultural barriers in order to become neighbor to another. To draw near to another is something that is most critical especially when dealing with people who have some pathological condition that often provokes annoyance or rejection among those persons who must treat them, for example, drug addicts, the mentally ill, individuals infected with the AIDS virus, people who are dying etc.

- **Fourth perspective: to care for another, *he poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them***

The Samaritan does not come on the scene empty handed but brings with him the resources that prudence and common sense dictate.

Today bandaging the wounds means that we accept and welcome into our lives those persons who are suffering. We do this with gentleness and with gestures that reveal our goodness ... we share the oil of hope and the wine of consolation which symbolize the action of healing the physical and moral wounds that these individuals experience.



- **Fifth perspective: accompaniment ... *then the Samaritan lifted him [the victim] upon his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him.***

After interrupting his journey in order to assist this victim on the road, the Samaritan confronted an emergency situation and so accompanied the man to an inn and watched over him during the night.

To accompany another is to journey along the path with a sister or brother who feels alone or discouraged, who feels tempted to give up because he/she is tired and frustrated. To accompany another is to take ownership of the following words: *Do not walk in front of me because I cannot follow you; do not walk behind me because I cannot see you; walk beside me and be my friend.*

- **Sixth perspective: collaboration ...** *The next day he [the Samaritan] took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, “Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on the way back.”*

After having personally paid the expenses the Samaritan does not presume to be able to do everything by himself but rather he involves the innkeeper in the process of assisting the wounded individual.

This is an important aspect of present day ministry. Even though twenty centuries have passed this aspect of the parable has been developed in many different ways. The inn has been substituted by thousands of hospitals, emergency and rehabilitation centers, homes for the elderly, etc. The innkeeper today offers surgeons, x-rays, cardiologists, nurses, technicians, other auxiliary services ... each one competent in their own area of expertise.

The tragedy of the man traveling on this road raises many questions about the thousands of different events that occur in our midst. And yes, the attitude of the Good Samaritan also finds echo in the gestures of those men and women who are willing to become neighbor to their brothers and sisters who are suffering.

