

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 19, 2023

Gospel: (Matthew 5: 38-48)

Jesus said to his disciples: “*You have heard the commandment, ‘You shall love your country man but hate your enemy.’ My command to you is: love your enemies, pray for your persecutors. This will prove that you are sons and daughters of your heavenly Father, for his sun rises on the bad and the good, he rains on the just and the unjust. If you love those who love you, what merit is there in that? Do not tax collectors do as much? And if you greet your brothers only, what is so praiseworthy about that? Do not pagans do as much? In a word, you must be perfected, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*”

Reflection:

Bishop Untener requested that every meeting in his diocese should begin with the question, “How shall what we are doing here affect or involve the poor?” He also said: “This must be addressed to the *poor* poor. They are the ones who get left out because they’re not part of what we did yesterday or today. The other kinds of poor people are part of our lives, and we need to be concerned about them. But I want us to connect with the *poor* poor. If we deal with them, all the rest will follow. The *poor* poor are the ones who rarely if ever are first on an agenda. So let’s talk about them. Always start with the *poor* poor.” (McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.737)

Vincentian Meditation:

I think the Bishop’s observations could give us all much to reflect upon. In his question, “How shall what we are doing here affect or involve the poor?” I like the two verbs, *affect* and *involve*. Both are important. We can spend much time discussing problems about the poor without ever—or at least only after much time—*affecting* the lives of the poor. To *involve* the poor: that is an ideal which we must try to realize in the programs we elaborate to relieve need and redress injustice. We must try to *involve* the poor in the projects which we organize. We must try to help the poor in such a way that they will be able to help themselves and thus rise out of their poverty in such a way that is in harmony with their human dignity. The work we do for the poor is a work of faith. Activated by the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and inspired by the example of St. Vincent, we try to bring the healing hand of Christ to those in need and the courageous voice of the prophet to those in power. This is the challenge that faces the Vincentian Family today. (McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.738)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

In what ways do we “*affect and involve*” the poor?

Closing Prayer:

For the grace to *affect* the *poor* who are living in poverty,

-Merciful God, hear us!

For the grace to *involve* the *poor* who are living in poverty,

-Loving God, hear us! Amen



I will not forget you.