

Spiritual Advisors & Presidents Formation Workshop – November 13, 2021  
(Presented by the SVdP-Georgia Spirituality Committee and Hosted by Amanda Stricklin)

Opening Prayer. Eyes closed, fully relaxed, no distractions. Used the prayer from page 46 of the 2021 Spiritual Advisor Handbook found at [www.svdpusa.org](http://www.svdpusa.org). Please note the first line of the prayer, “**Jesus, you have called me to evangelize persons who are bruised and burdened, and my purpose is to make you known.**”

Workshop Goal. Through virtual breakout sessions, collectively create a resource to identify ways to (1) apply Vincentian spirituality to business case analysis and all other areas of business, (2) become better connected, spiritually, with neighbors, and (3) look for God in our midst.

THREE QUESTIONS FOR DISTRICTS AND CONFERENCES TO CONSIDER,  
AND POSSIBLY APPLY TO ALL AREAS OF WORK, USING VINCENTIAN SPIRITUALITY.

QUESTION #1. How can we become less passive and more assertive, in applying Vincentian spirituality to business case analysis and all other areas? ALL business discussion should be viewed through a Vincentian spirituality lens, and the spiritual advisor should help all members in this effort, with the president’s support.

Possible Answers...

- a. What would Jesus do? How would he handle the situation?
- b. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you, then take the time to share what you hear with the conference.
- c. Focus on preserving the dignity of the person. Distribute copies of the SVdP Mission Statement at a Vincentian meeting, highlighting “dignity.”
- d. Ask others to share their thoughts and feelings.
- e. Assess each situation from a spiritual perspective.
- f. Remind Vincentians that drug addicts and released inmates have bills to pay too. Jesus helped everyone.
- g. Use the National and Georgia spiritual reflections during meetings, or other Vincentian resource materials.
- h. When discussing the National spiritual reflection, especially the discussion question, discuss cases that the conference is aware of, that relate to the question, tying in Vincentian spirituality with business cases. Additionally, throughout the meeting, as cases are discussed, interject the spiritual aspect, if possible.
- i. Spiritual advisors should be actively involved in case reviews.
- j. Pray before, during, and after the conference meetings.
- k. Talk about the mercy and unconditional love of God, and how we also have the opportunity to share this unconditional love with neighbors.
- l. Incrementally grow the time spent in discussing the spiritual reflection with each conference meeting, inviting Vincentians to share their thoughts and feelings.
- m. Educate the conference on Rule 1.3 - *"No work of charity is foreign to the Society. It includes any form of help that alleviates suffering or deprivation and promotes human dignity and personal integrity in all their dimensions."* There are no defined limits of assistance in our Rule.
- n. Become an "active listener." Be available for your neighbors as a listening resource. The reason a neighbor asks for help may become more clear when we actively listen to their situation. The situation is not always what we initially perceive.

QUESTION #2. How can Vincentians stay better connected, *spiritually*, with neighbors?

Possible Answers...

- a. Levels of Involvement with Our Neighbors. Level 1 - Financial: Help them with their immediate needs as well as long-term; Level 2 - Emotional: Listen to their stories without interruption. Level 3 - Spiritual: Say a prayer with them at the beginning and end of the meeting. Invite them to go to Church. Have a

- church bulletin available to share with Mass times, and be willing to meet them at a daily or weekend Mass. Extend the invitation. Ask them to thank God for the help they are getting.
- b. Pray with Neighbors. At the end of an intake phone call or in-person meeting, ask the neighbor, in a very humble way, if you can pray with them. Ask them what they would like you to pray for. Refer to *St. Vincent de Paul Prayer Person* (below). Additionally, you may ask them if they would like to lead the prayer. Always ask first, to respect their preference.
  - c. Typed Prayers for Intake and Case Workers. Type up short prayers that intake and case workers can use with neighbors on the phone and in-person, to help them become more comfortable to pray spontaneously, and from the heart.
  - d. Food Pantries. After neighbors have been served, ask them if you can pray with them. Also, give them prayer cards or other spiritual resources.
  - e. Rosaries and Pamphlets. These may be given to neighbors who are interested and genuinely wish to learn how to pray the Rosary. Tell them they are not jewelry and should not be worn around the neck. The Rosary pamphlet will help them learn how to pray the Rosary.
  - f. Bibles. sometimes neighbors ask for Bibles, and if they are available, please provide them with Bibles.
  - g. Gift Cards + Prayer Cards. Some conferences consider mailing a gift card and prayer card or other spiritual resource to a neighbor after intake has been completed.
  - h. Show Your Empathy for Them. Neighbors can be overwhelmed. Reassure them.
  - i. Follow-Up. Give them a call or visit them after help has been given. Stay better connected spiritually. Continue to pray, as a conference, for our friends and neighbors in need at all times during the visit, and after the visit.
  - j. Trust. Establish a relationship of trust, listening to the concerns of our neighbors, asking what they want us to pray for.

QUESTION #3. Where do we see God in our midst?

Possible Answers...

- a. We see him everywhere.
- b. We see him in the neighbor's face, the "suffering Christ."
- c. We should ask, "Why did God ask me to visit with this neighbor?"
- d. We see him in our own lives.
- e. Through encounters with other Vincentians.
- f. Through encounters with family and friends.
- g. Through encounters in public.
- h. We see the hand of God at work through his providence. One example of this that was offered during the workshop, was of a family who was in great need of furniture and a car. Another family, whose son passed away, provided their son's furniture (free) and car (sold this for \$400) to the family in need.

OTHER RESOURCES –

1. *The Ways to Become More Holy* and *St. Vincent de Paul Prayer Person* were emailed to all attendees of the workshop and are also included below.
2. "How to Run a Conference Spiritual Retreat" guide, is found at the SVdP-Georgia website, <https://j9p7t1xg4r12g2o04rjflx19-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2021/03/SVdP-Retreat-Information-Social-Media-Final.pdf>.
3. Formation Participant Contact List – forwarded by email to attendees.
4. The recording of the workshop is [https://youtu.be/pbpdYb5NA\\_4](https://youtu.be/pbpdYb5NA_4).
5. It is highly recommended that spiritual advisors download, print, and add to a 3-ring binder with tabs, the 2021 Spiritual Advisor Handbook, <https://members.ssvpusa.org/formation/formation-resources/formators-spiritual-advisors/>. It contains new material and is a required resource for spiritual advisors.

## Ways to Become More Holy

1. Pray throughout the day, pray unceasingly, pray at the beginning of a task, during the task and after the task is complete, asking for the help of the Holy Spirit, Jesus, God, Our Blessed Mother Mary.
2. Read the Bible and attend Bible Study classes.
3. Go to Adoration. In the silence turn over all that concerns you to God, to Jesus, then listen for the answers, and sometimes signs are given as confirmation of what to do in your discernment of life's issues.
4. Pray the Rosary. Refer to the pamphlet of How to Pray the Rosary. You may attach those you love and those you pray for, to each bead of the Rosary and/or pray for categories of people who are suffering, such as those who are suffering mentally, physically, emotionally, or spiritually. Give thanks and praise as well. Pray the Rosary before Mass.
5. Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, especially at 3:00 pm. Offer the chaplet for those who are suffering, who are dying, who have died, who are in Purgatory, especially for those who have no one to pray for them.
6. Attend not only Sunday Mass, but daily Mass as well.
7. Consecrate yourself and your family to Jesus, through Our Blessed Mother, Mary.
8. Pray Novenas for specific intentions.
9. Offer up your prayers during the consecration of the Eucharist and during receipt of Holy Communion.
10. Perform acts of charity, not just your money but your time and expertise.
11. Become selfless. Abandon self. Become less selfish. Empty yourself to allow yourself to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to be guided by the Holy Spirit to do God's Will, not your will.
12. Spiritual Warfare. When the evil one tries to tempt you, speak the name of Jesus, then go to prayer. You will find how easy it is then, to be freed of temptations.

*Note: These are just a few ways that come to mind. There are many other ways to become more holy. Ask God, in prayer, to reveal those ways to you.*

*Sr. Mary Francis Power, ESEH  
August 31, 2021*

## St. Vincent de Paul Prayer Person

1. As the prayer person, accompany the case worker whether the visit takes place in the home, church, or by (speaker) phone (or zoom/duo calls). Listen to the dilemmas of neighbors during the intake process, to prepare you for prayer. The intake person is the lead case worker in handling the business matters; however, if there is something you are aware of that the case worker may have inadvertently missed, feel free to offer helpful information you are aware of (example: asking the neighbor if they are aware of the local food pantries, if they need a gas voucher, etc.).
2. When there is a break in the conversation between the case worker and the neighbor, ask the neighbor if they would like to pray with you for a few minutes after the case worker has finished the business, or you can wait to ask this question after the case worker has completed their business. The neighbor almost always accepts the invitation, and typically will comment that they would like to pray with you as well.
3. Once the case worker completes the business, begin to pray with the neighbor. Since you have heard their dilemmas, you already have a good idea of what you need to pray for with them, but always ask what else

they might want to pray for. Invariably they have a sick relative or friend they would like us to pray for. Also ask other family members (who are with them) what they would like to pray for, to involve them in the experience.

4. After they tell you what else they would like to pray for, say "let us begin" and make the sign of the cross, then say the prayers that the Holy Spirit will guide you to say. I usually begin the prayers with, "Heavenly Father, I ask you to lift up this woman (or man or family)" then continue with prayers covering all the areas the neighbor or family needs.

5. The areas you will usually find yourself praying for are improved health, an improved financial situation, finding employment, better relationships, healing, less suffering, for example. Also ask God for "special blessings" for specific people they ask you to pray for.

6. Feel free to pray in any manner you feel you are being moved by the Holy Spirit to pray. I like to end my prayers for other people by saying, "We ask you to hear these prayers in the name of your son, Jesus Christ."

7. Whenever possible, give them an invitation to come to our church and a bulletin, circling the Mass times, RCIA, etc., and answer questions they may have about the church. It is especially important to extend this invitation when the neighbor expresses that they can't seem to find a church they like. I heard this many times.

8. Sometimes they will ask if they can have a Rosary or Bible. Some neighbors may appear to be in a dark place. You can talk about the effectiveness of prayer beads, and that as Catholics we call them Rosaries, which will help them go to a prayerful state of mind. Also provide them with the pamphlet on how to pray the Rosary. Feel free to give them religious items as the Holy Spirit leads you.

9. We only have a few minutes as prayer partners since the neighbors are usually in a hurry, for various reasons. Our praying should take place in a quiet resting location to offer our prayers in a focused and non-distracting way, allowing them the opportunity to hear, feel and receive the Holy Spirit. If they desire more spiritual guidance, hopefully God will provide you the extra time to spend with them.

10. Let the Holy Spirit of God guide you through this process, and if you haven't done this before, you will find it to be extremely rewarding in a very spiritual way as you let God use you to do His work! Actively listen to the Holy Spirit while you are in prayer with them, as he will lay the prayers on your heart, to share with the neighbors. You become the vessel through which He works.

11. You will feel joy and fulfillment as you look into the faces of the people you pray with afterwards, and see their tears of gratefulness, and smiles of appreciation. Some folks have never had anyone pray with them or felt a sense of hope. Many are looking for a church they are comfortable with. Many are lost, suffering and sick.

12. After you pray, end the meeting with well-wishes for them.

*Sr. Mary Francis Power, ESEH  
November 15, 2021*

## NOTES

1. **FUTURE MEETINGS.** All documents listed above, plus the November 13, 2021 recording of the workshop, may be used for district and conference meetings.
2. **FUTURE DISTRICT & CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS.** The above three questions may be broken down into three workshops that may be conducted by districts and conferences, developing additional possible answers to these questions. Or, districts and conferences may create their own questions to be used for workshops, and according to their spiritual developmental needs.
3. **EVANGELIZATION.** We have the opportunity to evangelize to our neighbors, just as St. Vincent de Paul did in his interactions with the poor. Our first priority is to continue to grow in our own spirituality, and following this, in our friendships with fellow Vincentians, and finally, as we serve our “masters,” the “suffering Christ” all around us, who are the neighbors we serve. And it may very well be that this is the primary reason God brings us together with our neighbors, to help them with their spiritual growth, even if it is in some very small way.