



September 2020 – AIC Training

Texts of the videos produced for the Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul

**Humility**  
**Fr. Robert Maloney, CM**

My name is Father Robert Maloney. I'm a Vincentian priest and I've been asked to say a word today about humility, a virtue that St Vincent said should characterize every member of this family.

So today, we all know about passwords. If we don't have a password, we can't get into our computer, so the device that we're using or the programs that we like. And St Vincent said this to the Daughters of Charity, he said: "*Humility, humility, humility. Let that be your password*" (SV XII, 206). And he explained that in talking to the priests of the Congregation of the Mission. He said to them, "*Humility is the foundation of all evangelical perfection. It's the core of the spiritual life. To the humble everything comes, and to those who are not humble, nothing good comes.*" (CR II, 7)

So, what's humility? Well first of all, it's a recognition that I'm a creature, that God made me, and that everything I have is a gift from God. And so humility means that we're grateful in life. We often think of Mary as the model of humility and Mary cries out, "*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God my savior because God ... who is mighty has done great things for me.*" (Luke 1:46-49)

Humility is also a recognition that I'm sinful, that at times my words are harsh, or my judgements are rash, or at times I do things that I shouldn't do, or I don't do the things that I should do. And so I recognize humbly that I'm a sinner.

And humility, especially in the Vincentian tradition, is the attitude of a servant: that I'm willing to get my hands dirty, that I'm willing to take out the garbage, or empty the bedpans of the sick. And so humility is also, and this is true of Mary especially, it's listening, humbly, to the word of God, listening to the cries of the poor, actually hearing what the poor are trying to tell us. Because if we don't hear them, we won't know their real needs, we'll be inventing their needs in our own heads, and won't be responding to what they're crying out for.

So that's a brief picture of humility and I ask the Lord to help all of us to be deeply humble because it's the foundation of all evangelical perfection.