

On behalf of the Board of Directors from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis, I thank you for participating in this Mass, either in person or virtually. Thank you to Bishop Rivituso, Monsignor Witt, Father Jim Cormack and Fr. Nick Smith. We would also like to thank the National Council of the Society for their support. John Heithaus . . . thank you to you and the Vincentian Services team for your work planning this celebratory mass.

And much appreciation to the Old Cathedral – how blessed are we to be at the very place where the Society began on this very day in 1845! This is truly a historic moment.

Across our great country, The Society of St. Vincent de Paul has been present in the daily struggles and in tragedies on the past 175 years that have left many in great need . . . in St. Louis alone . . . the 1849 St. Louis fire, the 1849 cholera endemic, the 1896 “Great St. Louis Tornado,” the 1918/1919 flu epidemic, and more recently, the 1993 floods and the recent tornadoes in Perryville and Jefferson City. Today, of course, our country struggles with racial disparity, recent election issues, and our COVID-19 pandemic.

We forge on. The Society will continue to love and serve as God’s providence allows. St. Paul reminded the Romans of God’s providence for those who love and follow God . . . “All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose”

I thank our Vincentians throughout our United States. *You have been called according to his purpose.* You have been and are silent, humble heroes . . . Seeing Christ in those you serve; heroically giving in service. You persevere in loving our Neighbors as Jesus asked of us.

Sometimes this service in these current times may leave us feeling unsettled and perhaps without peace. No doubt, these are unsettling times. But, I am reminded of the Gospel of John. We read that after the resurrection, Jesus’ disciples were locked behind doors, shuttered in uncertainty and worry. Somewhat like we are today. Christ appeared to them and the first thing he said: “Peace be with you...”

In his book, “*A Primer on Peace*,” Monsignor Stuart Swetland shared a quote: “*The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you.*”

Carry on, Vincentians. Peace be with you. May God continue to lead The Society of St. Vincent de Paul and send us where his grace keeps us.