

The Gift

While talking with a friend one evening, he shared with me how he became a Vincentian. While going for lunch with some work companions, he had walked past a homeless young man and suddenly felt compelled to tell his friends to go on ahead and he would meet them. Then he turned around and asked the young man if he could buy him lunch. The young man said he wasn't welcome in the restaurant and my friend said he would accompany him. They went into the local burger bar and the young man was invited to order anything he wanted. He got two of the biggest cheeseburgers, fries and pop and devoured them as he had not eaten for a while.

My friend told me that chance meeting touched his heart like nothing had touched him before and he went on to answer the call to serve Christ in the poor.

After telling me the story, I quickly said to him I bet it the young man was really St. Vincent de Paul in disguise. I thought to myself about the road to Emmaus when Jesus walked with his disciples in disguise or Hebrews 13.2 "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it."

I reflected on this conversation and thought to myself, we should all remember the story of how we came to be Vincentians. I am willing to wager that most of our stories will be heart-tugging and the person telling his or her story will have tears in their eyes.

This thought led me to further ponder if that first person we helped wasn't a gift from God.

Many walked by that young man my friend told me about and perhaps a few threw him a dime or two. Why did my friend suddenly feel compelled to turn around and personally come to the assistance of this very hungry man? As he unwrapped his gift from God by talking to the young man, a new life began for my friend.

My friend not only fed the young man physically, but he fed him emotionally by showing he cared enough to break bread with him. Let us not forget my friend was fed spiritually by the young man.

This month, reflect on the story of your calling. Ask others to share theirs with you. Then thank God for your gift.

Patricia Bennetto