

HEART & HANDS

GO TOGETHER AS FAR AS POSSIBLE



SPRING BREAK 2011

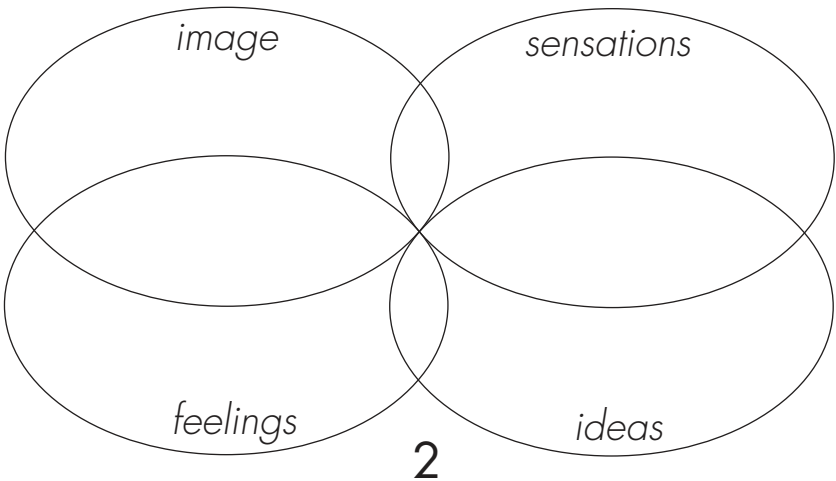
**MONTGOMERY, BLADENSBURG, OKOLONA,
NEW ORLEANS, NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA,
WASHINGTON, CRANKS CREEK**

name _____

Dear Vincentian in Action!

This journal is a tool for **you** to be intentional about the dialogue that happens within your **mind**, *heart* and **spirit** during your Winter Break immersion experience. Take time to listen and reflect upon all you are **seeing**, **feeling**, **thinking** each day. Be creative and fill this space with **images**, *words*, **thoughts**, **stories**...the possibilities are endless!

Each day you might consider the intersection of these 4 areas: images, sensations, feelings, ideas:



2

Spring Break Immersion Trip 2011

If you get stuck here some starter reflection questions for you to consider:

Where did you feel most alive today?

How did you think differently today?

Where did you find hope today?

Who did you meet today? What did you learn from them?

What was the high/low moment of today?

What did you learn about yourself today?

How did you become aware?

What are you grateful for?

What broke your heart today?

How are you Physically, Intellectually, Emotionally, Spiritually?

How were you inspired today?

What did you learn about community?

What struck you today?

How are you growing spiritually?

What did you see, feel, taste, touch hear today?

Where did you feel at home?


What surprised you?

When did you experience joy?

How were your assumptions and stereotypes challenged?

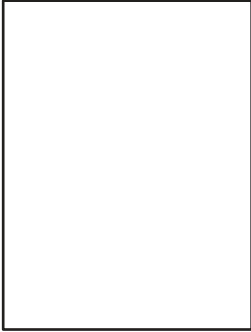
How is your Vincentian heart?

How are you falling in love?

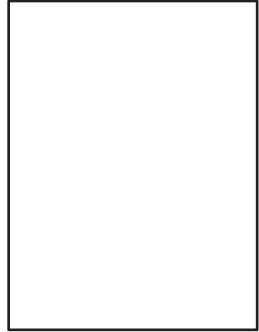


What have each of these persons
or groups taught you about the
people that you will be serving?

RELIGION or SPIRITUALITY



CLOSE FRIENDS



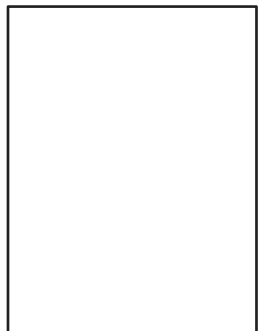
YOUR EDUCATION



FAMILY



THE MEDIA



**Mission Statement for
Spring Break 2010**

St. Vincent's read the reality of his particular moment in history. He discovered the inherent dignity behind the appearances, he saw the unseen and touched it. Through this seeing and touching he became a man committed to transforming the church and society. He became committed to the last, the least, and the lost of society.



“What you are about to undertake is a great work. I pray that our Lord will bless your leadership”

“ If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”-Lilla Watson

“Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we find ourselves treading on another’s dream. More serious still, we may forget...that God was there before our arrival.”

–St. Vincent de Paul

"The spirit of God leads us on gently to do the good which we can reasonably accomplish so that we can do it consistently and for a longer period of time."

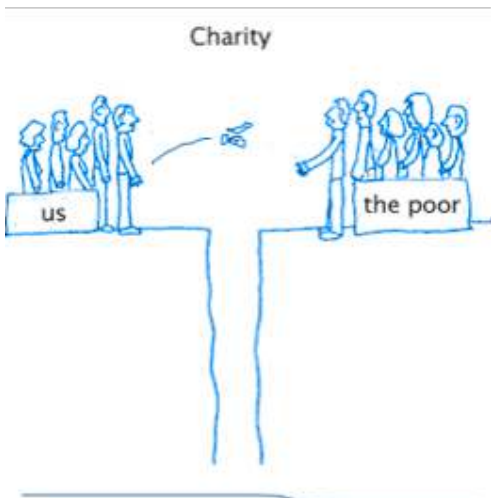
-St. Vincent de Paul

"Wherever there is simplicity there also God is to be found."

–St. Vincent de Paul

“Systemic change thinking affirms that everything is connected to everything else. In order to change the situation of the poor, we must focus not only on one particular problem, like supplying them with food, important as that may be at times, but on the overall circumstances of their lives.

Experience teaches that “quick fix” solutions, while temporarily helpful, prove inadequate in the long run.” - Fr. Robert Malone, C.M.



Justice (Systemic Change)



Dear Spring Break Service Immersion Participant,

Welcome home! After months of preparing your mind, heart, and spirit for this immersion you have now come back home, most likely carrying a little bit of change with you.

Coming back home can especially be challenging especially when family and friends have not had the same VIA experience you have had this past week. We want you to remember and know that you are not alone and that a community welcomes you back.

Because we can't be with you during the return we wanted to share with you some reflection tools that you might use as you begin to unpack the experience and the change within you.

We hope that by going through self-reflexive exercises at various stages of your journey, you can gain additional insights into the kinds of personal changes that your time on the immersion experience has brought about in you. Write your own personal responses to the questions opposite. Be as honest as you can be. Your responses should reflect how you feel right now as you are going through the readjustment process.



*"What we call the beginning is often the end
and to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from."*

-TS Eliot "Little Gidding"

On the bus ride home...



Think back to all the places you name as "home." How do you hope to Bring Change Back home?

What are three things you want to share about your experience?

1)

2)

3)

What were some of the visible signs of hope you witnessed?

How did your heart and hand come together?

Awareness?

Dialogue?

Solidarity?

"Going there, I had no knowledge of what there was to be done. I can say that I saw what was being done only when it was completed."

- St. Louise de Marillac

“Everyone’s story matters. [It is in the telling of our story, over and over, that we come to know who we are and to whom we belong.] We carry with us every story we have ever heard and every story we have ever lived, filed away at some deep place in our memory. We carry most of those stories unread, as it were, until we have grown the capacity or the readiness to read them.”

- Rachel Naomi Remen

Tips for Sharing your Story

Sometimes it is difficult to share the experiences we have had with friends and family who may have never done something similar. It is important to share what you witnessed with those closest to you. Here are some ideas on how to begin...

- Be genuine. Be true to your ideals and your experience.
- Reflect on where your listener is coming from. Ask yourself: “Has this person ever had an experience like I have before? What is my relationship with this person?”
- Ask yourself: Are my parents/friends/coworkers ready to hear what I have to say? Don’t judge!
- Be prepared that some people will need you to tell them the essence of your story in just a few minutes.
- Focus on people you met, not statistics
- Do not take negative reactions or inattentiveness as a judgement of your experience. You know the true worth of what you have lived!
- Understand that no one can validate or legitimate your experience – that is your responsibility.

Don’t forget what you have seen and where you have come from. Remember the importance of sharing the stories that are now a part of who you are.

– adapted from St. Vincent Pallotti Center

Letters to a Young Poet

You are so young,
so much before all beginning,
and I would like to beg you,
as well as I can
to **have patience to everything unresolved in your
heart.**

Try to love the questions themselves-
as if they were locked rooms
that you longed to enter
or books in a very foreign language
that you longed to read.

Don't search for the answers—
which could not be given to you now
because you would not be able to live them
and the point is, to live everything.

Live the questions now.
Perhaps then, someday,
far into the future
you will gradually
without even noticing it
live your way into the answers.
-Rainer Marie Rilke

Begin, Stop, Continue

Share these questions with your group.
-8th Day Center for Justice

**What can we
BEGIN doing?**

**What
can we
STOP
doing?**

**What can we
CONTINUE to do
in a more
INTENTIONAL
way?**

**When/How
will we
evaluate
how
successful
we have
been?**

**What part will
I play in this
effort?**

**How
will
we do
it?**

**When are we
going to do
it?**

**What is one
action we can
do to make
this
issue/problem
more just?**

As you Unpack...



As you unpack your bag from your immersion think about what other gifts you are unpacking from your journey.

By beginning to recognize the gifts that we received from these immersion experiences we come to realize they are now part of ourselves as we carry them with us into our present realities.

What else did you bring back home that didn't fit into your bag?

What change did you bring back home with you?

Shake the "shoulds"

There is no right or wrong way to bring change back home. If you find yourself saying "I should be doing this, I should be feeling that" shake them out!

I Remember...

Sometimes people are fearful that they will forget the significant moments, images or people they encountered during their immersion experience. While the experience is still fresh in your mind and heart take the time to recall the people and places that have become a part of your story. It may just be one word that will remind you of a person or moment. As other memories surface throughout the next months continue to add to this space.

(Idea from From Mission to Mission)

*“When we are dreaming alone, it is only a dream.
When we are dreaming with others, it is the beginning of reality.”*

—Archbishop Dom Helder Camara

ACTION PLAN IDEAS

How do you hope to integrate your VIA experience in your personal daily life?

What ideas do you have to share this experience with others and be a part of systemic change?

"People say, what is the sense of our small effort? They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time."

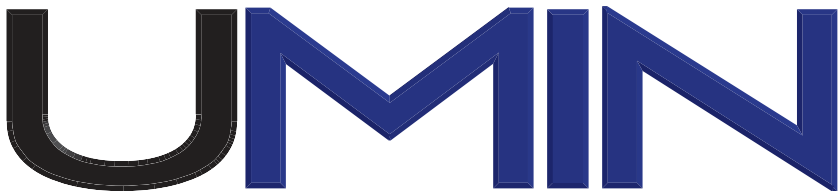
-Dorothy Day

Acknowledgements: Special thanks to Julie Lupien from From Mission to Mission who have other resources on re-entry after immersion experiences: <http://www.missiontomission.org/>



Vincentians in Action (VIA)... was created by a group of students, staff, and faculty to frame theoretically our social and political practice in service and advocacy. Over the years, VIA became a framework implemented by DePaul Community Service Association (DCSA), Service Immersions, Political-Activist organizations and others.

Today, VIA is a Vincentian community that reflects on faith, service, and justice. VIA is more than a strategic way of getting into action. VIA is a way to be, to think, to relate, to celebrate, to act, to grow integrally. VIA is here to teach us, to show us the way, to find common places and points of unity to build a better world through personal, community, and social transformation. In VIA we can find wisdom, the kind of wisdom that anybody from any background can integrate as a personal value. VIA belongs to humanity.



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY MINISTRY | UMIN.DEPAUL.EDU