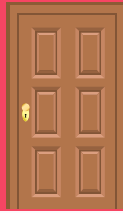




St Vincent
de Paul Society
England and Wales
Turning Concern into Action



Beginning of Year Prayer for Staff

This resource includes accompanying slides, one of which is blank for you to adapt for your school or parish.



Song: 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord) by Matt Redman and Steve Angrisano

Leader:

We gather to listen.

We gather to share.

We gather to be transformed.

We gather as community.

We gather, knowing you are in our midst.

We gather *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (Chapter 25, Verses 36-41).
(This could be read by different people.)

For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you clothed me,
I was sick and you visited me,
I was in prison and you came to me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

Leader: We live in such a busy time, where there is always something to see, to do, or to plan. Do we always have time to see and respond to the needs around us, and if we have the time, which needs do we respond to?

The Greeks have two words for time.

Theologian, Ant Towey, described them like this:

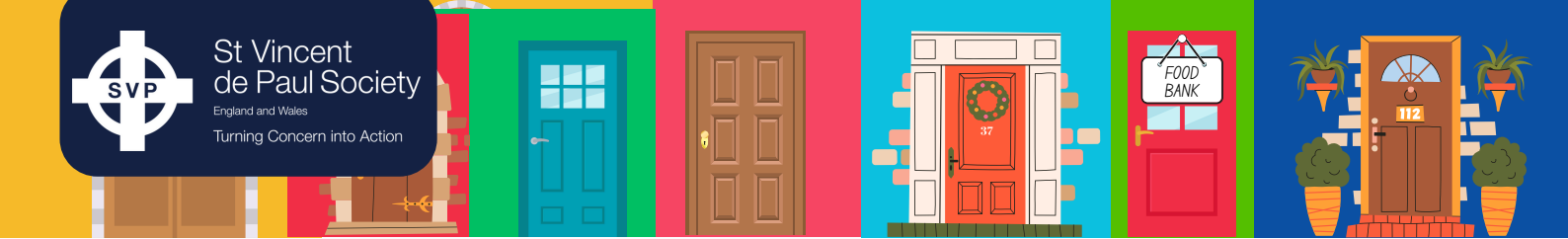
'Chronos' is the tick-tock, business as usual time.

'Kairos' is a special 'appointed time' which snaps us out of our 'business as usual.'

We tend to think of our time in a 'Chronos' mindset. We think of having 24 hours in a day.

We define our work weeks by the number of hours that we work. We have a list of things to do, and only so much time to get everything done. Being conscious of our minutes and seconds is a good thing. We should number our days as the scripture says. Our time on Earth is so brief, and we want to be good stewards of every second that we have, to glorify God while we are here on Earth. But ironically, this 'Chronos' mindset can make us miss so much of what is important.

If you or someone you know needs help from the SVP, go to Info@svp.org.uk



A 'Kairos' mindset can help us notice the special times in life. We can take them in and savour them, and allow them to change the course of our days. The special times are not always the good times. They can be difficult, interrupt our plans, and challenge us in ways we didn't foresee. Certainly, every moment we have is precious, but there are times we live through which are significant.

Every 25 years, we have a Jubilee Year, a moment of significance in the Church when we refocus and open ourselves to special graces. This Jubilee Year is entitled 'Pilgrims of Hope' and starts on 24th December 2024, going through to Epiphany 2026. A symbol of a Jubilee Year is often a Holy Door. Some of you may remember the Doors of Mercy. These doors are entrances into sacred spaces, and in this upcoming Jubilee Year, when our focus will be hope, the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica in Rome will be opened on the 24th December, and people will be invited to make the pilgrimage and journey through it. A pilgrimage is a journey where there is an expectation of meeting God. This year, behind every door we open, we should expect to encounter God.

Some of us may be lucky enough to visit that door in the year ahead, but one door, which you will be blessed to walk through repeatedly over the coming year, is the classroom door. That door, like the Holy Doors, is an entrance to a sacred space where Christ chooses to dwell.

So as we prepare to enter into a Jubilee Year, let's, for a moment, take time to be in silence. What are our hopes for the communities we serve? What are our deep hopes for the staff, students and visitors to our schools?

How do we hope they feel in our sacred spaces?

Use the post it notes to write down your hopes, and when you are ready come and place them on the door. (This might be your staffroom door or an area in which your staff will see this every day.)

Song: Recommended choice to be played during this time--'Stand' by Rebecca St James

Let's use this door as a reminder this year of the sacredness of all that we have been entrusted with. Each time we walk through the door let's be reminded of our hopes and the sacred space we are entering. (You could have a blessing of the door.)

Let us pray:

Loving God, give us strength. Make us kind and patient, loving and understanding. Give us the words and willingness to challenge injustice and wrong when we encounter it. Send us out this week, fired with your love, to work for you in the world and help us to be more caring in our families, at work and at leisure, for love alone gives eternal worth to what we do. Amen.