



St. Vincent de Paul
GEORGIA

To Home Visit or Not to Home Visit

Mike Mies, Executive Director

SPRING TO LIFE 2026 Inspired to **Love**. Called to **Serve**.

Objectives

- Discuss “Personal Encounters”
- Review the History and Purpose of the Home Visit
- Discuss Challenges to Home Visits
- Identify Ways to Get Back to our Home Visit Roots

Opening Prayer



Lord,

The poor and neglected are often without hope;

- *may we bring your peace to those we meet in our Home Visits.*

Teach us to do what is right in simplicity and humility,

- *and to speak with courage and compassion.*

Teach us to go to our Home Visits filled with selflessness and zeal,

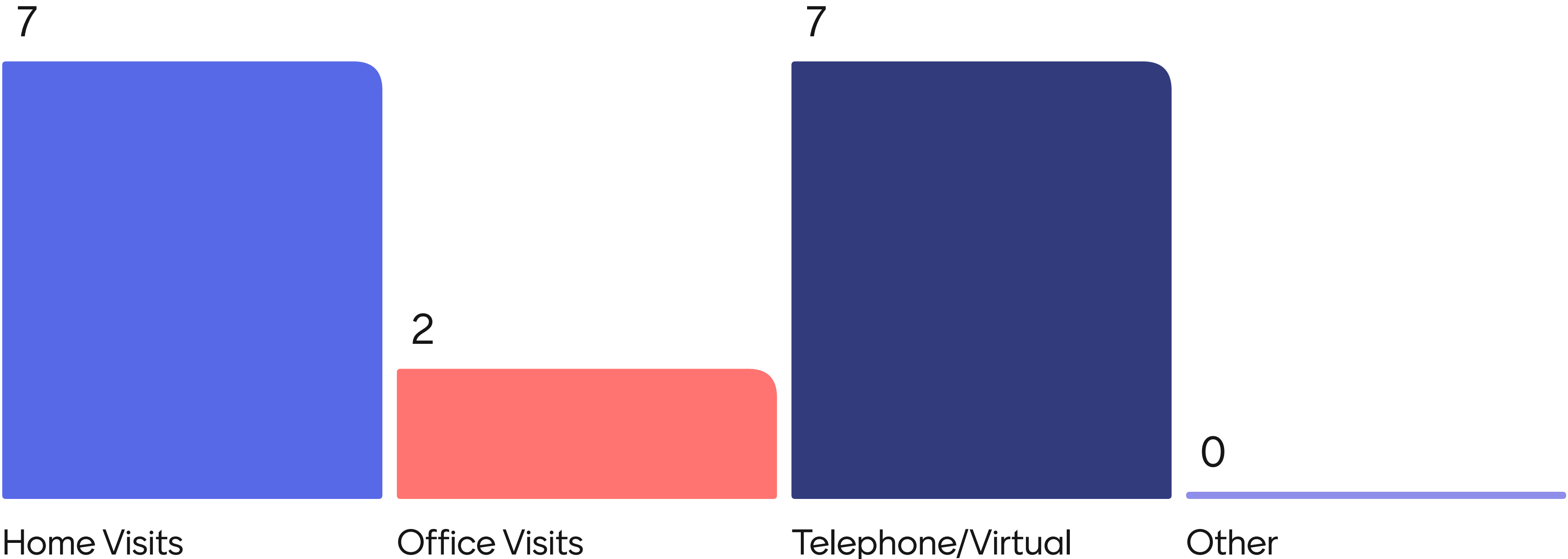
- *filled with the grace of a listening heart.*

Teach us how to embrace our neighbors in gentleness,

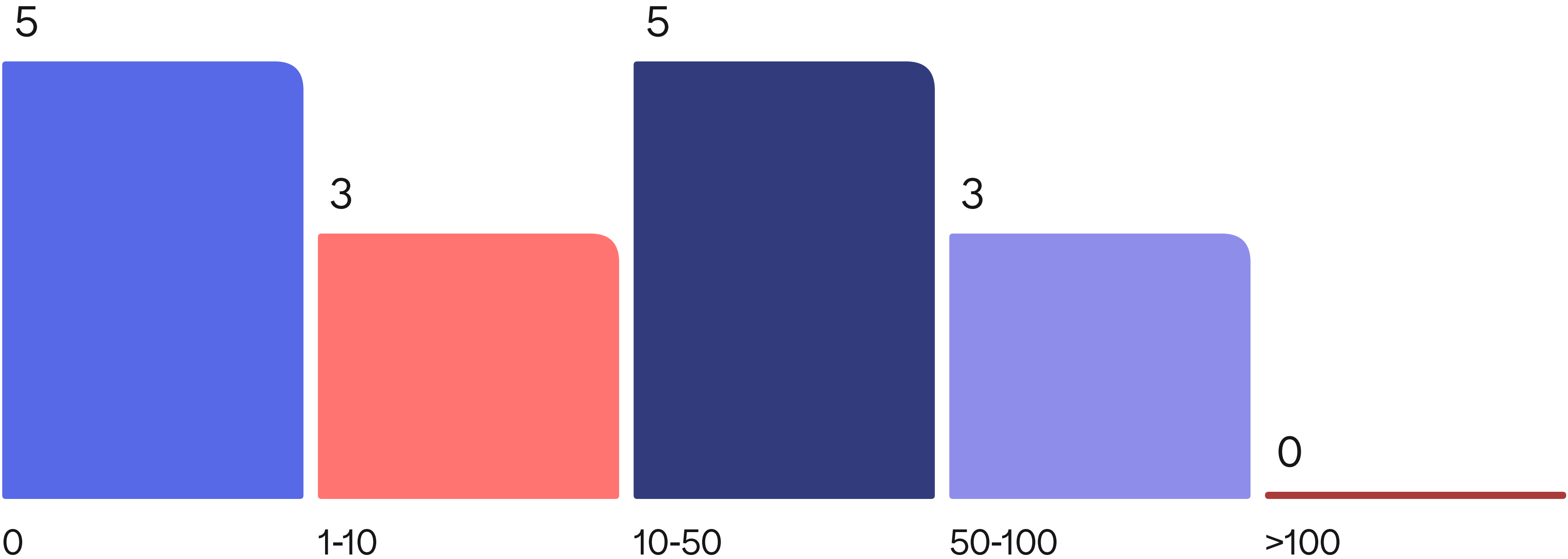
- *recognizing the face of Christ in them.*

Amen.

How does your Conference primarily conduct casework?



How many Home Visits have you been on?



What one word or phrase would you use to describe home visits?

Uncomfortable

Humbling

Personable

Transformational

A game changer-must do!

Making a difference

Humbling

Enlightening.

What one word or phrase would you use to describe home visits?

Humbling

Spiritual and uplifting

Appreciation

Compelling

Blessing, humbling

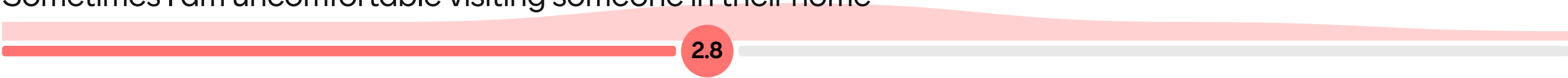
Helpful

Agree or disagree?

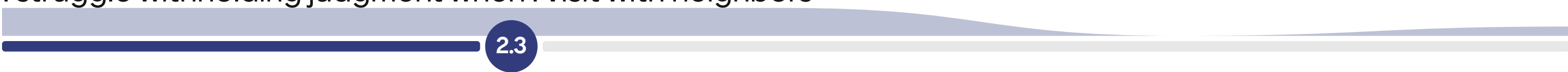
Home visits are almost always a rewarding experience



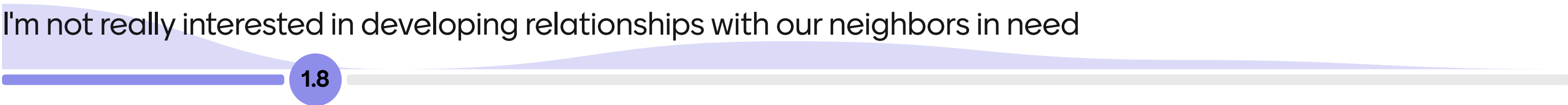
Sometimes I am uncomfortable visiting someone in their home



I struggle withholding judgment when I visit with neighbors



I'm not really interested in developing relationships with our neighbors in need



Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

Our Personal Encounters With The Poor

The Rule, 1.7 – 1.12

- Vincentians pray that the Holy Spirit may guide them **during their visits** and make them channels for the peace and joy of Christ.
- Vincentians serve the poor cheerfully, listening to them and respecting their wishes, helping them to feel and recover their own **dignity**, for we are all created in God's image. In the poor, they see the **suffering Christ**.
- Vincentians endeavor to establish relationships based on **trust** and **friendship**.
- They **do not judge** those they serve. Rather, they seek to understand them as they would a **brother or sister**.
- Vincentians are sincerely concerned with the **deeper needs** and the **spiritual well-being** of those they help..., listening and understanding with their hearts, beyond both words and appearances.
- Vincentians never forget the many **blessings they receive** from those they visit.

How to Encounter our Neighbors?

- The intake call can be a Personal Encounter
- The food pantry visit can be a Personal Encounter
- Meeting at a church office or public location can be a Personal Encounter
- Visiting our Neighbor where they live is the ideal Personal Encounter



The Origin of the Home Visit



Frédéric Ozanam



Emmanuel Bailly



Francois Lallier



Jules Deveaux

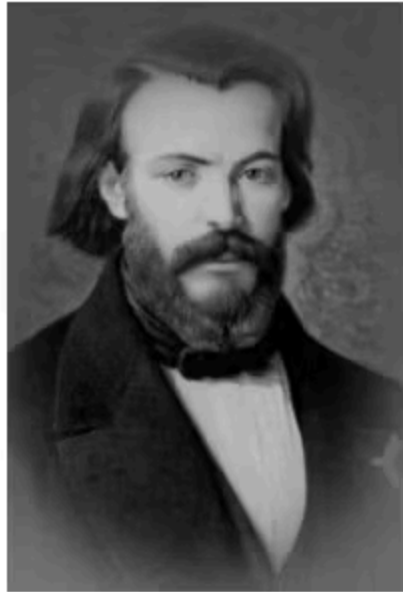


Auguste Le Taillandier



Paul Lamache

The Origin of the Home Visit



Frédéric Ozanam



Francois Lallier



Auguste Le Taillandier

The Origin of the Home Visit

“I am sending you two young men.... Their charity is spirited, but they are young and impetuous. They have already committed themselves to certain praiseworthy acts but in little harmony with their possibilities. They need direction. You alone, my mother, are qualified to guide them.”

Emmanuel Bailly



The Origin of the Home Visit

God has already given you spiritual wisdom or you would not be sacrificing your precious free day to His poor. Because you see Christ in His poor, I know you will approach each one you visit with humility as His servant.

Be kind and love, for love is your first gift to the poor. They will appreciate your kindness and your love more than all else you can bring them.

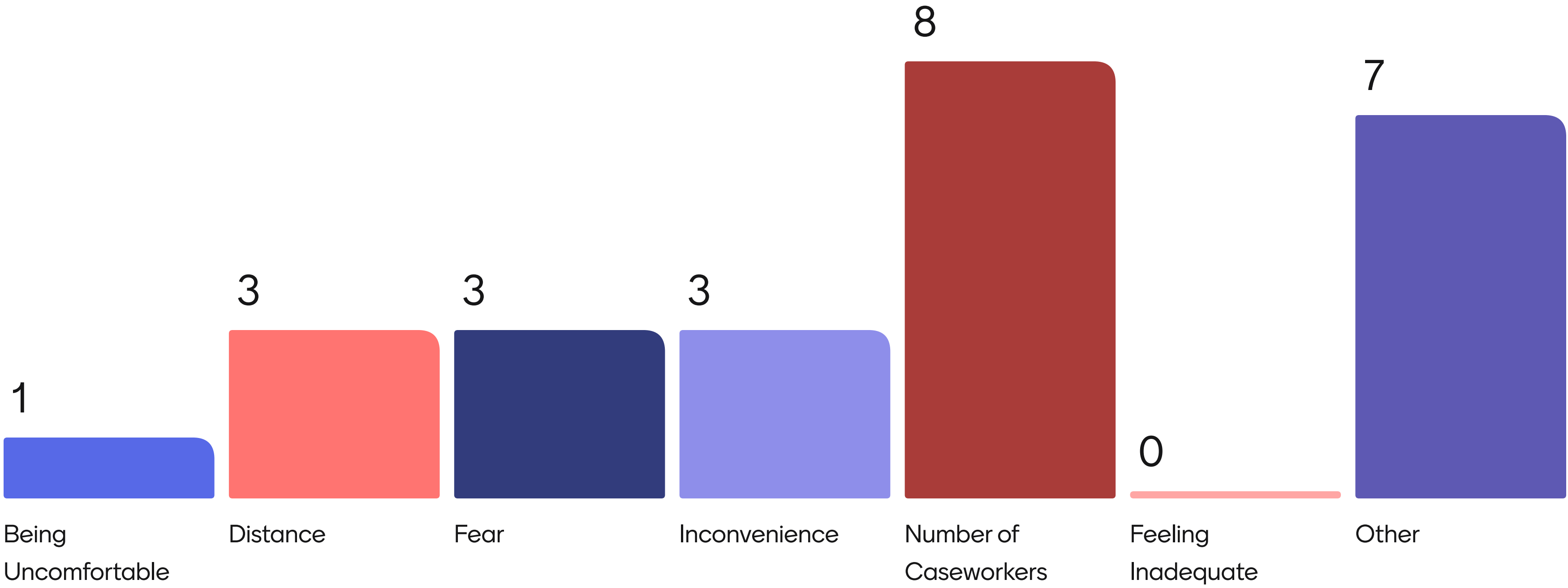
Note from Sr. Rosalie to Frederic Ozanam, 1833



Why Home Visit?

- Give Vincentian loving presence to people in crisis
- Respect the dignity of our Neighbors
- Establish a trusting relationship with the family or individual so that Vincentians can find ways to mentor and support
- Fully understand our Neighbor's situation and circumstances
- Accommodate our Neighbors' schedule and situation

The main obstacles to home visits in my Conference are...



Overcoming Challenges to Get Back to our Home Visit Roots

How to Home Visit: Tips & Talking Points

Explain to the Neighbor what will happen on a Home Visit.

"We visit in pairs to discuss how we could help."

"We'll listen and put our heads together."

Exchange introductions, pleasantries.

Set a friendly rapport: cordial, pleasant, kind, respectful guest in their home.

Comment on something in the room, a child, an interesting name...

Maybe you have a joke about your own name / nickname.

Point out something you have in common – number of children, sports team

Explain how the Society receives funding to correct any misperceptions.

"We pass the basket at church once a month, then spend what we have available."

How to Home Visit

Primary: Encourage conversation about their history and ours to establish mutual trust.

Tell me more about what's happening and why you reached out.

Stay fully present even if their story wanders.

Allow them to express negative feelings.

Express empathy: *"I know it must hurt." ... "I know that it's difficult."*

Reassure that you know how difficult this is to share.

Secondary: Observe conditions and needs of the household (both habitat and people).

What's missing? Are conditions unsafe or unsanitary?

Are disabilities or long-term illnesses being addressed?

Are there signs of abuse, manipulation, or neglect?

"Go with your gut and err on the side of caution." – Christa Frye

How to Home Visit

Actively listen and remain aware of body language.

Maintain eye contact and nod your head.

Repeat back what the person is saying.

Ask questions.

“How’s that working for you?”

Gently refocus on the biggest obstacle we can address.

“What were you looking for when you reached out?”

“I heard you say a moment ago... Let’s go back to that.”

Avoid sending out signals of impatience: checking your watch, hurrying through the conversation, leading with the clipboard.

How to Home Visit

Do not do for another person what that person can do for themselves.

Invite Self-sufficiency and their input on a plan.

Maintain a calm, easy-going manner so they don't feel grilled or judged when asked questions.

"Tell me about your strengths and the kind of work you like to do."

"What have you tried?"

"Who else could help you? ... What can I do to bridge that relationship?"

Only commit to what you can complete.

Share other resources that are available in the community.

"Have you heard about [XYZ Community Service]?... Would you like an introduction?"

Discernment

“Holy Indifference”

- What are the subjective / objective facts?
- What are the events and circumstances?
- What are my feelings and intuition?
- How is God speaking through events?
- How is God speaking through people?
- Is the decision reasonably clear, rooted in peace, just and compassionate?
- Does the decision empower the neighbor?

How to Home Visit

1. Visit in pairs and arrive together.
2. Pray before knocking.
3. Exchange introductions, pleasantries.
4. Explain how the Society receives funding to correct any misperceptions.
5. Encourage conversation about their history and ours to establish mutual trust.
6. Observe conditions and needs of the household (*both habitat and people*).
7. Actively listen and remain aware of body language.
8. Invite Self-sufficiency and their input on a plan.
9. Only commit to what you can complete.
10. Share other resources that are available in the community.
11. Offer to pray together.
12. Debrief as a pair.

