

Vol. 3 No. 2

Fall Edition

November 2009

## The Morning Report

Greetings, everyone! I do this report in the morning with a cup of coffee and see many of your faces in my mind's eye as I write, so won't you join me for a cup?

We have had a very busy few months, haven't we? Calgary Central Council has just celebrated Ozanam Day with a great crowd and wonderful workshops. The housing project is in the process of being filled and the conferences are preparing for Christmas hampers along with a very high call for home visits.

Edmonton Central is preparing for their first annual retreat in December and is also busy with home visits.

West Particular has applied for institution, and a new conference has been formed in Vegreville.

Henry Siwak of Prince Albert, SK, Bob McKeon of Edmonton, AB, and Gerry Moore of Winnipeg, MB, attended a formation meeting in Ottawa for the National Advocacy



Western Regional attendees at the AGA in Kitchener/Waterloo.

Committee in October. It is nice to have a member from each province. I am off to Ottawa for the National Council Board meeting this month and then to Winnipeg and Regina in December. I enjoy meeting with you in person and helping in any way I can.

In September I was in Yellowknife to assist in the screening process. The National Executive also came that weekend to hold their meeting and meet with the conference. We all enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of the staff at Trapper's Lake, Sister Mary Jo and the Conference of St Patrick's.

This summer Daryl Dittrich went up to Tuktoyuktuk to do some building repairs to St Joseph Conference's new store, which is the old rectory. In the fall, a committee was formed at the regional level dedicated to assisting the far north of the

Northwest Territories. The committee is constantly collecting items to send up to Tuk and I thank the two central councils for their generosity in storing these items until they are shipped. Eileen Orysiuk has been elected chair of the committee and brings a lot of knowledge of available resources to this position. I admire her energy.

St Timothy Conference in Winnipeg has stepped up to host our 2010 Western AGA. Please give them all of your support and make plans to attend. Winnipeg is such a beautiful city, so full of history.

We are blessed to have two retreats this year – one in Edmonton in December and our annual retreat at Mount St Francis in Cochrane, AB. If you have never been to a Vincentian retreat, this is the year to change that. It recharges our spiritual batteries in between the AGAs.

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Toronto Central Council and Ontario Regional Council are hosting the 2010 National AGA in Toronto next June. It promises to be an extraordinary gathering.

I'm still looking for a secretary after 2-½ years. It would make our board meetings much better to have someone take the minutes. Please consider this. Your expenses would be taken care of.

This is your newsletter; please send your articles for our next issue in the month of Love – February.

This will be our last newsletter of 2009, so may I take this opportunity to wish all of you a blessed, peaceful, joy filled Christmas from all of us at the Western Regional Council.

Respectfully,  
**Patricia Bennetto**, President  
Western Regional Council

### Upcoming Events

Sat, December 12, 2009  
SSVP Retreat Day of Prayer  
& Reflection

Good Shepherd Parish Hall  
18407 - 60 Avenue, Edmonton, AB

January 15 – 17, 2010  
Annual SSVP Retreat  
Mount St Francis – Cochrane, AB

Fri & Sat, May 28 & 29, 2010  
Western Regional  
Annual General Assembly  
Winnipeg, MB  
Hosted by St Timothy Conference

Wed - Sun, June 9 – 13, 2010  
National AGA  
Ryerson University – Toronto, ON  
Hosted by Toronto Central Council  
& Ontario Regional Council

August 15, 2010  
Feast Day of  
Our Lady of the Assumption  
Patronness in Canada of SSVP

September 9, 2010  
Blessed Frederic Ozanam  
Feast Day

September 27, 2010  
Saint Vincent de Paul  
Feast Day

## Address to the Western Regional Assembly at St Bonaventure Parish, Calgary (May 23, 2009)

–by Don Hunter – WRC President, 1997-2002

I would like to thank you all for inviting me to your 25th anniversary celebration of the Society of St Vincent de Paul in Calgary. I am honoured and would certainly be there to celebrate with you if I was in town. However, May 23rd is our 50th wedding anniversary, and all our family are converging on a resort in Osoyoos where we will also be celebrating an anniversary today as well.

However, I have been asked to give you a little background on the Society during the early years from my experience, so here goes.

It is so appropriate to be holding this at St Bonaventure, because they were the first conference formed in Alberta in recent times, and also where we held the first AGM of the Western Regional Council when it was formed.

**Chuck Heffernan**, a Vincentian who came from Toronto to this parish, was surprised there were no conferences in Calgary, so proceeded to set up one in his parish. He then continued to set up five or six more, and the first Particular Council, before he retired to Kelowna in about 1989. He was our Johnny Appleseed for the SSVP in the West.

**Brian Sipe** was the first Particular Council president, and as his vice president, I took on the responsibility for Extension of the Society in Calgary and southern Alberta.

We continued to grow in conferences and councils in Calgary and southern Alberta, so in 1997 we applied to form a Regional Council to represent Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. The National Council approved our application, and I was voted to be the first Western Regional Council president. Sounds impressive, but to be honest, the other two candidates backed out just before the vote, so I swept into office

with an overwhelming majority.

I really enjoyed my five years as Western president, especially travelling to all the cities and towns in our region and meeting so many wonderful people. I always felt so rewarded when we were able to start up a new conference. There were some disappointments of course, but the successes always outweighed them.

My two most reliable companions and fellow travellers to give the talks and help grow the Society were **Tony** and **Lynn L'Heureux**. Without their help and companionship I would not have been nearly as successful with our Extension results. I think back and chuckle at some of the situations we encountered.

We of course tried to keep our expenses to a minimum, so on one trip to Blairmore we ended up sharing the one motel room for the three of us. I remember the look on Lynn's face, and I don't think Tony was too keen either, but we worked it out and all survived with our dignity.

On another trip to Morinville to make a presentation, we stayed overnight with the priest. In the evening we all watched a *Flames* – *Oilers* playoff game, and of course enthusiastically cheered for the *Flames*. I think we forgot we were in *Oilers* country and I am sure Father was wondering about our love of mankind, so we convinced him we really love our northern neighbours, just not the *Oilers*.

One of our greatest supporters was Bishop **Tom Collins**, who invited us to speak at his priests' council meeting in St Paul, and we stayed with him that night, at his residence, when he was Bishop of St Paul diocese. About a year later, he was appointed Archbishop of Edmonton archdiocese, and he helped us again as he told us he wanted every parish in his diocese to have a SSVP

conference.

We decided to set up an evening in a parish in Edmonton to talk about our Society and also have several Catholic musicians perform. It was attended by representatives from parishes in the diocese, and Archbishop Collins was our key speaker, and did a great job of supporting us. I really feel that one of the main reasons that Edmonton has done such a good job of expanding was because of Bishop Collins' support.

We had a great session at the Bible College in Radway, where we also had **Dennis Grady** along, a local Catholic musician, who sang and played his guitar. Lynn can make you cry with some of her stories and Tony will crack you up with his jokes. A great combination.

But one of the times we still chuckle about is when we went up to Inuvik, NWT, to talk at a CWL convention. I gave my talk to the ladies, and also at the Saturday evening Mass at the igloo-shaped church, Our Lady of the North, I think it was. But Lynn, always looking for opportunities, had lined up a talk to the students at the local high school. For some reason, my intuition told me that this was not too good an idea, so I elected to join two priests and take a trip on the ice road to visit the parish up in Tuktoyuktuk, an Inuit village on the coast of the Beaufort Sea. It was a great experience and I learned a lot, so when telling the L'Heureuxs about it, I asked how the high school visit went.

I could tell from the look on their faces they were not enthused, so Tony told me it was a rather shocking experience – and this coming from a retired police officer.

Apparently some of the students seemed to have little restraint on what language they used in critiquing one another, and as gently as I can say it, four-letter words seemed to be a big part of their vocabulary. The teacher seemed to be helpless to control them, or maybe she was just used to it. Needless to say, this was not the normal reception we get when

talking at parishes, and I am sure Tony and Lynn still laugh when they think back about that day.

I would like to say that I am so impressed with how the Society has grown since my term ended in 2002, under the leadership of Lynn L'Heureux and Pat Bennetto, as Regional presidents, and also by all the council and conference members who have worked so hard to start up new initiatives.

I know that most of you are doing the good works of helping our friends the poor in whatever way you can. But I also want you to consider helping with the Extension of the Society as well. It does not mean you have to go to Inuvik or Winnipeg or some distant place, for that is the role of the Regional Council, but if a neighbouring parish has no SSVP conference, then meeting with that priest, and their Parish Council if need be, and hopefully getting them started is so rewarding.

Remember, without the work of Extension, St Bonaventure Conference would never have been formed, and likely there would be no conferences or councils at all in our entire region, much like it was in 1980.

Today, I don't think we exist in more than 20% of the parishes in our region, if that, so there is still much to do and many who need help. So I ask all of you who feel this calling of being a Vincentian is strong and spiritually rewarding to you, do consider continuing on and being part of the senior councils when you can, and consider running for president of the Western Region when Pat has completed her term. I guarantee you will really enjoy it, as you get to make friends, not just in our region, but also meet many great Vincentians from coast to coast in this great country.

Thank you again for your invitation, and hoping you all have a great time at this 25th Anniversary celebration. May God bless you all.

Your Vincentian brother,  
**Don Hunter**

## Twinning Update

–by *Patricia Bennetto*



**W**estern Region has twinned with Le Conseil du Departement du Nord: Conseil Saint François de Sales, the northern regional council in Haiti. Haitians are some of the most destitute peoples in the world. The Society desperately needs our help to make a difference in the lives of the poor there. For example, a home visit hamper may currently only have a small bag of rice. Please keep our brothers and sisters in Haiti in your prayers.

Our twin in the Dominican Republic, the National Council of the Dominican Republic, wants to build a home for the poor and homeless elderly and has asked for our assistance with funding. In this country there is no pension for seniors and once they are too weak or sick to work. If they have no family to care for them, they become homeless and destitute. We are hoping to receive donations from our Western Regional conferences and councils to send to the National Council to assist in this special project.

If your council or conference has not already done so, please consider applying for a twin. As you can see just from the two twins Western Region has, the need is great. For those of you who do have twins, maybe send them a Christmas card and remember to keep them in your prayers.

# Response to the National AGA ...

## Theme of 2009 AGA *Inspiring*

—by Lynn L'Heureux, Calgary

**W**hat was the best of AGA 2009? That question is easy. The best is the people who attend – sharing information, concerns and good times with other Vincentians. It is the one place you can go where everyone knows what you are talking about and can relate – where you can re-energize, knowing you are never alone.

I was really only able to attend two workshops due to meetings and presenting my own workshops. My favourite workshop was the theme development by Fr Joe Quinn from Windsor, Ontario.

### 2 loaves + 5 fish + Vincent =?

This was the theme of our AGA. It is a great statement to place before the Vincentians at your conferences. We should remember that this theme will be our theme all year through and we should try to always reflect on it in our meditations, spirituals and reports. This theme is chosen by National so that we are all moving in one direction as family. This theme is so rich and leads to many conclusions. Try asking your Vincentians and see the different interpretations.

Father Quinn developed the theme from Scripture. He read each Gospel from quite a modern translation. Each Gospel writer had a different inflection. We also learned that it is the only story that is in all four Gospels. Father spoke without notes, which I had remembered about him. I told him I was writing up his presentation so that it could be given to others for a workshop. He said, "Please send it to me, I'd love to see what I said." He spoke with such authority and yet gently. You could see the love of Jesus and the love for Vincentians in his wonderful presentation.

One of his statements was, "Jesus was a marvellous teacher, but He has the worst class in history." That is why we have to keep learning and learning and praying and praying. Fr Joe is a marvellous teacher and he also may think that he often has the most pitiful learners, but he keeps on teaching, just as Jesus, and one day we will get it. Alleluia!

Another aspect of the theme was developed by Msgr Schonenbach and that was the number 7, in the equation  $5 + 2 = 7$ . The number seven is very rich in the bible and one could explore each 7: the tribes of Israel, deadly sins, gifts of the spirit are a few. This is also something I hope to develop into a spiritual programme for conferences.

Another Board member from National, Yvon Bussieres, is a most outstanding speaker and I wish I understood French better when he speaks. He is a great addition to the National Board as Spiritual Rep. He also gave his report on the spiritual committee and developing the theme, and also spoke of the number seven. One of the cute memorable statements for me was: "Yes,  $5 + 2 =$  equals 7. You know all about 7 and we all love to be in 7th heaven." He of course developed a more serious reflection on this, but I liked that line. It reminds me of our work as Vincentians. We answer the call, we pray and we don't know what to expect. We visit and then leave and pray and we often find ourselves in a euphoria which we can describe as "7th heaven."

The other highlight for me was the wonderful report our president, Pat Bennetto, gave to the AGA National Council. She glowed as she was reporting the wonderful work we do at WRC and I felt very proud to be a part of the Western Regional Council.

Next year's AGA is in Toronto, which is a wealth of knowledge. Plan now to go. Each Particular Council President gets a vote as well as Central Council and

Regional Council. You should be planning and budgeting for yourself or a proxy to attend from June 9 – June 13, 2010, at Ryerson University in the heart of Toronto.

Blessings to all,  
Lynn L'Heureux

## Kitchener AGA *An Enriching Experience*

—by Carolynne Browne, Edmonton

**I**t's with a humble and a grateful heart that I want to thank the Central Council of Edmonton for allowing me to attend the National AGA in Kitchener. The whole conference was a very enjoyable and enriching experience. I enjoyed meeting new friends from right across Canada. It was very encouraging to see so many people dedicated to helping God's poor. It was also great to get to know some of the Vincentians from Edmonton on a bit more personal level.

The workshops I did attend were very well presented and very informative. Some highlights:

### HOMELESSNESS - Daniel Cullen

- We have to meet the homeless where they are at and help them to get where they're going.
- People have to be told how good they are not how bad they are. We have to earn and keep their respect.
- Most street people come from a traumatic mind set; they are often mentally and emotionally challenged, which often leads them to addictions.
- Daniel was homeless himself and is now helping the homeless to find self respect and get off the street.

### THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE HOME VISIT - Val Getson & Maureen MacIsaac

- Only when we are better friends with our Lord can we be friends of God's poor.

- Our acts of kindness must be done in humility.
- Only speak of religion when it comes up naturally.
- We visit the poor in their homes as if we were visiting Jesus. ("Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, this you do unto me.")
- What am I to do for them and what am I to learn? Do not assume what they need; possibly ask for some of their likes or dislikes.
- When our friends thank us, we should respond: "Thank you for having us into your home."

#### RECRUITMENT & RENEWAL -

Lynn L'Heureux

- Who are we? New members must feel they belong. We must be open to their ideas, mentor them until they're comfortable. Be up front with them about what is expected of them.
- Be transparent, step out of the box and join with other organizations.
- Always send thank-you letters to groups who have helped us.
- Put reports about what we have done for the poor in our area in our bulletins and other parishes bulletins in our area.
- Communicate with other groups in the church, e.g., Youth Group, for possible help or perhaps forming a SSVP Youth Group. Encourage R.C.I.A. candidates to consider SSVP to live out their faith in action. Communicate with the Prayer Group for special prayer requests, and with our parish priest to approach people he feels could help us and refer them to us.
- Ask about a float in a parade (possibly with another conference). Get some air time on radio or TV.

I found the business end of the conference very enlightening. We purchased a house in Ottawa for our head office, which was voted in unanimously. I thought this was a wise decision instead of renting. I also agreed with raising the contributions to \$2,000 a year from \$1,000 a year for twinning. I will have to consult with our conference to look at twinning in the fall.

Our trip to the *Oktoberfest* in June was fun and enjoyable.

Mass at Church of Our Lady Immaculate in Guelph was a very spiritual experience; the church was very beautiful. This was followed by a very delightful banquet.

The only concern, but by no means a complaint, would be the food, especially breakfast and lunch. I feel it could have been a bit simpler. The food was great but just maybe a bit too much.

Respectfully submitted

*Carolynne Brown*

## AGA 2009

### *A Spiritual Lift*

—by *Jean Claude & Monika Jette*,  
Edmonton

Since we were able to arrive on Wednesday, we had time to settle in and find the various locations before beginning what I would consider an information filled time. It is good to be able to recharge one's batteries. I believe we all need to reflect on why we do things and see that, although we think we do very little, the overall impact does have some effect, and meeting with people of like minds from all over the country sheds light on what is possible.

The workshop I got the most out of was given by **Daniel Cullen** of the Hope Coalition. He really explained about marginalization, stigmatization, and institutionalization. Using his own life experiences, he enlightened us about addiction, mental and emotional challenges, as well as the economic challenges so apparent to us all. Through using peer support, reducing harm (like offering safe places to exchange needles), forging an alliance with people, being regular, i.e., dependable, we can reinforce the good in them. The most important thing we can do is listen.

I also attended the workshop on the spirituality of home visits. The chief of question that was

addressed was how to see Christ in the person visited. Because the attendees represented all the regions of our country, the different ways visits could be conducted was brought forth. It was really helpful to see what was being done, and what could be done, even though as a rule I do not go on home visits.

Advocacy and charitable status had never connected in my mind. To advocate also means to speak for or to represent. To be able to claim charitable status makes that position easier, financially. Now that the organization has been able to purchase a central location, not only does the administration have a permanent home for its archives, but also the property can be used to generate income. Having resources in one location makes ministering to the poor easier on the volunteers.

I also attended the workshop on "Beyond the Voucher." It stressed asking the client what he prefers and then really listening to the answer. It may be a question of storage or dietary needs. It is better to show a client how to help himself than to care for his immediate and continuing needs.

Our hosts kept us well fed and entertained, eating meals at the large tables and promoting informal get-togethers. There was even a special *Oktoberfest* celebration, complete with the opening of the keg at the Concordia Club.

The closing banquet took place at RIM Park. The music was geared to a very young audience. The band was good, but much too loud for me.

What I enjoyed most of all is the spiritual feeling. Every morning opened with Mass and the saying of the Rosary. The final Mass was celebrated at the Church of Our Lady. It was really impressive to see all present rededicate themselves. The building was of particular interest to me because it is a small replica of the Cathedral of Cologne, in my home town.

# CIRCULAR LETTER

*from* President General José Ramón Díaz-Torremocha

Paris, June 30th, 2009

Dear friends and fellow-members,

This year, if we want to help in bettering the world, when it is suffering such a serious situation of economic and financial uncertainty, the President General, to whom you have entrusted responsibility for the Council General, cannot, must not and would not wish to forget so many families whose situation has worsened.

Throughout the 175 years of our existence, ever since the birth of the Conferences, wherever we have practised our vocation, with truly humble means but always with great determination, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has constantly strived to adapt to changing times.

The current times are no exception to this rule. The enormous and profound economic and financial crisis that is currently affecting the whole of our highly interdependent and globalised international economy must not be forgotten in the service that we owe to the poor. In other words, our Conferences cannot and must not exist without constant concern for the suffering that this new situation is causing among the weakest of our brothers and sisters.

The greed of a few, a lack of business ethics and a search for quick profits over and above any moral considerations, in short, sin itself and also the structures of sin<sup>1</sup> have brought despair and suffering to millions of people all over the world. This is particularly true in the developed world; however, it has a domino effect on all economies due to the globalisation that I mentioned earlier. This profound economic and financial crisis is driving millions of people all around the world into unemployment and family hardship.

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(1) It is nevertheless an indisputable fact, as I have often pointed out, that the interdependence of social, economic and political systems creates multiple structures of sin in today's world. (Catechesis of Jean Paul II, Audience of Wednesday 25th August 1999).

Furthermore, the number of people living in poverty and suffering has been added to by many who just a few months ago were able to control their financial situation with relative ease and were even able to devote part of their income to helping others in need in their own country or in other, poorer parts of the world.

I am particularly concerned about the effect of this global crisis on those who were already very poor at the start<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, the wealthier economies which have, until now, been able to help less developed countries, either through government channels, associations or at a purely individual level, may have to reduce or even suspend this kind of aid. Aid which is so necessary to the world's poor. The crisis could have a devastating effect on large parts of the world.

For this reason, the poor are now poorer and their suffering is greater, wherever they may live. The challenge to reduce poverty, taken up a few years ago by various international organisations, now appears more and more remote each day. As a result of the current crisis, the number of people who lack the most basic resources has not decreased, as was hoped, but instead increased.

The Conferences and their supervising Councils, wherever they provide their services, must now think very seriously about how they are dealing with the effects of the global crisis. They must look at how they can help to fight its effects, no matter how modestly, without forgetting its auses. In other words, we must purposefully concern ourselves with the people who need immediate and urgent help with basic necessities. There can be no doubt about this. However, at the same time we must also think about the future and seek to change the situation in which they are living. It is true that Conferences must

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(2) In a recent report, the World Bank estimated that during the year 2009 the number of people living on less than 2\$ a day will increase by 53 million.

always direct their efforts towards changing the lives of the poor but this is especially important now when even extreme poverty is affecting people who just a few months ago had comfortably secure lives and could even provide help to others, as I mentioned before.

Indeed, if we work together in the hands of such a large institution as the Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul, we will be able to find countless ways of tackling the effects of this global crisis. However, this will only happen if we are generous and determined enough to use and share all our resources, if we are able to dream and find ways of realising our dreams.

During my travels around the world, visiting fellow-members and Conferences, I have seen places where this ability to dream, so alive ever since the beginnings of the first Conferences, has led to the creation of small businesses, modest businesses, which have nonetheless created thousands of jobs throughout the world. It is true that these jobs are humble, but they have succeeded in saving many human beings from situations of extreme poverty.

Now is the time to spread hope, but it must be active hope, as the Holy Father reminded us in his recent Message to the Young<sup>3</sup>. A hope that

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(3) My dear friends, follow the example of Paul and be witnesses to the Risen Christ! Make Christ known, among your own age group and beyond, to those who are in search of "the great hope" that would give meaning to their lives. If Jesus has become your hope, communicate this to others with your joy and your spiritual, apostolic and social engagement. Let Christ dwell within you, and having placed all your faith and trust in him, spread this hope around you. Make choices that demonstrate your faith. Show that you understand the risks of idolizing money, material goods, career and success, and do not allow yourselves to be attracted by these false illusions. Do not yield to the rationale of selfish interests. Cultivate love of neighbour and try to put yourselves and your human talents and professional abilities at the service of the common good and of truth, always prepared to "make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you" (1 P 3:15). (Benedict XVI, Message to the Young, 22nd February 2009).

will enable us to work for others, to give them what they need from us: help to find a decent way of life and recover the personal dignity that they have so often lost.

We must never forget, dear fellow-members, that each poor person who remains in poverty after receiving the fellowship and help of the Conferences, any such continuity, should be experienced by each member, each Conference and each Council as a painful failure in our vocation<sup>4</sup>. Our vocation must be bound to the utopia of eliminating poverty, never limited to providing temporary relief. However, we should not forget that, to our great sorrow, such relief is at times the immediate and sole solution. Nevertheless, we must always dream of strengthening the potential of each human being that we meet, of helping them to overcome the situation in which they find themselves.

“To serve in hope” of the Conferences, and the Councils that unite them, must always seek to provide liberation and overcome the situations of poverty that are brought to our knowledge<sup>5</sup>. It is not and never has been enough to fight only the effects of this suffering without committing ourselves to the ongoing battle against its causes. It is true that we have limited resources. However, the resources that we do have must be used unreservedly to serve towards liberating those that suffer. Indeed, only in this way can we be true followers of Christ, He who suffers in the man in whom he is reflected.

By way of example, how many Conferences and Councils have financial reserves set aside, misled by the promise of future services to the



poor which so often never materialise?<sup>6</sup> Those that have such reserves, part with them now! Use them in real and direct service to the poor, use them to provide modest solutions to those that need them.

How often do we talk about micro-credits as

a truly dignified salvation for so many families? How many micro-credits, how many grants for small businesses could we provide with our reserves, thereby creating jobs and preventing the destruction of others? These reserves that are kept for the poor but so often fail to reach them. I have no doubt that the Conferences and Councils that are currently hoarding financial resources, whatever they may be, rather than fighting to change the situation of the poor, are perpetuating a sinful situation for which the Good Lord will call us to strict account. Those that behave in this way are maintaining a situation as unfair as that created by those who have brought the world to its current predicament through selfishness and malpractice. Obviously, we will not cause as much harm as they have caused. That is true. However, we will not be doing all the good that is within our reach.

My dear friends, it is not only anonymous financiers and obscure entities that are guilty for causing the distressing situation that we find ourselves in. The guilt also lies with those of us who forget the strength that we have in He who remains by our side, those who cease to act as He would wish: with generosity and with all our intellectual and material resources, to fight the suffering that is to be found nearby and further afield, without keeping anything back for the future when so many people are suffering now.

Above all, we should do this through social projects that employ paid staff, wherever they may be. We must not

only guarantee the jobs of those who are already employed. We must go further and work to hire others so that they can receive the benefits of a decent and dignified job.

This year, dear fellow-members, my Circular Letter is shorter than in other years. It does not need to be any longer in order to make us reflect upon on what we can achieve if we work together, to think about what we must aim towards in each of our Conferences and Councils.

The wine had run short and She took pity on the couple<sup>7</sup>. She asked Him to help. Right then. Not later. Not the next day. When it was necessary. As could only be the case, He agreed.

Will we have Mary's confidence? Will we be able to do what is needed, as She did when she saw that it was necessary?

The ability to dream, the ability to alleviate so much poverty is now in our hands. We simply have to put all our resources, every single one of them, at the service of those among us who best represent the Good Lord: the lowly, the forgotten, the abandoned, those that suffer. In short, the poor.

Under the guidance of Mary, let us start work. Let us unite our strengths, all Conferences together, all Councils together. Let us give of ourselves and offer everything that the Society represents, everything, to serving the poor that are by our side. Many will suffer less and will recover the personal dignity that belongs to the children of God.

May She help us to achieve this by touching and illuminating our hearts.

With my prayer and affection,

*José Ramón Díaz-Torremocha*  
XIV President General  
(I.N.E.D.)

**Keep informed about news,  
projects, biographies, etc., at:**

[www.ssvpglobal.org](http://www.ssvpglobal.org)

(4) Vincentians endeavour to help the poor to help themselves whenever possible, and to be aware that they can forge and change their own destinies and that of their local community. (The Rule of S.S.V.P., Art. 1.10)

(5) The vocation of the Society's members, who are called Vincentians, is to follow Christ through service to those in need and so bear witness to His compassionate and liberating love. Members show their commitment through person-to-person contact. Vincentians serve in hope. (The Rule of S.S.V.P., Art. 1.2)

(6) Money must not be hoarded. Decisions regarding the use of money and property are to be made after reflection in the light of the Gospel and Vincentian principles. (The Rule of S.S.V.P., Art. 3.14)

(7) John 2, 1:12.

## Regional REPORTS ...

### Calgary Diocese *Central Council*

September 2009

#### Alice Bissett Place

Alice Bissett Place is a 114-unit housing complex located in Inglewood community in Calgary. The complex provides supportive affordable homes for homeless and low income and at-risk Calgarians.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul has been involved in this project along with Calgary Housing Foundation, Horizon Housing and the Calgary Kerby Centre for Seniors. SSVP saw the great need for affordable housing, especially for women 50 and over who for one reason or another have fallen through the cracks of our social safety net. These women find themselves in an untenable situation in unacceptable living conditions – whether it be the result of abuse, economic woes or other misfortunes.

SSVP raised funds for the project and continues to be involved in a very in-depth manner. SSVP provides monies, developed an interview protocol for prospective clients, and Vincentians have conducted personal interviews with the women and men who will live in this facility. These Vincentians and friends have had a very difficult time in the heart wrenching situation of choosing people to live in this safe, beautiful environment.

The extent of problem solving is daunting and infusing the Christian charisma of Frederick Ozanam in a secular setting has its challenges. However, the Vincentians that have committed themselves to this process are ordinary folk like you and me, role models for bringing the gospel of Jesus to life in the modern world.

This journey is not over. We have filled 18 of the 31 units for women and men; they are living in dignity, feeling safe and walking taller as they feel deeply that society cares. They have hope for their future. SSVP and friends have taken a dream to provide affordable housing for a very vulnerable group of women – which is no less than miraculous.

I am extremely pleased to be working with the following Vincentians and friends, who have shown great heart and gone that extra mile that scripture asks us all to do: Len Grose, Carol White, Terry Gordon, Carol Mitchell and Lori Paine.

Sincerely,  
*Byron Price*, President



*Byron Price presenting cheque to Pat Bennetto & Noreen MacDonald.*

### Ozanam Day *in Calgary*

—by *Noreen MacDonald*

**O**n October 31st, 2009, Calgary held their Ozanam Day at Canadian Martyrs Church. The day began at 9:00am in the Church. Lynn L'Heureux spoke on the program set up in Calgary to eliminate homelessness. Bishop Henry has encouraged all parishes to take part in adopting a homeless family through the "All Roads Lead Home" program. Lynn suggested SSVP be involved wherever possible.

A presentation was given on prison ministry and the prisoner's reintegration into society.

Input to the website for Calgary Central Council was given by those attending. An informative panel updated us on the Inglewood project, known as the Alice Bissett Residence, and how that process has unfolded. This is a joint project with SSVP, Homeless Foundation, Horizon Housing and Kerby Centre. St Vincent de Paul has 23 one-bedroom suites and 8 two-bedroom suites; 10 of these are reserved for women 50 to 64. The panel gave examples of getting people into the residence and some of the pitfalls.

The spiritual speaker was Father Bob Mitchell from Mount St Francis Retreat House at Cochrane. He spoke on "The Privilege of Poverty" as it relates to our spiritual hunger, and also the spiritual hunger of many of those we try to help.

## Report for St Timothy's (Winnipeg, MB)



*Future Vincentians already doing their part.*

**T**he SSVP Conference at St Timothy's Parish in southeast Winnipeg continues to grow in membership and under the guidance of our supportive Pastor, Fr Phil Daley. Our calling, to assist our friends throughout all of Winnipeg through regular 3-times weekly grocery deliveries, is made possible only through the generosity of the entire parish family. The ever-increasing demand from our friends throughout the city means that our SSVP teams have been kept quite busy this past summer.

On a sad note, we recently lost one of our long-standing members – Chuck Hunnie – who was instrumental in running our used furniture pick up and delivery service. During his illness we had to cut back, but after much prayer and reflection by the entire conference, we have since vowed not to let this valuable service slip away and are united in our desire to restart and grow this service.

At our first fall meeting our conference was already getting excited as we plan for our Christmas Hamper Campaign. Finally, with the ongoing financial support of our parish, we hope to continue our "twinning" with Gjoa Haven SSVP Conference.

**Mike Langedock**  
President, St Timothy Conference  
September 2009

### Greetings from France

October 23, 2009

Hello, Vincentians:

I am in Lourdes now but I wanted you all to know that, while in Paris, I went to Rue Debac to the shrine where St Vincent de Paul's heart is kept in a reliquarium.

I prayed there for all of you, that God will continue to bless each and every one of you for your generous hearts, and for the enormous good that you do. I thanked the Good Lord for the blessing that you all are to the parish of St Timothy and, especially, for the inspiration that you are to me.

I asked St Vincent to intercede for our little group – asking for wisdom, discernment, and especially for joy in service to God's little ones.

Peace and love,  
**Father Phil**

## Saskatchewan Report

**T**he St Francis of Assisi Conference in Prince Albert continues to assist families with furniture and hampers. Our membership is dwindling and as a result we have our meeting once a month with a prayer meeting which is done during the Mass in our parish.

In the past year we have worked with the West End Community Group to provide Christmas hampers and a Christmas dinner. We had fed approximately 1,200 people and we used St. Mary's High School for that purpose.

In view of the H1N1 virus, we have decided that it is unwise to assemble that many people in one hall, and in particular a school, as this could trigger an outbreak. As a result, meals will be delivered and all families will be receiving a turkey and related supplies so they can celebrate turkey dinner at home. It is more expensive to provide that service and as a result we are engaging in early fundraising to finance this venture.

I have not heard anything from the Regina Conference and hopefully they will be reporting directly to the Board. We have had some inquiries in Prince Albert to have a second conference started; however, this has not materialized as yet. A good time would be this fall, as everyone realizes the need to assist the poor.

**Henry Siwak,**  
Saskatchewan Representative

# Yellowknife *Report*

## *St Patrick's Conference* – by Gerda Groothuizen, President

**S**t Patrick's Conference, Yellowknife is continuing to flourish. The following has been accomplished in the third quarter:

- Constitution and Bylaws have been drawn up and approved by our conference.
- We are continuing to add names to the SSVP database; hopefully by the end of the year all of our friends, from the first visit to present, will be entered.
- We packed groceries at the Yellowknife Co-op for the second time and raised \$2600.
- Our visits have increased; somehow we are managing to keep up.

We have lost our secretary – she returned to her hometown in New Brunswick. She is a huge loss as she was a lawyer for the poor and was the driving force in getting the constitution and bylaws in place. As well, she was knowledgeable in helping people to stay in their homes when they received eviction notices. Although she passed this knowledge on to us, we will miss her tremendously. Another member has stepped up to the plate and accepted the position of secretary. Our executive is once again a foursome.

A couple of Vincentians, one from Cambridge and one from Edmonton, came together to Yellowknife for a visit. We had a BBQ, giving Yellowknife Vincentians a glimpse of how other conferences deal with the same issues we have.

As I mentioned, our visits are increasing. We looked into the reason for it, believing it was possibly due to the down-turn in the economy. This isn't the case – our name is getting out there and more neighbours of the people we have been helping are coming to us for assistance. To this point we are still doing the home visits, especially for the first time requests. However, if the volume continues to increase, we will have to either get new members or figure out a different way of serving those in need. The parish is doing a recruitment drive and we are hoping interested parishioners will sign up for SSVP.

Our funds are very low at the moment, even with the influx of \$2600, due to the higher volumes of people we serve. We have put in a request for another collection at church, but will have to wait



for the next Parish Pastoral Council meeting to obtain approval.

Our first meeting of the fall was phenomenal. More people attended the meeting than I have seen in all the meetings I have attended. More of our members are involved in the home visits, which lightens the load of those who have been trying to keep up. We have had times, though, that people haven't been available for a few days.

Our conference is running well; our executive works well together and somehow keeps the momentum flowing; our membership picks up the slack when needed and gives us the energy to keep going. I was seriously thinking of not attending this meeting because I didn't want to divert SSVP funds to pay for my hotel accommodation. I mentioned this at our last meeting and one of our members said he would take care of it. I thought he might have had an "in" with a hotel – he didn't. He booked me into a fantastic hotel and is paying for it himself! It blew me away!

### *The Work of Christmas*

*When the song of the angel is still,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the wise women and men  
are home,  
When the shepherds are back  
with their flocks,  
The work of Christmas begins:*

*To feed the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among people,  
To make music in the heart.*

—Unknown

## St Martin of Tours in Vegreville

**I** bring good news and glad tidings. St Martin of Tours Church in Vegreville has organized a conference of the Society. The Conference was recently formed and has a full slate of executive officers and a membership of approximately 15 persons.

Bob Prestash has worked diligently on this project and will mentor the new executive as they work through the continued demands of organizing the Conference. He will also participate as a member. Hands up everyone who would have liked to have Bob Prestash in their back pocket as a mentor when they took over their present duties!

**Barry Kuly** is the President of the Conference. He is ably assisted by Darren, Terry, Carole, Allan, and Edward who all accepted positions on the executive. Their first task is to oversee the development of a needs assessment for the town of Vegreville. This will be done with a view towards selecting a form of ministry as the main task of the Conference to get started with.

Some preliminary work has already been done in this regard and there were lots of ideas being tossed around. There is a lot of energy in Vegreville and I look forward to the time when we will all gather again so you can taste their enthusiasm and excitement.

**GUESS WHAT?  
IT'S A CONFERENCE!**



***The street will be long and unfriendly, the stairs and the poor often ungrateful. You will soon find charity a heavy burden, heavier than the jug of soup or the full basket.***

***But you will still be pleasant and smile. Distributing soup and bread is not everything. The rich can do that.***

***The poor are your masters and you will find them terribly exacting masters. So the more unattractive and dirty they are, the more rude and unfair they are, the more you must lavish your love upon them.***

***It is only by feeling your love that the poor will forgive you your gifts of bread.***

—St Vincent de Paul

## Committee REPORTS ...

### National Strategic Planning **Committee**

I had the privilege of representing you and your suggestions to the National Strategic Planning Team. The main goal of strategic planning is to build on what we have. We often try to re-invent the wheel or discard what has worked in the past, always looking for something new. Often the best way to do things is right before our eyes. Each person is encouraged to know what is in place. Often when you tell someone something they'll say, "Oh I didn't know that," and the information is in storage in their file box or some other box. Know your inventory and build on what we have – taking old ideas and making them work, or taking old material and books and updating so they work today.

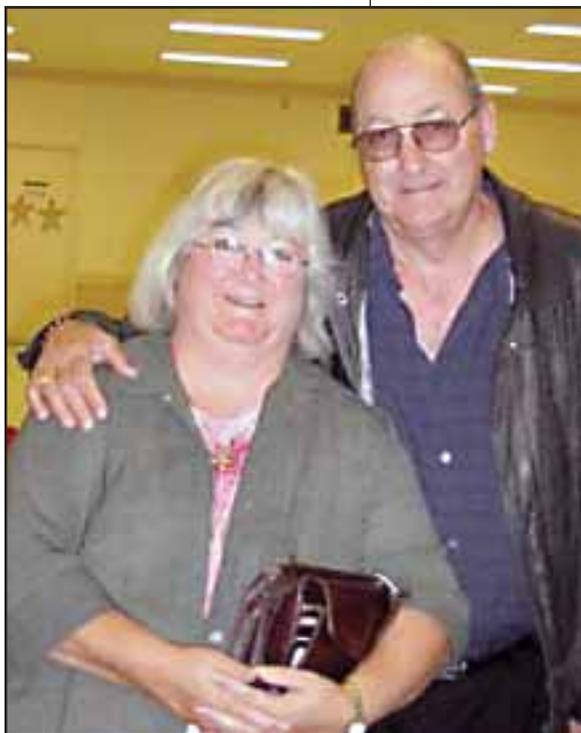
The number one priority of National is training/formation and that will continue over the next few years. Another priority is advocacy and we will be hearing more about that in the near future as the committee meets and comes forward with a plan.

Communication is the big one that will remain as the priority to improve. Communication is a two-way street and it must flow across, up and down. Another side to communication is outside our organization, and much of our focus will be on that this coming year.

Good communication is transparency within the organization, and with our parishes and benefactors. We are part of a bigger picture and it is so important that our funds and decisions be up front. Transparency is good for all of us at every level. It brings trust, and trust brings partnerships that work.

In the same light of communication is collaboration, and you will see more information and suggested techniques on that. This is not a suggestion to send our friends to other agencies, but to work with others to lift our friends from poverty. Of course, collaboration means communication – and advocacy. It is a journey with the poor.

– *Tony L'Heureux*



### Training & Formation **Report (National Council of Canada)**

Great News! The National Council Training and Formation Committee produced the first module and it will be presented at a "Train the Trainers" workshop that will be set up by Pat in the near future.

The manual will be given to each attendee at the training. Once the trainers set up training sessions in their areas, the attendees at these will be given a manual. The manuals also come with a Power Point CD and notes. The notes can be changed to

suit your area, but references to the Rule should remain as printed. You will be able to gear this workshop to your particular needs in the Conference. The manual can be broken down into shorter workshops and presentations. It deals with new members training (what all Vincentians should know) and home visiting.

The committee began with these top issues as a priority. Everyone is new once and some members have never received the information they need on the Rule and Policies. The other main ingredient in the Society of St Vincent de Paul is the home visit. It is what makes us different and is what makes a Vincentian. There is nothing more humbling or gratifying than sitting in the home of a friend in need and

learning from them. We are serving Jesus who is in the poor and in some way we also bring Jesus to the door. We must be the arms, mouth and feet of Jesus and we must carry the Gospel in our person, always serving the Lord.

I hope you will all eagerly come forward for the training so that you may train others in your conference, in your councils and in your areas. We will all be sharing our 5 loaves + 2 fish + Vincent's teachings to better serve our Lord in the poor.

– *Lynn L'Heureux*

## Something *To Think About ...*

**P**lease come forward and participate in the projects outlined below. I know you will find them fulfilling endeavours!

### Vincentian Stories of the Heart

Some of you may have seen the last book that was produced about 9 years ago. It was a national effort and took two years to get a few stories, but the stories have been used by many people across Canada. We are now into another one and have been requesting stories once again.

At the AGA I collected a few heart wrenching stories and they will be included. Everyone has a story. Please ask your Vincentians. We want stories about what SSVV means to you. Perhaps you have a special story of why you joined SSVV. Perhaps you have a special home visit or store story. Please send your stories, prayers, and poems. Your poems and prayers must be original. We already have two stories written by our friends that are acceptable, but we always protect the dignity of the person. All stories, poems and prayers may be edited for brevity, spelling, etc., and must be true stories. If you use names, you must get their permission and send the permission slip to me for our records. (If you need a form I will send it to you.) You may send your stories anonymously, but I should have your name for clarification and originality proof. At the bottom of each story or poem you must state that it is true and an original, not published in any other magazine or book, and sign the copy. (I also have a form for this purpose).

Please send your submissions to:  
Lynn L'Heureux  
1322 – 1818 Simcoe BV SW  
Calgary, AB T3H 3L9  
E-mail: calgaryssvpadm@shaw.ca

### Hands in Prayer Across Canada

This is not a private club. It is open to all. I would love you to join on Tuesday to pray for the Society of St Vincent de Paul, the servants and those we serve.

My parish priest challenged me in 2003 to pray always. We were planning to raise money, receive land and build an Ozanam Place for women over 50 and seniors. A small group in my parish started to pray with me and on their own. Things began to happen. People came forward to help on the housing and fundraising and the momentum was building.

To make a long story short, we were again challenged to choose a day and to not only pray, but fast as well. We chose Tuesday. Now every day is a miracle, but I tell you, Tuesdays were great miracles then and today. This began as mainly non-Vincentians, and I had a dream that we could do this with all Vincentians across Canada. We could pray for one another and the poor on a specific day and make that our Vincentian day of prayer. This day in my dream was more than once a year, but each week. I pitched the idea at a National Board meeting and everyone liked the idea, but the motivation was not there. I have been talking about this now for about 5 years and our numbers have grown slightly. God taps a person on the shoulder and a new member comes forward.

I try to send out a message to all prayer members once a week, but at least once a month. The idea isn't necessarily to pray all day, although we have at least two members who do that. The idea isn't to fast the whole day, although we have one member doing that. The idea is to give thanks to God for calling us to serve Him, to pray for our Vincentian family and the



poor we serve. Some of us fast one meal or abstain from snacks; some of us don't fast at all from food, but fast from gossip and anger or something like that.

But most of all we pray. We pray for National Council, Regional Councils, councils and conferences across Canada and in our own communities. A week before the National AGA, Vincentians were praying for the organizers, and the gathering itself. We prayed during the AGA and in thanksgiving after the AGA. We pray for our own needs in our conferences, the poor in their midst. We pray for leaders, the sick, weaknesses and strengths. Some set aside an hour and a few set aside the day, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, attending Mass, offering Rosaries, Novenas and many prayers. Some set aside a simple prayer taking only a few minutes. The length doesn't matter; what matters is the pureness of your heart in prayer.

I wrote a little prayer book to help our prayer team pray. It is divided into prayers for each section of our organization. I am printing more copies as they have run out. I did this as a gift for our Western Regional Council, but on the reprint, unfortunately I must charge \$3.00 per booklet which includes postage. If you would like one of these, let me know; and if you would like to be part of the prayer team, also let me know.

*-Lynn L'Heureux*

# Beyond the Poor Box

## *Communicating with Parishioners & Parish Groups*

—by Ben Macht, Calgary

**C**ommunication is the means by which people and organizations establish, maintain and improve understanding with another. Effective communications can enhance a relationship while lack of effective communication may hamper the effectiveness or prevent a meaningful relationship from developing.

**Without effective communications with its parish and its parishioners**, a St Vincent de Paul conference can struggle or be handicapped in its works of charity in its area. It may not be able to find the resources it needs to do its work effectively in the conference area. It may not be able to recruit Vincentians to build the conference, or sustain it should Vincentians leave the Conference.

**With effective communications**, a conference improves its ability to find the financial and material resources it needs to be effective in addressing the needs of the poor. Such communications also help the conference inform parishioners of its works and attract new members to help it develop or to renew its membership.

### ***What can conference leaders and members do to communicate effectively in their parishes?***

One method is to plan and execute an effective publicity program – one which regularly informs the parish of the poor and their needs, the work of the conference in addressing their needs and the resources the conference needs.

### ***Communicate with whom?***

Parishioners (Mass attendees, parish poor), parish ministries and groups, parishioners who are benefactors, parish area schools and institutions, parish staff (clergy, religious and lay persons)

### ***Communications Media?***

The Poor Box; begging (in church or community); conversations with individuals or in meetings; pulpit announcements – involving the pastor; bulletin notices; posters in the church and community; booth at stewardship fairs; presentations to parish, parish groups or community; internet web site including link to parish web site.

Effective conference communications means planning and executing a program to inform the parish of the needs of the poor and of the conference's works and needs using a variety of media to deliver the appropriate messages year-round! An example of such a campaign to inform and engage the parish follows. It is intended to be but an example of what a conference might consider and adapt to the circumstances and environment it experiences in its parish and area.

### **SAMPLE CAMPAIGN**

#### **JANUARY**

- An early-January announcement reporting to the Parish on the Christmas program (hampers, gifts, visits, etc.), and thanking the parish for its generous support to the annual program.
- An announcement regarding the conference's first meeting of the New Year, inviting anyone who cares to attend. The announcement might also mention the challenges the conference faces in the year ahead.
- Perhaps a notice advising parishioners of how they or others might contact the conference for help should they need help after the holiday season.

#### **FEBRUARY**

- A summary of the conference's works of the year past. Perhaps include information on how the num-

ber and nature of calls for assistance have changed or increased over the past year. Particulars on the generosity of the parish over the previous year might also be included.

- A summary of recent conference activities and plans for upcoming activities and events.
- An item on the approach of Lent and some thoughts on sharing with the less fortunate.

#### **MARCH**

- An item regarding spring cleaning and a reminder that items might be useful to the poor.
- An announcement of an Easter week or post-Easter food and funds drive to prepare the conference for the calls for assistance that are bound to occur over the spring and summer.

#### **APRIL**

- Liaison with other parish groups such as the CWL, K of C, Pastoral Visiting Team, etc., to exchange plans, and objectives and to find ways to help each other succeed.
- Announcement of special needs that need to be addressed, i.e., beds, children's furnishings, etc.

#### **MAY**

- An item on the needs and perhaps number of single-parent families the conference assists including any special needs of such families that need to be addressed.
- An item indicating how to receive more information on the Society and the conference and its works.

#### **JUNE**

- A reminder to remember the poor over the summer and perhaps a plea for specific assistance to help the conference do its work over the summer (most parish bulletins are suspended for July/August).
- A note that the Poor Box does

not take a vacation. Information on how donations of goods and funds will be handled over the Summer period.

- A reminder on how the conference may be contacted for assistance.

#### SEPTEMBER

- A 'welcome back' to parishoners and a welcome to new parishoners. A 'thank you' for the parish's support over the summer.
- A brief item on the conference and perhaps the status of its resources. Perhaps an item on special needs of the poor as their families return to school.
- Participation in the parish's 'stewardship fair' (or like event) to inform the parish of the conference's existence and to recruit new members.

#### OCTOBER

- A note on the results of the stewardship fair from the conference's perspective.
- An invitation to the parish to share the harvest and to remember the poor during this month of thanksgiving.
- An item on the challenges the conference faces with the onset of winter.
- A campaign for food and funds.

#### NOVEMBER

- An item on seniors being assisted by the conference and special needs they may have. Information on how seniors in need might obtain assistance.
- A reminder to remember the poor in preparations for the Christmas season and preliminary plans to help them.

#### DECEMBER

- Publicize plans and needs for the Christmas program including special needs and help sought.
- Seek volunteers who may be able to help with specifics of the program.

## A Sense of Gratitude Goes a Long Way

**I**n the April/May edition of *Today's Parish Minister* magazine ([www.todaysparishminister.com](http://www.todaysparishminister.com)) is the article, "Spaghetti Creates Community," written by Cathy Rusin. It talks about how the simple act of having a spaghetti supper as a thank you dinner for campus ministry volunteers not only served as a form of appreciation but also as a source of community building and faith formation for the group as a whole.

It says, "An awareness of stewardship begins with a sense of gratitude. How do you cultivate a grateful spirit in your parish? A spaghetti dinner takes neither much money nor planning, but is a meaningful way to thank people for their service and demonstrate that many generous souls are active in your parish." The article goes on to discuss other ways to show appreciation for those involved in volunteer ministries – of which my favourite one is to budget for training and faith formation opportunities! Below is a list of 20 ways to thank and support volunteers (as identified in the article).

*Source: World Volunteer Web, [Inyurl.com/2VAS22](http://Inyurl.com/2VAS22)*

1. Say "Thank You!" often, and mean it.
2. Match the volunteer's desires with the organization's needs.
3. Send birthday cards; send a card at Christmas.
4. Provide a clear role description for every volunteer.
5. Make sure new volunteers are welcomed warmly.
6. Highlight the impact that the volunteer's contribution is having on the organization.
7. Show an interest in volunteers' personal interests and outside lives.
8. Tell volunteers they have done a good job.
9. Give volunteers a real voice within the organization.
10. Set up a volunteer support group.
11. Always have work for your volunteers to do and never waste their time.
12. Send thank you notes and letters when appropriate.
13. Smile when you see them.
14. Involve volunteers in decision-making processes.
15. Give a certificate to commemorate anniversaries of involvement.
16. Allow volunteers the opportunity to debrief, especially if they work in stressful situations.
17. Have a volunteer comments box and consider any suggestions carefully.
18. Provide insurance coverage.
19. Add volunteers to memo and e-mail distribution lists.
20. Keep volunteers informed of changes in structure and personnel.

I will be looking for more ways to attract and retain Vincentians and will share them with you in future newsletters.

# The *Ideal Conference*

—from *Toronto Central Council*

1. Six to twelve members, depending on need in area.
2. Meets once or twice a month for about 90 minutes.
3. Begins each meeting with the prayer and an appropriate spiritual reading & reflection.
4. The needs, wishes and preferences of the members are appropriately considered when planning and running the meeting.
5. The agenda adequately provides for addressing current issues and concerns.
6. Meetings are held “in a spirit of fraternity, simplicity, and Christian joy,” providing for “consideration in common of the experiences of each member and the problems encountered in the pursuit of a better service.” (The Rule, Schema I, Art. V, 1 & 2)
7. The President is happy to serve the poor in his/her position as President and is willing and able to make the effort required to effectively lead the Conference.
8. The Executive members provide the President with adequate assistance and support.
9. Members make a real effort to attend meetings regularly and to be active participants in meetings.
10. Financial and other records are maintained effectively and efficiently and are appropriately secured.
11. Members will make a point to support and assist the other members of the conference, especially the newer or less confident member.
12. Adequate and appropriate service, consistent with our Vincentian philosophy and commitment and with the available resources, is provided to those in need.
13. Home visitations:
  - Calls are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner.
  - Members always visit in pairs (as per the Screening and Risk Management policy).
  - Appropriate arrangements are made with the client prior to the visit.
  - In all aspects of the visit members remember that “sharing does not consist merely in the distribution of material goods.” (The Rule, Schema I, I 5, Commentaries)
  - The members take the time and effort to really listen to the client.
  - All efforts are directed both at immediate needs and the goal of greater self-sufficiency on the part of the client. The members are not merely satisfied with regularly supplying vouchers and not helping the client move towards goals they have (or could be helped to develop).
  - The information gathered about the client and their circumstances is only as much as is required to make decisions that will be helpful and appropriate, and to allow the members to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to them.
  - Although the Vincentians will use good judgment in determining the type and amount of assistance, they will not be judgmental.
  - The Vincentians will be compassionate, empathic, respectful and loving towards clients (or will seek a form of service that doesn't require these qualities and efforts).
  - They will make it clear to the client, through words, tone, body language and actions, that they genuinely want to be of assistance and service to the client.
14. Where circumstances make it difficult or unwise to do home visitations, the conference will either take appropriate steps to overcome these obstacles (e.g., a recruitment campaign) or will provide the service to those in need in a manner appropriate to the Society's mission and our Vincentian vocation.

## Publication Information

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We welcome your feedback!