

## CHANGING TIMES

Welcome to the first edition of our revised Changing Times social justice newsletter. You may recall this newsletter was published four times a year. This revised edition will be published ten times each year but will be shorter in content. Each of our five regions will have one edition dedicated to their region's for social justice news with the other five editions being dedicated to specific themes or issues. There will be a full schedule in the February edition which will list the month for each region and theme. We encourage your comments on social justice and the various articles in Changing Times.

In addition, the February and October editions of Vincenzapaul will be dedicated to social justice. The national website now only has the one Facebook page but there will be posts from various sources including social justice. We are very excited with these changes as there is still a great need to educate and inform our own membership about social justice issues and the importance of our Society becoming more active regarding social justice.

I encourage those councils and conferences who do not yet include social justice as a regular agenda item to please do so in 2019. In addition, please appoint one or more members as your social justice representative. Please remember our national website ([www.ssvp.ca](http://www.ssvp.ca)) has the Social Justice Guide for use as a source and resource for anyone taking on the role of their council/conference rep.

One of the documents included in the Guide is the Ten Principles of Catholic Social Teaching: Human Dignity - Common Good - Respect for Life - Association - Solidarity - Stewardship - Human Equality - Preferential Option for the Poor - Participation - Subsidiarity.

These ten principles are ideal topics to discuss at your council/conference meetings. How do they relate to today's needs of those living in poverty?

If I had to choose my top two, they would be human dignity, which everyone is born with and which all deserve and common good, which simply means if we take a more holistic approach to our efforts and have the welfare of everyone in mind, we help Canada become a more just society for all. I also remind everyone of the main areas of work that we include under social justice. Advocacy is about our efforts to enable our neighbours in need to have a voice and when needed to help them be heard.

Systemic change seeks to change current systems that tend to place barriers in front of those we serve. We should also keep in mind that many of us need to be willing to transform our attitudes towards poverty and those living in it.

Restorative justice (prison ministry) comes under social justice as there are so many effects the criminal justice has on offenders, their victims or the families or both.

Indigenous Peoples is another important topic that is especially associated to our Catholic faith through the history of our church with Indigenous Peoples. There is much we can do to educate ourselves about the history, culture and faith traditions of Indigenous Peoples.

Environmental change is certainly a topic that is so relevant in today's world and one that does affect poverty. I encourage you to read the statement position paper that can be found on our national website.

Subsidiarity, one of the ten principles of Catholic Social Teachings is also one that is addressed in our Rule. While we strive to allow decisions and actions to be decided and implemented at the lower grass roots levels of the Society, it is also true that we need to give our grass roots membership a way to voice their opinions, concerns and comments. This is very true regarding social justice. We need to hear from you at all levels. You are always encouraged to submit your input to our national social justice committee. While many issues such as affordable housing, pharma care, child poverty, basic living wages, homelessness and many others are national, they can also be seen at the local community level in various forms. In addition, there can be local issues that are just as important to our members in their communities. We need to hear from you about these issues and we may also be able to provide resources and support to assist your local social justice actions. In closing, I sincerely hope you enjoy reading future editions of Changing Times, and if you are not yet active regarding social justice that you will promote and support the need for your council/conference to address this gap in service.

Sincerely,

*Jim Paddon, Chair  
National Social Justice Committee  
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul*