

The magazine of The Society of St. Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada

Volume 34 no. 4 • Winter 2006

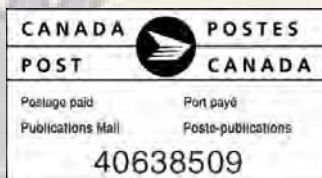
# Christmas 2006



# Vincenpaul-Canada

« UPON THIS ROCK... »

Return Address:  
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THE SOCIETY OF  
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CANADA

## MISSION

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization whose mission is:

To live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy.

## VALUES

The Mission of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul implies that as Vincentians we

- see Christ in anyone who suffers
- come together as a family
- have personal contact with the poor
- help in all possible ways

Official publication of The Society of St. Vincent de Paul - Canada • Dépôt légal  
Bibliothèque nationale ISSN0703 6477 •  
Agreement no. 1751697

Made with the collaboration of:  
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Graphic Design: Josée Laforest  
Printing: Impressions Daigle Inc.

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There are numerous references to wine and the Vineyard in the Gospels. In fact the first miracle that Christ performed was when He changed water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana. His Mother said to the servants: "Do whatever He tells you." Jn 2 Vs 5

Many of Jesus' parables use the image of a Vineyard to show the disciples how He wants them and us to live. People in Jesus' day were familiar with the Vineyards and the work it took to produce good fruit and wine. It is no different today 2,000 years later. This is especially true here in the Okanagan where the fruits of the Vineyard are becoming world famous.

"Come and Work in the Vineyard" is an invitation and a challenge to all Vincentians. "You too go into my Vineyard and I will give you what is just." Mt 20 vs 4. We are called as Vincentians to labour for Christ in the Vineyard of life.

We invite our fellow Vincentians to join us in our "Vineyard", beautiful, sunny Kelowna, B.C. next year for our National AGA. The AGA will be held on the 243-acre retreat-like campus of the University of British Columbia Okanagan, conveniently located just minutes from

the Kelowna International Airport.

Kelowna is served by direct flights from Toronto and many other cities, including Seattle in the USA. We have established a convention account with Westjet that will give a 10% discount on individual fares in addition to any discount you can secure.

Details are available at [www.ssvp.bc.ca/2007AGA](http://www.ssvp.bc.ca/2007AGA) and our PowerPoint presentation on Kelowna and the campus at UBC Okanagan is available at [www.ssvp.bc.ca/AGAPresentation.html](http://www.ssvp.bc.ca/AGAPresentation.html) for those who want to know more about our city and the facilities that we will be using.

See central pages of this magazine for subscription form.

We look forward to welcoming you to Kelowna in 2007!



## President's Word - Michael Burke

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Dear Brother and Sister Vincentians,

This month I had the pleasure of visiting with the Particular Council of Victoria and the Vancouver Central Council. While there, I visited some of the works of the Society which included the Social Concerns Office and store and housing complex in Victoria. These projects demonstrate what can be done when the Society partners with the various government funding agencies.

As well, BC Regional President and newly elected Vancouver Central President Bill Yuell visited with Vancouver Archdiocesan Vicar General Fr. Mark Hagemoen to talk about the Society in Vancouver. Fr. Hagemoen was very supportive of the Society's activities in the Archdiocese and offered his support in the Society's extension efforts. During a meeting of the Vancouver Central Council, I had the opportunity to participate in the Installation of President Bill Yuell. Finally while in Vancouver, I spent a few hours in the East Hastings and Main area of the city which is often referred to as the poorest area in the country, where drug abuse and poverty is rampant. This neighbourhood contains many "single room occupancy" (SRO) buildings. These buildings often can have six floors with one working toilet. It is hard not to come away from visiting this area of our country without being very depressed by the number of people living in such horrendous conditions, but it also underlines the unlimited amount of work available to the Society in helping

these people, and also advocating on their behalf.

I also visited with the folks in Kelowna who are working on the 2007 AGA. I am pleased to say that Co-chairs, (Reg and Dana), of the organizing committee are well on the way in the planning for the meeting to be held at UBC – Kelowna Campus. This facility is very new and is settled in the Okanogan valley and will provide a pleasant setting "In the Vineyard" for the Vincentians attending our 36th AGA.

### GENDER BALANCE

The Society in Canada has developed nicely over the past 25 years, and is now present in all ten provinces and territories. The number of Conferences is up and continues to grow (approximately 982 at present), as do the number of Councils. However we should remember that it was 1979 before the Society welcomed women to the established male Conferences. Our best guess at this time is that more than 60% of our Canadian members are women (this by the way is similar for the USA and most developed countries). This percentage however is not reflected in the administration and direction of the Society, i.e. 60% of the presidents etc. of Conferences and Councils are not women. I have just started reading a book entitled *The Other Side of War – Women's Stories of Survival & Hope* by Zainab Salbi and I was taken by the following passage in the introduction referring to a woman's recent visit to Africa – On the roads there are few vehicles, and I notice,



*Michael Burke,  
President, National Council of Canada*

not for the first time, that most of all the drivers in the cars and trucks, are men. An ill omen, I think, for the society at large, because it speaks to an ingrained gender inequality that drastically curtails the mobility and involvement in life of women and girls and will undoubtedly undermine any dream of progress and social stability. After all, how can a society flourish, a country attain democracy and health, children grow into intelligent beings, sensitive to the needs of an ever more fragile and endangered planet, if half its people are kept out of the driver's seat?

How can the world right itself and find its true direction, if only men are taught to steer the vehicle that would take it there? Alas, the roads resemble only too closely the country's political and spiritual leadership, all of it masculine. – Alice Walker

While this quote from Alice Walker refers to the political situation in countries in Africa, I am sure many women within the Society can see the similarities with the situation within the Society, and within the political system in our country and provinces and even within our own Catholic Church, I am however

## President's Word - Michael Burke

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pleased to point out at this time that the Society in Canada is light years ahead of most other countries in the world when it comes to gender balance. President elect Penny Craig will be the third female National Council President in the last five presidents, two of the three vice-presidents are women and two of the five regional presidents are women. Our neighbours to the south have not had a woman president to date; in fact I don't think they have had a woman vice-president to date. Other developed countries (particularly in Europe) are much worse. I don't know that we should be totally surprised at this development, given that the Society is a micro-cosmism of the Catholic Church.

However, unlike the Catholic Church, we in the Society can, and should do something about this inequity; we cannot sit back and just point to our achievements. We can promote and encourage women to offer and run for the position of president; we can appoint women to the position of vice-president, not just to the traditional role of secretary. There are two ways we can look at this imbalance. First as an injustice, I believe that women should be occupying the office of Conference President in proportion to their membership, and secondly, we have to come to the conclusion that the Society will be much better, much stronger, much better administered and managed if we make full utilization of the talents of all our members, not just the half that are driving the cars and trucks.

### YOUTH

I am happy to report that we now have Youth Delegates in four of the five regions in the country. This is a very positive first step. I have been spending a lot of time lately thinking about youth, and how we get them "back" into the Society. I say "back" into the Society because at the beginning they were the Society! The Society was formed by youth. The entire Society was youth! My visit to Central America showed me that in third world countries, youth play a much more dominant role in the Society than in North America. Our challenge in the Society (globally) is how do we give the Society of St. Vincent de Paul back to the youth?

This is a global challenge not a Canadian or North American challenge. I look around our Society in North America and I see senior people at all management positions, nationally and internationally. I see very few youth in positions of responsibility (except for our Youth Delegates). However, when I look around the business community, I see many young adults in senior management positions, even as presidents of major companies.

I have referred in the past to an organization in Canada of "Young Presidents" that meet annually where the criteria for membership is the person must be the president of a company and – be under 40 years of age! I believe that our present system in the Society stifles the development of our young people and this

is to our detriment. We seem to have the mentality that you must have grey hair (or no hair) to be elected president of a Conference or Council. We talk about "youth being our future" – WRONG - we must start talking about - youth being our present. We must encourage and allow our young adult members to run for the office of president. We must appoint young adults to positions of responsibility within the Society, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers. We, the senior adult members of the Society must not be afraid, we must be humble enough, courageous enough to turn over the reins and be lead by those younger than us. We must encourage our youth to take control of the Society, and to lead us. Dare to think about young people in our Society right now who could be the future national President in 2013 or 2019. I can think of three or four young people who can fill this bill. We can start with the four Youth Delegates in place at the regions and National Council.

This goal however will not happen by accident. It must be a plan and something that we are willing to work towards. We must identify these individuals and start to encourage them and to put them in increasing positions of responsibility and to expose them to all the levels and committees of the Society. Why not start a mentoring system like many professional organizations have ?

So what can we/you do to accomplish this goal – a goal of getting young adults involved in the

Society? Well the first thing is to pray; pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance. Secondly, start looking for young leaders that can fill the positions, I reiterate “young leaders”. I do not believe that I, or my national president successor, should be replaced by a person in their late 50’s or 60’s, but by people in their 30’s. The National President’s position should not be the reward for longevity in the Society (also take note that Frederic who was the Principal founder was never the International President General of the Society). I am convinced that a Society in Canada with a young president will attract youth like flies to honey (look around at organizations with youthful leaderships).

I remember a year ago the Vincentian Family suggested that Theme for the Year be “The Year of Youth: Sharing the Vincentian Charism with all Generations”. The members of the family include the Daughters of Charity, the Congregation of the Mission, Marian Youth, Miraculous Medal and of course the Society of St Vincent de Paul. The theme was in place from Sept. 04 to Sept. 05. The objectives for the year included: Every branch will focus on “Inviting more young people to join us in the service of the poor”. The member organizations were invited to have special days of prayer on September 27 and to invite 3 or 4 young people to join us in prayer. This was a wonderful opportunity to engage young people to join the Society and to become grass roots participants, to get their feet wet, to catch the spirit

of the Society. Unfortunately not many Councils in the world bought in to the idea, and very few Councils held any of the suggested programs during the year. Even the International Council General still allocates less than 1% of its annual operating budget to the promotion of youth and youth activities.

In my opinion Youth Promotion and participation offers a real opportunity for Canada to take a leadership role in the Society world wide. I believe that like the participation in the Catholic Church in industrialized countries, the Society’s membership is “greying” and needs revitalization or it will disappear. We are faced with the challenge to replenish the ranks or gradually (or maybe not so gradually) disappear. There are many good young people out there and they are joining many organizations that provide help and charity to poor and disadvantaged people (look at Sun Youth in Montreal). They are just not joining the Society in droves – why not ?

I really believe that we are facing a tremendous opportunity at this time when it comes to the subject of youth – it is up to us to Seize the Moment – “Carpe Diem” and courageously give the Society back to the Youth.

Peace  
Michael Burke

### IMPORTANT

Please take note that the National Council has a new address:

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Ottawa ON K1H 6K9

Tel: 613 738-1118  
Fax: 613 738 4789

E-mail: ncc-  
cnc.ssvp@bellnet.ca

All your correspondence with your National Council should be sent at this address.

Should it be to reach a member of your National Council, to send an article for the Vincenpaul magazine, to order an object from the Society, to pay for your Vincenpaul subscription, to send your contribution for twinning and any other topic that is under the National Council jurisdiction.

THANK YOU!

*Joy & Happiness for all in 2007*

*- The Vincenpaul Team*

# Reflection

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## THE RIVERS OF LIFE

The Oriental tradition talks about the rivers of life. There are four of them: inspiration, surprise, challenge and love. As Christians, what can we make of these?

A life in union with God is necessarily connected to the Holy Spirit, source of all true inspiration. We must believe in that. That force literally propels us towards excellence; it pushes us to accomplish more than 100%.

A truly inspired life is a life that improves society. That is to say that Vincentians bring not only essential material things to the needy, but they also bring the breath of life that helps them to get up and see the eternal horizon.

Such an approach to life allows us

to see life's surprises as new opportunities to put to work what is best within ourselves. Life's surprises do not paralyse us, not even the worst ones. We know that God will extract good from evil, and from that certainty arises Hope, a virtue so important that we can transmit it to those who are in need.

With inspiration from the Holy Spirit and Christian Hope, we do not fear challenges, but rather see in them opportunities to act as co-creators of new possibilities together with God. Challenges drive us forward, and we must develop the talent to introduce appropriate challenges in the life of those we help. Let us say it once more, we bring not only material things to the poor, but also everything they need to live as

God wishes them to live, thanking Him for everyday that He gives.

Finally, everything we do must be permeated by the fourth river, the river of love. It is truly the fourth, because its water will be bland if we draw from it before we draw from the other three. Whoever lives with the Spirit, and rejoices in life's surprises and challenges cannot be without love. Saint John clearly tells us that God is Love. Therefore, anyone who is full of life is never far from God.

When we visit the poor, may our bag full of material necessities also contain the four rivers of life.

Mgr Peter Schonenbach,  
Spiritual Advisor  
National Council of Canada



## THE NEW LOGO - A NEW LOOK FOR THE SOCIETY IN CANADA

Voting Members of the National Council approved the new Rule on June 24, 2006 at the AGA held in St John's, Newfoundland. The voting on the new Rule also meant the adoption of the International Council General's (ICG) logo, which was explained in the last issue of the magazine. The international logo was approved by the ICG in Rome in October 2003 when the new International Rule was approved. More than 20 countries have adopted the logo since

then, which is contributing to unify the Society under one logo, thereby being better recognized worldwide and within our communities.

It is hoped Conferences, Councils and Special Works will adopt the new logo as their stock of official letters, envelopes, signage, etc. need replenishing. Some Councils and stores have already made the change.

The Executive Committee of the National Council has contracted the production of the new pin which can be purchased on our website ([www. ...](http://www...)) or by contacting the national office. Generic identification cards, in either official language, for Conferences members and for officers at all levels, have also been designed and are now available to the membership by contacting the National office. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul store

in Ottawa has refreshed all its collection bins (located at various points throughout the city) and installed the new logo (2 feet. x 2 feet) with bilingual signage around the logo. The decals can be ordered (bilingual format or in either language) from the business which made them; please telephone the Ottawa Store Manager (Don) at (613) 722-7166, ext. 12, for more details and orders.

The National Council encourages all Conferences, Councils and Special Works in Canada to adopt the new logo, which is a sign of Vincentian unity in serving the poor and as a means by which to be widely recognised by the general public.

Clermont Fortin  
1st Vice President  
National Council of Canada  
September 12, 2006

## IN THE HEART OF THE SOCIETY

### LEBANON: AFTER EMERGENCY WORK...

In the « post-war » situation in the Lebanon, the Society is working as hard as it can, in addition to distributing supplies (more than 3,000 portions, only in August), clothing and medicines, following the convoys that arrived in August, to develop a construction project for a bakery in order to provide food for hundreds of people a day, whether for sale or free ofcharge, depending on their possibilities.

This project is presently before the Council General and the Technical Commission and we will keep you informed as to its progress.

### SALVADOR: ONE YEAR ON FROM « STAN »

helping the victims of the natural disasters in the previous year. This programme was approved by the ICG's Technical Commission in September.

The Society has now granted \$28,000 to this country, with 10% of the project budget being raised locally by the Society.



*One of the houses built*

Having identified the families to be supported, following several local visits, the National Council and 6

Conferences in the country have developed a programme that includes building 5 new homes and reconstruction of 20 temporary shelters.

The programme also includes the construction of protective works to reduce the damage caused in future by hurricanes and storms, frequent catastrophes in this part of the world.

Finally, alongside this, the Society has identified about one hundred families, nearly 500 people, who have lost everything in the disaster and urgently need supplies. These will be given rice, wheat, corn and sugar mainly.

The total budget for this aid project, partly funded by the ICG through the generosity of our brothers and sisters all over the world, comes to around 31,000 euros.

### SUDAN: HELP FOR REFUGEES

The catastrophic situation in the Sudan does not improve, and the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is continuing its impressive work, particularly with displaced persons in refugee camps.

The work of the SSVP in the country, supported by its twins in England and Wales, is based in a community centre, with many activities taking place, including provision of accommodation for 220 children and training for 920 people a year, as well as provision of food for 500 very young children, and work in the health field, particularly as regards the fight against HIV/AIDS. Naturally, the demands of this kind of work are huge, and more than justified by the situation.

Consequently, the Technical Commission has decided to make two grants of 50,000 euros for this project, between now and the end of 2006, making the money available through the account assigned to this country.

Naturally we will keep you informed about the progress of this project.

### USA : « HOPE », FOR VICTIMS OF DISASTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Whether it's a fire, a hurricane, an earthquake, or a flood, when the next disaster strikes, the Society of St.Vincent de Paul will offer HOPE (Help Our People Eat).

HOPE made its official debut at the Society's Annual Meeting in Indianapolis August 30-September 2, 2006 and was deployed to the Gulf Coast immediately thereafter to serve persons suffering the lingering effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

### MOBILE FEEDING SERVICES

The provision of meals and distribution of water, ice, and recovery supplies – areamong the most valued assistance provided in the wake of a disaster. With a full stainless steel kitchencomplete with grill, soup preparation stations, sinks, washers, and food-service windows, HOPE can reach any destination in the continental United States and feed 10,000 people per day there when it arrives. It can operate on its own generator and carries a full complement of mass-care feeding needs: water, juice, sandwiches, soup, coffee, etc.

HOPE can also act as a distribution center for essential personal care needs, such as toothbrushes and shaving kits.



More information on  
[www.svdpusa.org](http://www.svdpusa.org)

Rolling into disaster-affected communities, HOPE can function in a stand-alone mode, or be connected to community water and electrical systems. With the addition of telecommunications, computer, and satellite connections, HOPE can also serve as a mobile office for emergency services, the initiation of case work, and the coordination of other disaster relief organizations.

In non-disaster times, HOPE will be a traveling resource center for an ongoing Disaster Planning and Awareness Campaign. Stocked with authoritative print and audiovisual materials from experts in the field, HOPE will tour the country raising awareness among the Society's membership and the general public about the need for disaster planning and the steps to be taken when a disaster occurs.

PARIS, 18-20 OCTOBER 2006:  
MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE

WHAT IS THE IEC?



*The Society's  
headquarters  
in Paris*

According to the International Rule, « the mission of the International Executive Committee is to coordinate the Society's international strategy » in between the meetings of the General Assembly. It is also intended to « help and advise » the President General in the choice of strategic directions to be taken. It also acts as the General Assembly of the Confederation, outside the plenary meetings which take place every six years.

The permanent members of this Committee are the President General – who chairs the IEC -, the Vice-President General, the Secretary General and the Treasurer, as well as the Assistant Vice Presidents General.

These permanent members are joined ex officio members, Presidents of Superior or assimilated Councils, who have more than 1000 active, aggregated Conferences in their countries. There are presently 8 countries represented: Australia, Brazil, the United States, France, India, Ireland, Italy and Zambia.

The President General also appoints, every two years, five further members, proposed by the permanent and ex officio members, from the countries who have fewest Conferences. These are currently the Central African Republic, Hong-Kong, New Zealand, Scotland and Haiti. The Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Kenya, Venezuela, Korea, Austria, Slovakia and Monaco will also be present, as invited members, along with the Lebanon, Israel and Palestine, because of their current situations and the immense work going on there. Finally, the Territorial Vice Presidents, Presidents of International Commissions, the Spiritual Director and the members responsible for particular missions are also invited to these meetings.

In total, therefore, around sixty people will be in Paris for the meeting of the International Executive Committee, preceded by those of the International Office, the Territorial Technical Commission and the Permanent Section.

## PROGRAMME FOR THE MEETING

A Pilgrimage will take place, on this occasion, to the tomb of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, with Mass in the crypt of the Church of St Joseph des Carmes. The Vincentians will then meet for dinner in the district, the Vincentian heart of Paris.

The meeting of the International Executive committee will therefore begin on 19 October, and last a day and a half. The agenda includes, in particular, consideration of topics suggested by Superior councils who are not members of the IEC, and consideration of current issues and development of the Confederation, such as the work of the Training & Research and Communication Commissions, the University Chairs, the 'Henri de Vergès' Foundation, the Confederation's finances and the 'Welcome - Bienvenue' fund-raising



project. Other topics will be covered, such as the current position of the Strategic Plan or the Africa Plan, Twinning, new VinPaz projects or Internal Statutes, as well as the Vincentian Family.

To mark the « International Day for the Eradication of Poverty », established by the United Nations on the 17 October, the Council General has included a meeting on this topic for the IEC agenda. It will cover the International Programme for the Eradication of Poverty, and then look in more detail at the work of the Society in wartime, with contributions from representatives of Conferences in the Lebanon and the Holy Land.

## INTENTIONS FOR PRAYERS AT THE MEETING

Victims of the conflicts in the Middle East, and the intentions of the Holy Father for prayers in October « That all the baptised grow in faith and witness to it by their clear, courageous and bold choices in life », « That the World Day of Missions encourages everywhere a spirit of missionary zeal and cooperation. »

## HELP VINCENTIANS AROUND THE WORLD TO HELP THOSE MOST IN NEED!

You can send your donations by cheque to the Society's address, or by bank transfer to:

Banque CIC- Paris Bac  
2 Bd Raspail  
75007 Paris, FRANCE  
Account n°. FR76 3006 6100 4100  
0105 8120 129  
International Confederation - SSVF

## THE FINANCES OF THE ICG: A FUNDAMENTAL CONCERN

concern, for many years. Contributions from Vincentian countries are currently the only source of funding for the ICG, and all Superior, National and Assimilated Councils have recently received a note from the General Treasurer, Mr. Ian Mc Turk, encouraging them to do their best to increase, or simply to pay their contributions, and also reminding them that « it is a spiritual obligation upon all of us, member countries and all members, through our individual contributions ».

The Council General does not, of course, take one penny from the donations made for the poor, for its own funding, and we can only continue to operate through regular contributions from all our member countries.

In order to increase the funds available for your projects, Council General has recently recruited a member of staff who will contact major international organisations to appeal for financial support for the Society for some of its projects.

It is therefore essential for the Council General to have a reliable and up-to-date database on its global activities. We have therefore produced a new form on which all Superior Councils will send us their data every year. This form, which is a simplified version of the previous annual report form distributed in 2002, has been sent to all our Superior, National or assimilated Councils, and is also available

from our website.

## NOTE FOR VINCENTIAN NEWSLETTER EDITORS

This short information sheet, which will appear from time to time, is intended for all our brothers and sisters throughout the world, to keep them up to date with what their Society and their Council General, are doing. Please ensure it is distributed as widely as possible, by including it with your national and local newsletters, as well as on your websites. With our sincere thanks,

Erich Schmitz  
General Secretary

Bruno Fabre  
Editor

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Editor : Bruno Fabre

# Vincentian Merit

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## MR. VIATEUR GERVAIS, WINNER OF THE 2006 GEORGES-TRÉPANIÉRIER VINCENTIAN MERIT AWARD

Québec (Sainte-Foy), October 8, 2006 – Mr. Réal Camiré, President of the Society of Saint-Denys-du-Plateau St. Vincent-de-Paul Conference, has announced today that Mr. Viateur Gervais has posthumously received the 2006 Georges-Trépanier Vincentian Merit Award. The announcement took place during a brief ceremony in the church of Saint-Denys-du-Plateau on de l'Église Road in Sainte-Foy, in the presence of Mr. Gervais' and Trépanier's family members.

This merit reward is intended to recognize, in a meaningful way, remarkable contributions to the fight against poverty and social exclusion by volunteer members of the Society, in Sainte-Foy's Saint-Denys-du-Plateau district.

“Recognition of volunteer contribution is, according to Mr. Regalbuto, a way to express thanks to particular members, as well as their family – particularly their spouse – for their continuous support, on behalf of the hundreds of needy people helped by the Society in Saint-Denys. Volunteer work is extremely important; it allows the community to answer the needs of the community. It is one of the three pillars of modern society, at par with public and private sectors.”

Mr. Gervais, who passed away a

few months ago, was one of the Saint-Denys-du-Plateau Conference founding members. In Quebec, the Society has more than 1000 active members working in 96 district Conferences and Special Works.

Mr. Gervais dedicated most of his free time either to the Society of St. Vincent-de-Paul, or to amateur sport in Sainte-Foy (e.g. Water Polo club). In the Society of St. Vincent-de-Paul, he was given the task of reorganizing home visits planning and the control centre at the church rectory secretariat, where requests for help were directed. He also worked at recruiting volunteers, for the Guignolée and for the distribution of Christmas baskets. He thus contributed to the Vincentian cause during several years, until his health prevented him from continuing.

In 2005, the Conference provided assistance to approximately 50 Saint-Denys-du-Plateau families, and had 509 interventions, mostly providing food supplies.

With the authorization of the family, the merit award commemorates the exemplary contribution of the late Mr. Georges E. Trépanier, councillor, long-time teacher in the city of Sainte-Foy, promoter and instigator of the Society of St. Vincent-de-Paul Saint-Denys-du-Plateau Conference, founded on April 4, 1995.

The merit award comes with a \$200 prize that will be given, in the name of Mr. Gervais, to the assistance fund to decrease school drop-outs.

Let us recall that the Society of St. Vincent-de-Paul is an international lay organization, created on April 23, 1833, in Paris, to provide assistance to the needy, making no distinction of race, colour, religion, or gender. The Society has no less than 50,000 Conferences, with 600,000 active members, working in more than 135 countries on every continent.

The assistance provided is in the form of food coupons, clothing, furniture, household appliances, help to street youths or school drop-outs, etc.



*M. Viateur Gervais*

## Youth - Québec

QUEBEC CITY SOCIETY OF  
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

### SUMMARY PRESENTATION OF YOUTH WORKS

Since 1993, the humorist Jean-Michel Anctil has been the spokesperson for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul de Québec (Québec City), particularly on behalf of the following youth works:

Service d'aide aux jeunes étudiants (Young students Aid Service) (SAJE): This program intends to help primary and secondary school students to buy school supplies, thus supporting equal opportunity.

### CARAVANS

The Le Marginal and La Bohème caravans maintain a day and evening presence for youths in specifically selected areas: d'Youville Square and Caron Street in the Saint-Roch district, aiming to promote their development and social integration. In addition, caravan teams visit primary and secondary schools and, via special animations, work at preventing school drop-out and help youths facing various social problems (drug addiction, bullying, rejection, etc.).

### JEAN-MICHEL ANCTIL ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

The scholarships recognize remarkable achievements by students, often from needy families, whose have shown particular perseverance

during the school year. Approximately 300 scholarships are distributed every year. Primary school scholarships (5th or 6th grade) amount to \$250, while secondary school scholarships (1st and 2nd grade) amount to \$500. Normally, winners come from the area's four school boards.

### JEAN-MICHEL-ANCTIL HOME

The home welcomes secondary level students who are on the verge of dropping out of school, or face specific difficulties (lack of self-esteem, drug addiction, aggressiveness, rejection, hyperactivity, learning difficulties, attention deficit, school dismissal or suspension, parental divorce, violence of all types, etc.). The youths visit the Jean-Michel-Anctil Home after school, and receive various services according to their needs: snacks, homework assistance, group dinners, workshops, sports, professional counselling (personal, academic and professional orientation), intended to help them solve their personal and family problems. Every year, a \$500 "Student Project" scholarship is also available to a youth who frequents the Jean-Michel-Anctil Home and works assiduously during the school year. The scholarship is intended to help young people reach a specific sport, culture or arts-related goal.



On his recent visit to Kelowna, the venue for the 2007 National Annual General Assembly, President Michael Burke took time to meet with Mrs Eileen Grannary and present her with a President's Pin in honour of the work and achievement of her husband, the late Barry Grannary Q.C. Barry served as the President of the Okanagan Valley Particular Council in the interior of British Columbia; he also served as Chairperson of the committee which was assigned the task of re-writing the Canadian Rule of the Society.

The Rule which will be printed and released shortly will be a fitting memorial to Barry's memory and will reflect his keen legal mind and his ability to work with others in achieving consensus in discussion. Vincentians in Kelowna will also recall his confidence and trust in their ability to host a National Annual General Assembly, and assure Vincentians from across the country a memorable experience in June 2007.

For more details about the Assembly planning visit  
[www.ssvp.bc.ca/2007AGA.html](http://www.ssvp.bc.ca/2007AGA.html)

# Council in Action

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## NO WORK OF CHARITY IS FOREIGN TO THE SOCIETY

These words resound and are used often. Many Conferences started in the West felt that they were only responding to emergency calls and some decided that they would only bring food. Of course many times they have had to change their minds on what the Society is and a food bank it definitely is not.

I often think back on stories I've heard and read about Frederic Ozanam and the fear he felt on his first visit. We have all been there. We put on this brave face, we pray, we look for Jesus and we smile so that we can be forgiven for bringing the bread we bring. We often don't fully buy into this and sometimes it is hard to see Jesus, when you have to look beyond the dirt, alcohol, prison bars, lies or anger. But see Christ we do and serve we do.

Thanksgiving, and I know by the time you read this Thanksgiving is long over, is a time when I am truly thankful for the poor God has put in my midst. Not a great statement, I guess, but I have learned so much from the poor and from the servant of the poor. Both have Christ in them and when they reach out in prayer and say "Yes" to that call, there is nothing quite comparable to it. This brings me to a story of service in Christ through the Society in two countries.

Just over two years ago a gentleman was presented to me after a talk I gave at Mass in a small town in Southern Alberta. This was a refugee from the Republic of Congo. He impressed me so much with his deep sense of faith and he grabbed my heart firmly with his tragic story. His story, I know is like many, but I was looking into his eyes and Jesus was calling me to listen carefully and I did. (I am not going to argue.)

I do not speak French, and although his first language is French, we managed without too much trouble. He patiently told me of his journey from the Congo to Canada and from Quebec to Alberta.

He was a college principal in his county and was teaching agriculture and things were fine. He and his sweetheart had 6 children. Things were good. He was troubled with the way many children were treated in his country as they were being discarded like garbage. He decided he would teach the orphans and abandoned children, who were left to die, how to plant seeds, so that they could feed themselves. Well the government did not like this action and our refugee was forced to flee as his life was in danger. SSVP in the Congo helped to get him to the Red Cross, who helped him escape to Canada.

He came without his family. They were safe in the Congo, but needless to say not too happy. Our friend was

sent to Brooks Alberta because of the job opportunity in the new Westside Packing plant. Jobs were plentiful and wages seemed high. This was true, but conditions are poor. The work is grueling, the hours are long and there is no housing.

Our friend blesses SSVP in the Congo, in Quebec, in Alberta and was taken by a Vincentian from Calgary, to Edmonton to look for a place. I called ahead to see if there were any Vincentians who spoke French. Well there was a new president who had just been installed 20 minutes prior who quietly said, I speak French a little and I will help. Well this 20 minute old Vincentian took three days off work, drove our friend and the Calgary Vincentian around Edmonton, found him a house in a less than 1% vacancy rate market, for eight people and made him feel welcome as only Vincentians can do.

Well their new home was to be in Edmonton. A week before the family arrived, our friend went to Edmonton and visited the French Church and Congolese Community, and decided this was the best place for his family to settle. Vincentians from Medicine Hat, and Calgary as well as Brooks, his home base, were helping him. All Vincentians wanted him to succeed with his goals. A partnership was also formed with the Full Gospel Church and the family was moved to Edmonton.

Our friend longed for his family and the process began more than two years ago to re-unite them. This came to fruition on a Friday evening in September. Seven weary travelers arrived at Calgary International Airport and as Vincentians met them and waited with many luggage carts for luggage to arrive, one bag came down and our guest said, "That is ours", in French. One bag for 6 children, 4 or them teenagers and the mother!

The Vincentians had brought many coats for all so that they would not freeze in the Calgary chill. They still could not believe the cold climate.

Vincentians came loaded with gifts for the new family to start their life in Canada. The best part was the look of pride on our friend's face when he saw his family. One can never forget nor would they want to forget the looks on the face of the mother, the children and especially his oldest son. That reunion was unforgettable.

I received an excited call from the family as they once again sang the praises and this time for Edmonton for all the furniture they were given. Each person had a bed and the entire house was furnished and even a television which the children enjoy. God is good says our friends and I respond, "All the time".

In the past we have been called upon from BC, or Ontario to help with our

friends and neighbours we serve. We have been part of relays from Vancouver to Halifax and St. John's. We have waited to greet families coming from Ontario and Vincentians right across the country have stopped what they were doing to be part of this great family.

Christ knew what he meant when He said that His Church would be built "Upon this Rock" and our Vincentians carry this theme out every day. They are the strength of this Rock and No work of Charity is foreign to them. They serve Christ daily "Upon this Rock. I thank God for this Vincentian Family.

If you want to read more about the struggles of the Congolese community this family came from, Western Catholic Reporter and CBC have done stories and specials on how the children are starving. There is no justice for those in our friend's homeland. But thanks to SSVP in the Republic of Congo and Canada, we have made one small step.

Our hearts ache because we cannot save the world, but we do so, one person at a time. We are servants of the poor, friends of the poor and we serve Christ in them

Lynn L'Heureux  
Western Regional Council



*Our Congolese Vincentian friend at the Calgary airport*



*The reunion was unforgettable for all the members of the family.*



*The happy Congolese family at the Calgary Airport*

# Council in Action

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## ONTARIO PROVINCIAL COUNCIL PASSES ON THE TORCH

Over 3,800 Vincentians across Ontario have worked long and intensely over the past 5 years to improve the lives of tens of thousands of our neighbours in need. Our Vincentian Vocation "To live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy" has driven our dedicated Vincentians in major efforts of service in Ontario and, through twinning, around the world, to deliver comfort, help and Christ's love.

Elections are underway for the next President of the Ontario Provincial Council (ONPC). These will be completed in December 2006 - and all will be informed of the results before the new President takes office January 1, 2007. We have 3 excellent nominees.

And so the exceptionally bright torch of ONPC Vincentian faith service will be passed forward for ever more growth in service with our neighbours in need.

The ONPC organization chart put our neighbours in need at the top:

Neighbours in Need, then our Conferences where our Vincentian work is carried out then Central and Particular Councils coordinating, stimulating and supporting all - the ONPC and its Executive.

## NEWS FROM ONTARIO PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Christmas is through our ONPC Vincentians who carry tens of thousands of hampers, toys and comfort to salvage the good spirit of Christ's birth for those in despair.

Of special dedication has been our VP Membership Bonnie Mulvihill, Sudbury, and Corporate Secretary. Bonnie has generated over 60 new Conferences across Ontario with an addition of over 370 new members.

Special Works VP Renz Mostacci, Hamilton, has worked diligently with our ONPC Stores Committee Chair, Pat Laurette, to increase Stores to over 40 across the Province and published a definitive Stores Operations Manual. Renz had also worked with our ONPC Twining Committee Chair, Doreen Simmersto increase ONPC up to 82 twins, with more in process.

An essential element - our youth work - is carried out by Carmela Addante, VP Young Adult Program (Waterloo) with a strong young adult group in Waterloo and Windsor. Young adult recruiting brochures have been published in English and French. Reach out to Catholic university ministers and student associations is essential. An international youth exchange through twinning is in process.

Our VP Communications, Paul Pytel, London, has set up elec-

troinc "Quicknotes", of emails to alert Ontario Members By Right. Paul has pushed the refurbishment of the ONPC website [www.ssvp.on.ca](http://www.ssvp.on.ca), working with Communications Assistant Bernie Hartlin, and it attracts world-wide attention. Secure donations on-line (in French and English) is featured on the website homepage.

And our VP Finance, Agnes Turley, Milton, tracks all our numbers - pass ups, pass downs, support of National, special projects such as women's residence and children camp costs. Agnes assures proper and efficient processing of funds, record keeping and audit review.

Our Administrative Secretary (part-time) Beverly Kowbel performed excellent services to keep all flowing smoothly.

Major actions have resulted in the opening of multiple SSVP facilities for the first time in mid-North Ontario, Sault Ste. Marie. Our 164 suite affordable apartment building in Ontario received an award as best in Ontario, with 49 families moving in on welfare and in 3-5 years moving out to buy their own homes.

Across Ontario, the ONPC and its components received a closely estimated \$14,580,000 in 2005-06. This is fundamental in generating over 80,000 home visits, supporting affordable housing, transition homes, childrens' camps, Prison

Apostolates, Twins, and more and more.

As President, I, Nick Volk, have been blessed with the endless determination of hundreds of Ontario Vincentians to smooth the path of the Lord into the homes and hearts of so very, very many of our neighbours in need.

With the Blessings of Frederic Ozanam and St. Vincent de Paul, Ontario Vincentians daily strive to improve lives of our thousands of neighbours in need to replace a sense of despair with a strength of personal dignity through the sharing of Christ's love with all.

For further information on any works or materials above, please check the ONPC website [www.ssvp.on.ca](http://www.ssvp.on.ca), email at [provincialcouncil@ssvp.on.ca](mailto:provincialcouncil@ssvp.on.ca), or phone 416-924-2160

Regards,

Nick Volk

