

Look back on the AGA 2007



Vincenpaul-Canada

"Come and Work in the Vineyard"

Return Address:
National Council of Canada
1247 Kilborn Place
Ottawa ON
K1H 6K9



Summary

SUMMARY - AGA 2008.....	2
PRESIDENT'S WORD.....	3 to 5
SPIRITUALITY.....	6 to 8
TWINNING.....	9
INTERNATIONAL.....	10 to 13
EXPANSION.....	14
VINCENTIAN MERIT.....	15
VINCENTIANS ACTIVITIES.....	16 to 17
AGA 2007 - PHOTOS ALBUM...18 to 23(French section)	

THE SOCIETY OF
SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CANADA

MISSION

Society of Saint 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 Saint 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 Society of
Saint Vincent de Paul - Canada • Dépôt légal
Bibliothèque nationale ISSN0703 6477
Agreement no. 1751697

Made with the collaboration of:
Ghislaine DuNord, John Grocholski
and Yvette Lafrenière
Editors: Nicole Schryburt, Ellen Schryburt
Graphic Design: Josée Laforest
Printing: Impressions Daigle Inc.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul -
National Council of Canada
1247 Kilborn Pl., Ottawa,
Ontario K1H 6K9
Email : national@ssvp.ca
Tel. : (613) 738-1118 • Fax : (613) 738-4789

AGA 2008 - Invitation

The City of Quebec will host the next Annual General Assembly of the Canadian Society of Saint Vincent de Paul that will take place from June 18 to 22, 2008, at the Val-des-Neiges hotel, in Beaupré.

Various activities will be offered under the theme, "It is by my works that I show my faith. Let us go to the poor..." (James 2:18). Among others, official AGA opening at the top of Mont Sainte-Anne, dinner at the L'Entailleur sugar house, on Île d'Orléans, mass at the Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré cathedral, closing banquet in the hotel ballroom, as well as attendance (to be confirmed) at the mass celebrated by the Pope on Sunday, June 22, on the Plaines d'Abraham. The Pope will be in Quebec City at that time for the 49th Eucharistic Congress.

The Val-des-Neiges hotel has reserved 150 rooms for our AGA. You will soon receive additional information and a registration form. If you wish to obtain details and registration forms before this magazine's next edition, please send us your name and address via e-mail nathalie.couture@ssvpq.org, or by phone at the Quebec Central Council secretariat, 418-522-5741.

Looking forward to meeting you in Quebec City next year!

Nathalie Couture
Recreation Technician, Quebec Central Council

YOU ARE MOVING ! PLEASE SEND US YOUR NEW ADDRESS

Please fill out this form and send it to SSVP National Council,
1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa ON K1H 6K9

Name: _____

Old Address: _____

New Address: _____

City: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Name of your Council or Conference: _____

President's Word - Penny Craig

Dear Brother and Sister Vincentians,

I am so very pleased to address all of you as President of the National Council of Canada because each of you is very important, and all of you give meaning to why I am here.

As I tried to determine what I could possibly say that would be meaningful to all of you, I found myself turning to the basic elements of our Mission and Values statement that says:

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.

Our Values that stem from this mission are that as Vincentians we see Christ in anyone who suffers, come together as a family, have personal contact with the poor and help in all possible ways.

What is so important about all of these elements is that what we value is essentially that which guides our actions both as Christians and as Vincentians as we live out the Gospel message. It is these values that guide who and what we are in our everyday lives on a 24/7 basis; what we commit to and what we consider as valuable in our Vincentian spirituality.

All of us have accepted this as the guiding principle in our lives because it provides the underpinnings for the meaning we all give to our lives, that is, being people of service.

We have a wonderful role model in Christ himself. Christ came to serve and not to be served, so his followers, you and I, are to become servants of all. This service to Christ and to the Gospel as reflected in our Mission statement is expressed in service to each other as brothers and sisters; to serve especially those in need; the marginalized, the outcasts of society and those rejected by society.

This Service to those who suffer is beautifully expressed in the beatitudes and the living out of these beatitudes. Many wonderful retreats for Vincentians have been based simply by reflecting upon these beatitudes. The living out of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of mercy is a beautiful way of expressing who we are as Vincentians. Help in all possible ways, is a value that we cannot ignore...the expression of service knows no bounds or limits.

Just as Christ was a person for others, therefore as his followers, so must we be persons for others, because this service is an imitation of that love expressed by Christ, when he humbly gave the example by washing the disciples' feet at the last supper. So then, there are no limits to our service...we must learn to become "People of the Water and the Towel" by following His example.

It is not about whether we can physically carry bags of groceries, go shopping or climb steps. It is about who we are as a "gift" and about inclusiveness of those Vincentians who are less physically able, and



*Penny Craig,
National Council President*

who have chosen the work of the Society as a way of living out their spirituality, as a way of returning back to the Father in heaven. It is providing these Vincentians with meaningful opportunities that will assist them in continuing to live out their Vincentian vocational life, and help them to never say "I can't do it any more...I am too old". We should be encouraging these individuals of our Vincentian family to stay connected with all of us. They are our history; they are a source of spiritual guidance and wisdom. We need their support, their wisdom and I dare-say their prayers! In fact, we need the prayers of the entire parish community! We need their help to contact others who are shut-in and lonely.

We need them to make those phone calls, we do not have time to make to those lonely persons or send cards to brighten the days of the sick and less able. We all need to remember that who we are is a "gift", and it is our gift that is needed in so many ways and on so many levels, most especially from a spiritual dimension. Above all, we need to leave everyone with whom we come in contact with a measure of hope!

President's Word - Penny Craig

From a spiritual dimension, the Mission and Values provide the framework that also allow each of us to be connected as part of Christ's "vine and branches" that allow us to "Come work in the Vineyard", and to strive to be more like Him, true servants as "People of the Water and the Towel"!

I am especially fond of the Mission and Values statement of the National Council of Canada. Our Mission and Values assist in providing a sense of Vincentian community that allow us to speak with one voice. The Mission and Values are the "Rock" that serves as the foundation upon which we rely and use to take guidance to assist us to work more effectively as a team for the needs of all that we serve.

As National President, I would like to continue to live out the Vincentian vocation in greater depth and assist others to do the same. The position of president is one of the most humbling experiences one may entertain. Any president's role is one of "Service".

It is my responsibility to assist everyone to provide an administration that is truly based on and reflective of the "Spirituality" of the Society.

I, the members of the Board of Directors and the staff will need all of you to pray for wisdom, understanding and strength so that we can make real and concrete what it means to be true Seekers and Stewards and all that it implies in our mission of charity.

Moreover, the Mission and Values provide the strength and impetus for us to become Seekers and Stewards in a very meaningful and dramatic fashion.

If there is a challenge to "see Christ in all who suffer", this would indeed be considered a prime responsibility of all Seekers and Stewards. The challenge is being able to look at those we serve and truly ask "what else can I do for you?"

As well as continuing the good work started by Presidents before me, we will focus on what I consider some of the current and critical areas of need that were identified by you the members during the National Council Strategic Planning processes. These include:

Spirituality

We will continue to want to make "Spirituality" a truly visible sign of who we are. Often the lack of maintaining the Gospel message at the front of what we do leads us away from our true mission and spirituality. We need to "walk the talk" and truly "live out" the Gospel message. Each year we choose a theme at our AGA that should be played out all year at all of our meetings and functions. Our National Committee will be able to assist local Conferences and Councils with prayers and activities to do this.

Youth

Youth Committee and its activities have been quite interesting, inspiring

and energizing over the last several years. A lot of enthusiasm and willingness by youth to be of service has been evident certainly in Ontario, Quebec and BC. I have also read communication sent by John O'Flynn to other countries very interested and hungry for connectedness and involvement. We want to continue in this path and enhance this aspect of the Society. The youth are the hope and future of the Society.

The World Youth Days in 2008 in Australia will provide a wonderful opportunity for youth to become connected in immeasurable ways. This Society began with a challenge to the youth of the time...from "all your faith is in books...to "let us go to the poor". Fredrick and his companions were up to the challenge and moved forward in so many ways to advance what it really means to be of service and to be Christian. This will be a wonderful time for renewal!

Administration

In our Administrative Structure – we will continue to develop a functional and efficient structure for both the membership and the public. By developing clear administrative processes that help all members achieve organizational and personal goals in a clear and simple manner. When such processes are not clear, this invites confusion and frustration, which is not very life giving for all concerned. Everyone's time is valuable and should be respected. All calls and inquiries to the Society's offices and administration should be received as welcomed opportunities

for support, education and empowerment....providing "the human touch"...so to speak.

Training and Development

We will want to ensure the establishment of approved training programs and trainer development programs that will enhance the abilities of others to recruit and retain dedicated members in each region. This will require time and dedication. There is so much good material out there, but it needs to be coordinated and developed so that all may realize its benefits, both as new and experienced Vincentians. For example, we need a basic orientation program that empowers and grounds everyone spiritually to the Society in keeping with its Mission and Values.

Public Relations/Media

It is agreed that this segment of the Society's work needs attention. This was identified as a strength that is yet to come for the Society. We must be able to be found, we must be visible. We must identify ourselves with a respectable measure of pride to the Church, each other and the public. We need to begin by examining exactly what we want the public to know about us, and defining what messages we want to convey to all. We need to send a coordinated message of who we are. What mediums should we use and when etc.. I will be calling for expertise to help us with this. This is essentially marketing and branding ourselves into

recognition by anyone who either sees the logo or sees what we do...they will know us by our works!

Advocacy

Advocacy in itself is nothing new to the Society. Fredrick constantly wrote articles in the Tribune to advocate for justice. However, its concept is generally misunderstood. President Michael Burke recognized the need some time ago for the Society to be up front and acknowledged as the Voice of the Poor by the powers that be in various capacities. In September 2006, Michael asked that a new committee, to be called "Voice of the Poor", be struck as a National Committee. Along with this, policies/guidelines for advocacy and communications were to be established to ensure a consistent message on behalf of the Society. We will be undertaking to instruct all board members relating to what advocacy is and what it is not.

I also believe that the other elements of our Special Work, such as Twinning, Prison Ministry, NERC etc., will each in their own way become enhanced as the administrative and educative underpinnings are in place to support these endeavors.

Serving the needs of my fellow Vincentians will begin with a Board Orientation Program before the first Board meeting in November. There we will share and learn the processes of National and Regional administrations, staff functions and key com-

munication, timelines and expectations. It is intended that this day will also see the identification of administrative goals for the coming year. The Board is the administrative body for the Society in Canada and should indeed know where it is going.

Each of you, as members, will realize the benefits of this education and empowerment process in at least three ways: first, receiving answers to communications on a timely basis, secondly, understanding how your local activities dovetail with national and international processes and thirdly, how all of these processes affect you as an individual in your local conference activities.

I realize that responsibility and accountability must be two of the most salient features that any president at any level must be ready to live out in all of his or her activities. This accountability and responsibility will be demonstrated in our day to day activities and at the Annual General Assemblies each year.

Finally, my overall vision for the Society in Canada is that as members we always bring that Jesus Vincentian relationship into being with all those we meet and serve and that... "We may all be one in truth and charity!"

President's speech at the AGA 2007.

SOFTWARE FOR THE MIND

For a great many of us cradle Catholics, for as long as we can remember, our minds have had a hard drive that contains the fundamentals of our Catholic Faith. Study and grace help keep all in working condition. Having said this, one must add that, as in the case of a computer that requires the latest software to be able to meet contemporary needs, so must we be on the lookout for solid information and good programs so that our Christian vocation will blossom according to God's plan.

A recent book from the Harvard Business School Press authored by Howard Gardner is entitled Five Minds for the Future. This book offers the solid information referred to above. The book suggests that in dealing with the future in the complex world we live in, there are five minds that should be developed. I suggest that this is very compatible

with the Christian values contained in our own internal hard drive. The Five minds are as follows:

- The disciplined mind**
- The synthesizing mind**
- The creative mind**
- The respectful mind**
- The ethical mind**

The author notes that the entry point in developing these minds ought to be the respectful mind. We are not alone and whatever we wish to accomplish is in relationship with others. Any worthwhile endeavour requires thoughtful planning and review before proceeding. This calls for a disciplined mind, one that moves logically from conception to realization. Such a process means managing many factors and inevitably synthesis is needed. New realities call for new solutions and creativity is called for. Finally an ethical mind is essential if we hope to be someone who truly enriches the common



Mgr Peter Schonenbach
National Council Spiritual Advisor

good.

As Vincentians we are often asked to pick up the pieces when human endeavours collapse. To do such important work all five minds are important to develop. The song we all know asks God to "makes us instruments of your love". It behooves us to do all we can to be excellent instruments so that God may use us to bring His love to the poor and the downtrodden.

Mgr Peter Schonenbach

SUBSCRIPTION COUPON

Please send this form and a \$15.00 cheque to :

SSVP National Council, 1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa ON K1H 6K9

NAME OF CONFERENCE OR COUNCIL: _____

NAME OF PRESIDENT: _____

NAME OF SUBSCRIBER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

PROVINCE : _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

Vincenpaul-Canada 2007 Edition - Subscription - 15^{\$}

WITH WHOM DO WE WALK?

We answer requests from people who have many of the same problems that we have faced, at some stage of our life, or face some of the same choices that we have had to make.

Perhaps you have applied for a job, with a stable and “good” company. You hear of an opportunity. You might have considered quitting the job that you have, in the same line, and then had the job that was such an opportunity and that you applied for, go to someone else. Now you have no job, and are at risk of losing your apartment. A food voucher would help for the time being, as you grapple with what to do next.

Have you been a little depressed, had a casual job that gives you more or less employment, but haven't been called a lot lately? With less money, you and your son save money by walking 14 blocks each day to get to school, so you ask for bus passes. Things have been so argumentative lately between you and your ‘significant other’ and it is not good for your young child to be watching this, so you separate. Then you discover that you are pregnant. And you are in the second to last term of a training course that you would have finished 2 months after the baby is due. Besides the food, you would like a jacket for yourself.

As your children develops, you become aware that they are having problems learning, and are advised to bring them to a special school. You need a car and some furniture, and your money is going to get the chil-

dren to school. Besides the food, you ask for help with a bed, sheets, a dresser, and some clothes for the kids.

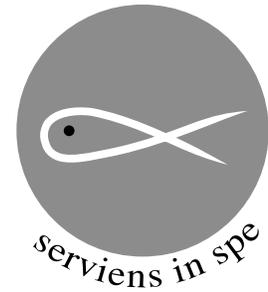
Not many of us have made a home in a motel room, where we have lived for at least three years. But that is the way of those of us who are less organised, who don't get those forms in and so do not get something from the Christmas Bureau, and just pool resources with someone and make the best of it.

How many of us have tried a new job, one that has a hope of making more money so that we can get ahead, but it is too physical for us, and we hurt our back or leg, and have to rely on our supportive family - but not too much. So we call for help when we are at our wits end, and then it snows heavily, and the visitor is delayed 2 days. When she/he comes, we follow them out the door as we rush to the grocery store with the food and milk voucher that they have given to us.

We have all made choices that are better or worse for our quality of life, that have put us into a position of needing help, whether we ask for it or not. We may have even been in the position of those we visit, and this helps when we give what resources that the Society has.

We are very grateful to all of our benefactors, who enable the members of our Society to serve Christ, as we walk with the poor.

Signed: A Home Visitor



**YOU WISH
TO CONTACT US?**

**SOCIETY OF SAINT
VINCENT DE PAUL
National Council of Canada
1247 Kilborn Place
Ottawa ON K1H 6K9
Tel: 613 738-1118
Fax: 613 738-4789
E-mail: national@ssvp.ca**

All correspondence with the National Council should be sent to this address.

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

THANK YOU!

THE WIDOW'S MITE: A Spirituality of Generosity

St Mark's Conference, Gatineau (Aylmer) Quebec, hosted a day of reflection and sharing on Saturday, February 19. All Conference members, parishioners and friends were invited to attend. Fr. John van den Hengel, scj, assistant pastor of St Mark's and professor at St. Paul's University and Sherie Croft, a parishioner, and retreat leader, led a group of 25 in considering just what giving - and receiving - can mean for us. To quote Naomi Kritzer in *On Giving to the Poor*, from the journal, *Commonweal*, December 15, 2006, "the act of giving opens the door between the human and God...When we help a needy person, we are helping Christ himself." (Matthew 25). Both to give and to receive is to be invited into a relationship. The question then becomes, how do I experience this encounter?

Participants were greeted at 9 a.m. with fresh coffee, juice and homemade muffins. This certainly set the tone for our day together - a day of good nurture for both soul and body!

A delicious - and healthy - buffet lunch was also provided by the St Mark's Conference.

Times of shared prayer were enriched with musical accompaniment provided by Terry Clarke and Rob Gillis. Their contribution was much appreciated.

Our morning focus, "The Beggar and I: Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God?" Fr. John introduced the theme, reflecting on the relationship God wants to have with each of us. Obstacles are found in various forms of wealth, power and even misunderstood piety. Unfairness, usually integral to 'neediness', can eat away at one's dignity. In smaller groups we discussed our feelings and probable actions when encountering one of several different scenarios where another asks for financial help. We discovered how easily we become judgmental and how many-faceted generosity can be. 'Charity' became better understood within the larger concept of social justice. Difficult questions were raised - what about the 'undeserving' poor, those who do not manage 'well' what we give them, seeking our help over and over? Judging again! There are no simple answers, but we became more aware of our own motivations and how complicated our generosity can be.

The afternoon theme: **You and the Beggar: Is it Good News?"**

Through two role plays, offered by four aspiring actors, we reflected on what 'giving' to another was really saying, and the feelings their needs called forth in us. As anticipated, we had a few good laughs as well. Sherie spoke of how we receive the generosity of others. Vulnerability is always uncomfortable. So is our lack of self-esteem. We can refuse generosity in how we brush aside a compliment or turn away offered

help, insisting, "Thanks, but I'm O.K. I can do it myself". Such situations may speak of our own poverty and inability, at times, to be grateful, to receive as a gift both a bird's song - and a pot of soup from a friend.

We came to understand in a deeper way, both our own poverty and that of others, and as well, our own gift-fulness and how we share that. In his encyclical letter, *Deus Caritas Est*, God is Love, Pope Benedict XVI defines Christian charity as "offering others not only material help, but refreshment and care for their souls." This day was an experience of this special love. At their regular meeting, St. Mark's Conference has continued to share on the article, "On Giving To The Poor". 'Refreshment and care for our souls' continues.





As a Twinning Representative, I am often asked why we should consider twinning or to explain more about twinning. I pondered this in my heart and let the Holy Spirit lead me in a reply that I hoped would provide an answer.

When we help a friend here in Canada, we try to ensure that they have three nutritional meals per day, more than one day's worth of clothes, furniture, bus fare, a television...the list goes on and on. In a third world country it is hoped that our friends will have something to eat every day, at least a day's worth of clothing, an opportunity to go to school or get medical attention and if at all possible, shelter.

Let's look at the Dominican Republic for an example. We all know about the political trouble in Haiti. The government at the time was actually pillaging items and money that were sent for the poor. So we stopped sending money and goods to Haiti. This was a hard decision but we weren't helping the poor any longer. The Dominican Republic Conferences stepped in to help the poor in the neighbouring

country. Now, the Dominican Republic has their share of poor too. In true Vincentian spirit the Conferences in the Dominican Republic accepted the funds and items we sent and crossed into Haiti to help the poor there.

Consider Nicaragua. The Vincentian youth there each adopt an elderly person who has no family nearby as their grandparent and visit them. They also bring them a small gift on their birthday and at Christmas.

In El Salvador, the Vincentians are helping young people go to high school in San Salvador as there is no high school in the smaller towns.

Then there is the ongoing project of rebuilding homes lost in hurricanes and mudslides. In Jamaica, the new homes being built are what we would call garden sheds and house whole families. The recipients are so proud of their new homes that protect them from the rain and give them shelter at night. These are all stories I have had the privilege to hear of since I took on being the Western Twinning Rep.

Consider that our dollar buys a lot in a third world country, so if people wonder what good \$500 per year is....IT'S A LOT! Those Conferences are doing all they can with what they manage to fundraise in their country. Sending them our contributions allows them to do so much more. They also need our

encouragement and prayers.

The work we do with our friends in Canada is very important and needs to continue. At the same time, it costs so very little to assist our Vincentian brothers and sisters in third world countries. In fact, I encourage all Conferences to twin. The funds they send could easily be raised through a special fund raising project and prayer is priceless.

Pat Bennetto, Twinning Rep
Western Regional Council

SPECIAL NOTE TO ALL

Dates to remember :

August 22:

*10th anniversary of the
Beatification of Frederic Ozanam*

September 9:

*Blessed Frederic Ozanam's
Feast Day*

September 27:

Saint Vincent de Paul's Feast Day

A pamphlet for a mass to be celebrated on September 9th in honor of Frederic Ozanam, is available on our website at: www.ssvp.ca. Go to the section "Spirituality" and click on the tab "masses". A pamphlet is also available in the same place for a mass in honor of Saint Vincent de Paul, which is celebrated on September 27th. If you cannot download these pamphlets please contact us at: (613) 738-1118 and we will mail them to you.

International - News from around the world

Confeder@tioNews
News from the Society
all over the world...
N° 6 – 16 April 2007

The first meeting of the Confederation's Africa Commission, in February 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya, attended by Presidents of the Society from all the African countries, and members of the Commission, will lead to the development of plans and projects at an international level over the next few years. We will cover these regularly in these columns, but for now we offer you a snapshot of the work of the Society in Africa at the moment.

Sudan: SSVP facing disaster in Darfour and elsewhere...

Although not so prominent in the media at the moment, the situation in the Sudan remains catastrophic. There are almost one million refugees (Ethiopians, Eritreans, Chadians and Congolese) and nearly two million displaced people (from the west of the country, mainly from Darfur, where civil war has been raging since 1986), living in the camps or outside of them, on the outskirts of large cities like Khartoum, in extreme poverty.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has been working among these people for a long time, providing medical help, food, education etc., in many of the camps, to several thousand people, with the help of the international Society (particu-

larly England & Wales, Ireland and Scotland) and other organisations. We have chosen to describe the work of our Society in Darfur, an area particularly at risk at the moment.



Humanitarian support in Darfour

Humanitarian support

From June 2004, in collaboration with Caritas Austria, several missions were organised in the region, especially around Nyala and Derege, to evaluate need and work out possible ways of helping. In 3 displaced persons' camps (Masai A and B at Nyala, and Derege), together with the local authorities and camp officials, the Society organised the distribution of emergency provisions in very large quantities (750 tonnes of sorghum, 4500 drums of cooking oil, 2000 mattresses, 3600 mosquito nets, 5000 blankets and covers, 7000 items of kitchen utensils, soap, etc.) between 2004 and 2005, which has had a very positive impact, according to the local authorities themselves. These operations came to an end in 2006 due to a lack of funds. The needs remain enormous.

Education and professional training

In 4 camps in the Geneina region, on the borders with Chad, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society is running a development programme, funded largely by War Child Canada, which is benefiting several hundred people. Courses in building, cookery and home economics are offered to groups of 120 people, over 3 or 6 month periods. There are other training activities (building ovens, for example). Literacy



courses (in English and Arabic) and numeracy courses are also given to many children, who are then encouraged to return to the state schools.

Various recreational activities are organised, along with courses in AIDS awareness, domestic violence, etc.. The SSVP would like to offer the people taking these pro-



grammes some financial or material help to start work, associated with their training, but cannot do this at the moment for a lack of funds. They do need your support!



Your help will be put to good use!
Maurice Konkobo

Expansion and training in French speaking Africa

Maurice Konkobo (Burkina Faso), Coordinator of the zone and Oliver Béthoux, a French Vincentian, member of the TTC in charge of the expansion of the Society in French speaking Africa will this week begin a two week trip to Togo, Mali and Senegal. They will be travelling by bus around the three countries. Their main objectives will be to offer training to the newly formed Conferences, to follow up the training of the older ones, and to meet Church authorities and interested people to create awareness of and interest in the Society so as to form new Conferences.

In Mali, the Society was created only 5 years ago, and 10

Conferences are working well under the authority of a very recent Central Council; in Togo, two groups have been working as Conferences (one aggregated) in two different cities since last year, and will meet for the first time to attend the training session given by



Oliver Béthoux; and in Senegal, one Conference has been working for some time now and will receive training to strengthen its work.

O. Béthoux à la réunion de Nairobi

Leadership training: Vinpaz Initiative

Without good leadership no organisation can prosper. Leadership in the Society from Conference President upwards is vital if we are to grow and develop and continue to be effective in meeting the needs around us. A key leader in the Society's structure is the Council President as his or her influence extends to all the Conferences and members in the Council's area and can be a vital factor in the motivation of members and the direction the Society takes. Conscious of the importance of this role, the Vin Paz Commission decided to provide leadership training courses on a

pilot basis for Diocesan Council Presidents and members of Superior Councils in Africa – Group 2.

Two such courses have been held to date – the first in Zimbabwe in November 2006 and the second in Zambia in March 2007. Despite the long distances to be travelled by



many, attendance at both courses was very good, with over 90% of Diocesan Council Presidents present together with members of the Superior Councils, indicating a real interest in what was offered. The programme was residential (retreat houses provided suitable venues – Assisi House in Lusaka and Silveira House near Harare) and extended over 3 full days.

There were three broad themes presented by the Vin Paz team (John Phiri and Francis Nkashi from Zambia; Juliet Marumahoko from Zimbabwe, Fr T Barquin CM, Denise Kelly and Larry Tuomey). These are:

DAY 1 : “Knowing the Society” :

This dealt with such topics as the Vincentian Vocation and Spirituality; the International Rule

International - News from around the world

and the position of the Society in the host country and the challenges it faces from the prevailing needs (in this connection the fallout from



the AIDS pandemic in both Zimbabwe and Zambia was a particularly pressing challenge).

DAY 2 : “Leadership and Role of Councils”:

These sessions considered the meaning of leadership and the key tasks of Society leaders (including the role of Diocesan and Superior Councils).

DAY 3 : “Planning Ahead”:

As a preparation for drawing up strategic plans, a SWOT analysis of the Society in the host country was carried out by the participants and guidance was given on how to draw up a strategic plan (Juliet Marumahoko of Zimbabwe presented this topic at both courses). The participants then set out their preliminary priorities for a 3 Year Plan for their Councils (to be followed up when they return to their Councils).

There was an emphasis throughout the 3 days on participation by the Presidents present and on small group discussions, which was

appreciated by the participants. Evaluation forms completed at the end indicated a high degree of satisfaction with what was offered. The participants felt that their knowledge of the Society was improved; that they had learned more about the responsibilities of their roles and that they were given a “tool” for planning ahead for their Councils. As always in Society meetings, the opportunity to meet fellow members and exchange views on common issues was much appreciated.

In Asia... Vincentian Solidarity Singapore in Cambodia...

Ms. Bernadette Lau, a Singapore Vincentian and Director of Corporate Services and Membership in the National Council of Social Services, Singapore's umbrella Council for all Charity organisations here including SSVP, visited Cambodia, one of the poorest countries in the world, with a group of Vincentian students.

In the centres they visited, with help from the parish missionaries, and the support of the SSVP, the children from the neighbouring villages are given the chance of edu-



cation and provided with a roof over their heads. One of the priorities is helping children and young people, who are very important for the future of the country. A number of learning centres have been set up, offering special care through education, basic hygiene training, English classes, libraries and reading groups, leadership training and so on.

200 computers were donated by the Polytechnic of Singapore, and 17 students and teachers of the Polytechnic came to a number of centres in order to install them: some were given to youth training centres, for the young people to learn computer skills, Kompong Cham Diocese has been given 33 computers and 5 of them will be sent to Kompong Cham Prison for prisoners to learn computer skills as well.

...International structure and Hong Kong in Bangladesh

Thank you for the support of Bro. Gabriel Mondel (National President of Bangladesh), Bro. Joseph Pandian, (Coordinator of the zone) and John Lee, (Territorial Vice-President for Asia), who visited the Conferences of 4 (out of 6) Dioceses in Bangladesh from March 9th – 15th. This visit may be considered a success, focussing on what should be done to improve the help given to many poor people in the country, one of the poorest in the world.

They had meetings with 3 Regional

International - News from around the world

Councils, 1 Area Council, 8 Conferences, meeting with over 200 SSVP members. Bangladesh has over 221 SSVP Conferences (despite having only 0.3% of the population who are Catholic) all over the country. The Conferences are quite active. They raise their own funds by collecting rice and eggs from their parishioners and selling them to help the poor.



The Vincentians met all the bishops

of six dioceses in Dhaka: they talked highly of the Society but suggested that more formation should be done among our SSVP members. The plan is now to work closely with National Council of Bangladesh on training (a copy of the Rule to be given to all members; training sessions for all levels, supported by India; reporting on the use of twinning money, etc.)

The National President of Korea and his team visited Bangladesh last year. They donated one house and two computers to a rural Conference in Mathbari, Dhaka. A team of 14 young people visited Mathbari last December and helped to build a house for a family with a disabled member. They will soon

be twinned with 5 Conferences in Bangladesh. With a generous donation from Mr. Peter Ko last year, the Central Council of Hong Kong supported the trip, and distributed some money to support SSVP work in Bangladesh.

**You want to share a story,
a testimony or an experi-
ence with your fellow
vincentians of the world ?**

**Please send us your
information at**

cgi.information@ozanet.org

Expansion

GREETINGS FROM THE ARCTIC TUKTOYAKTUK CONFERENCE!

Six months ago I never would have dreamed we would have a SSVP Conference up and running here on the Arctic Ocean. But God and Lynn L'Heureux had other plans and beliefs in our people up here.

In early February of 2007 Lynn and Tony came to Tuktoyaktuk to 'casually' introduce anyone interested, to the works and spirit of SSVP. And it took hold! Though there were only 5 or 6 persons who were contacted at that time, most of them

became a core. I think what spoke most to the people here was how Lynn put it. She said "You are already doing all sorts of things to make your community work, but maybe it would help to have a whole group of people behind you, giving you assistance in a variety of ways."

Then she enlarged, and the outcome was that there being so many needs in our community of Tuktoyaktuk, that a Conference was set up within 2 months, opening officially on March 27th. We were about 6 people at that meeting and we have increased steadily ever since. At

our meeting just today we had two new members and our number is now 12 persons, not including myself. We are 3 men and 9 women, and come from a number of different Christian faith groups - all ready and dedicated to do things to help those who fall through the cracks. To date we have had 2 rummage sales, received 3 large boxes of goods from the Calgary Conference, and a promise of 10 boxes to arrive by barge from the Yellowknife rummage center at St. Patrick's Parish.

These are some of our blessings to date:

Expansion

1. Sister Dorica Seber wants to start a SSVP Conference in Ghoa Haven, Nunavut!

2. Our numbers have increased from 6 to 13 in just 2 1/2 months.

3. Almost everyone is willing to either lead a meeting, take notes, lead the prayer, distribute food, or keep their ear to the ground to find persons most in need.

4. To date we have helped 2 persons in wheel chairs, three elders, a single parent, and several families with everything from a card table, to cloth diapers and to food. We have shared good gospel faith around scripture in our meetings and we manage to carry on our works without letting 'the left hand know what the right hand is doing' - so there is good confidentiality. There seems to be a gentle ripple effect of helpfulness and satisfaction in what is happening. The Mayor, Jackie Jacobson, expressed keen support for our presence and works.

5. We have been written up in a little blurb in the local newspaper entitled "Helping Hands in Tuk".

6. Tuk has neither a food bank nor a thrift store and blessings are moving in both these directions now. The Calgary group of SSVP has expressed the possibility of mobilizing SSVP to help build a Thrift store for us here in Tuk. People are so grateful that this might happen. We even said we'd plug in a coffee pot and then call ourselves "Fanny Horton's".

In Tuk there are many needs. Unemployment is about 80 %. The cost of living is exorbitant. A watermelon appeared in our Northern store. It cost \$46.00 (and it was only a small round one!!) A pineapple was \$24.00. A loaf of bread can cost as much at \$8.00. Last month 4 small apples cello wrapped were \$8.00. Two litres of milk is between \$6 and \$8.

We give only very basic staples for food: flour, sugar, and baking pow-

der (so the people can make bannock), lard (in place of butter), tea and coffee, peanut butter and cheeze whiz, and sometimes dried soups or oatmeal -- not any great banquet -- yet the persons receiving these are so very grateful.

With this letter I want to thank Lynn and Tony L'Heureux, Eileen Orysiuk and all of the SSVP who are supporting us by materials, prayers, finances and encouragement. SSVP seems to be the single thing that has really 'taken off' with the people of our community -- even more than 'church'! It is concrete and reaches out to persons in a crunch.

So please keep supporting us in any way you can. We have willing hands, but so far are far from being self sufficient. Thank you for making our Conference of St. Joseph possible.

Sister Fay Trombley,scic,
Spiritual Director.



**MR. RICHARD GIRARD,
WINNER OF THE 2007
GINGRAS-LABERGE-ARTEAU
VINCENTIAN MERIT AWARD**

This merit award is intended to honour, in a meaningful way, remarkable contributions to the fight against poverty and social exclusion by volunteer members of the Society, in the western districts and communities of the metropolitan Québec City area. "Recognition of volunteer contribution is, according to Mr. Regalbuto, a way to express thanks to particular volunteers, and to volunteers as a whole, for their continuous support, on behalf of the hundreds of needy people helped by the Society. 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. Girard, a university professor (Education Faculty, Laval University) retired since 1998, has been active in the community for several years. He formally joined the Saint Vincent de Paul over 20 years ago; participating to the Society's various activities regionally as well as in the Sainte-Foy Sainte-Ursule district. In Québec City, the Society has approximately 1000 active members working in 96 District Conferences and Special Works.

Mr. Girard has contributed significantly to setting up various works aiming to fight poverty and reduce social exclusion in the area (Regional Round Table on Poverty, Frederic's

Store, Food Store, home visits). His contribution was recognized by Centraide Quebec's Unified Seniors. He is Founding President of Frederic's Store (repair and low price sale centre for donated furniture and appliances) "This, according to Mr. Girard, is a type of assistance that promotes accountability, because the centre offers manpower training services that promote social reinsertion."

The merit award commemorates the exemplary contribution of the founders of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the territory of the former municipality of Sainte-Foy. Indeed, Mr. Omer Gingras, President, Louis-Victor Laberge, Vice-President, and Odina Arteau, Secretary-Treasurer, all of them now deceased, created the first Vincentian Conference, the Notre-Dame-de-Foy Conference, in December 1941.

The merit award comes with a \$500 prize that will be given, on behalf of Mr. Girard, to Frederic's Store.

**Frederic's Store, a work of
the Saint Vincent de Paul**

For the past five years, Frederic's Store, located at 2901 du chemin Sainte-Foy (where the old Garon hardware store used to be), has been selling used furniture and electrical appliances. A work of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Store aims to help modest income people who do not have the means to purchase new furniture and appliances. The Saint Vincent de Paul recipients, young couples, single parent fami-

lies, single people, immigrants, and students are the target clientele. The Store is also open to the general public. A team of 7 employees and about 15 volunteers ensure operations.

Through that activity, employees have the opportunity to acquire skills that might help them reintegrating the work force. Moreover, Frederic's Store actively contributes to environmental protection through recuperating and recycling, appealing to the western area of Québec City's population to donate used furniture and appliances. Before offering those goods to the general public, the store's personnel checks, cleans and repairs every appliance, if necessary. When purchasing an item, every client receives a 3-month warranty. The staff and volunteers do repairs to ensure that every piece furniture and small appliance offered to buyers is in good shape. Every purchase over \$50 entitles clients to free delivery. There is no sales tax.



Vincentian activities

TWO RIVERS RUN THROUGH IT

Calgary's Flood 2007

The morning paper read, "Calgary lashed by wicked rainstorm." I would have changed the word lashed to slashed as I toured the battered city. Calgary, as many of you know, is a city of hills and everything runs down from 'dem thar' hills.

It was a very warm June day and we were down the hill having a barbecue when we scurried inside as the rain came. We watched in excitement, safely from indoors, in a no flood zone. It was an amazing light show that only God can produce and the thunder was an outstanding vibration. The rain came down fiercely hitting the ground and bouncing back up to the heavens. This rain was no friend of eaves troughs and sewers which soon became apparent.

We left our dinner to discover that this wonderful show had a serious path of destruction. Behind our guest's house was about two feet of water. They were safe although sewers and rain spouts were not handling the onslaught of water.

While only 72 ml (4.4 inches) fell it was in a short period and within 25 minutes things began flooding. There were many lightning strikes, two causing fires, and many people were stranded in the middle of busy roads with water up to the roof of their cars. We were in water that came over our bumper. Power was out in many places and so streets were chaos, and all you could hear was sirens. They were out in great numbers. The storm hit near the end of the rush hour, so there were still

many people making their way home.

The gloves were off as we began to battle rescuing those who live in low areas. There is construction everywhere in Calgary and the rain closed more streets the next day. So there were not a lot of happy campers and I mean that both literally and metaphorically. Calgary has a great affordable housing shortage and many people are camping in tents and trailers that are close to rivers and they really got washed out.

There was an underground fire in the sewer system just outside the Drop In Center and it had to be evacuated. Low Rentals flooded and one had a lightning strike. Walls caved in, including one basement wall and one family had to swim out of their house as it filled to two inches from the ceiling. Numerous basements flooded and many other homes. Along side rent gouging this is one more blow to our friends, the poor.

The good news is that the weather has cooled, the rain has stayed away, and while the rivers are definitely at their peak, the snow is melting a little slower and unless more rain or a heat wave comes we are once again safe for the moment. Other places around Calgary are on alert, especially the town of Canmore, which is overrun with above ground sewer lines to help with the surplus of water. People are on the edge in Banff as the Bow River is swollen to the max.

We have 3 deaths allegedly attributed to both the storm and the swollen violent Bow River. Two rafters from Quebec are missing and their raft was found empty being tossed around in the mighty river. The river

is dangerous at the best of times, but now with so much water and under tow it is a treacherous warrior.

Currently Albertans have been generous with their help financially for those rendered homeless by the flood. Others are being helped by the Red Cross and the SSVP and money is not yet an issue.

Both Federal and Provincial Buildings have received great water damage and the City of Calgary has experienced over \$50 million in damage. Some roads are still closed due to sewer and surface water several inches deep. There is one incident of the sewer literally blowing up and this was on one of Calgary's busiest roads, which was closed for more than a week.

By the time you read this the flood will be over for a long time and we may have received more flooding, but know that Vincentians are on the job loving and serving Christ in the very wet and muddied poor.

Lynn L'Heureux





ONTARIO COUNCIL INITIATES UNIQUE FUNDSAVING - FUNDRAISING PROGRAM

Did you know that our St. Vincent de Paul Society can collect Aeroplan miles to offset the costs of SSVP travel, and to raffle them off as a fundraiser ?

Yes, it is true. It is done on a regional basis, and the Ontario Council (ONPC) is doing this right now.

Aeroplan - Community Investment Division (A-CI) - is quite supportive. They call our ONPC account a Charitable Pooling Account. ONPC Executive Ron Trent (1) uncovered this special project following on President John Staley's request for new initiatives to help in our work with our neighbours in need.

The process is to contact the Aeroplan Office (2). One person in the SSVP Provincial/Regional organization should be designated to collect the points for the whole

Region and redeem them with Aeroplan.

Points can be collected from all Vincentian members and friends in the Region (actually from anyone who wants to help). The individuals donating these points submit them on an Aeroplan donation pledge form (3) to the person redeeming the points for the whole Region . The donation pledge form can be edited with the name and contacts of the person redeeming the points, with our logo, etc. The points collector works directly with the Aeroplan office.

This creative plan was announced in detail at the ONPC meeting at our recent AGA in Kelowna. More complete details are on the ONPC website www.ssvp.on.ca - click on the scrolling message "Donate your Aeroplan points...", or click on Donations, under General Information. The website includes an Aeroplan Information Sheet and Aeroplan pledge form, as well.

Prospects are very good for both the

fundsaving part of the program permitting SSVP travel at no airline cost. The ONPC has also set up a committee to oversee the distribution of the donated points. It is important to note that points can be donated in advance. And also positive prospects for the fundraising part of the extra points raffle.

(1) For more complete details and questions, please contact Ron Trent - 1-800-315-0387x25 or email rtrent@pegasus-glass.com

(2) The Aeroplan-Community Investment Advisor is Tamara Souglis - 416-352-3780 or email Tamara.Souglis@aeroplan.com .

All best for success with free SSVP flying and productive fundraising, all dedicated to helping those whom we serve.

Blessings - respectfully submitted,

Nick Volk

THE AGA 2007 BILINGUAL ARTICLE BEGINS AT PAGE 18 OF THE FRENCH SECTION.