



Vincenpaul-Canada

“Come and Work in the Vineyard”

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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

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Obituary

We regret to inform you that Brian Craig, son of our National President, passed away on October 28 at the age of 42 after a lengthy battle with cancer. Other than his parents, Penny and Bill, Brian leaves behind his son Tanner and a brother.

Important ...

**The legal name of our organization is
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.**

**Even though we use the article “the” before the name in a text,
we do not use that article when the name is used alone,
for example in a document title or on a poster.**

**The only official acronym for the
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is “SSVP”.**

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL 2008

The time has come to renew your subscription to Vincenpaul-Canada. Vincenpaul-Canada is the main information channel between the national Council and its Conferences and Councils. Therefore, we ask all Conferences and Councils to send us their subscription coupon, together with a cheque for the year 2008 by January 31, 2008.

This is also the opportunity to let us know of any change of address, or of the election of a new president. The information transmitted through your subscription coupon will help us update our database.

To all our subscribers who are not Conference or Council presidents: please send us your subscription coupon and a cheque as usual, and we will be happy to add your name and contact information to the Vincenpaul-Canada subscription database.

Printing, paper, and mailing costs increase year after year, so we have had to increase our subscription rate to \$20.00 per year. Your contribution is essential to maintaining this communication tool.

We always reserve a few pages of the magazine for your articles, be it to express your comments, describe a Vincentian event or activity, or to honour a Vincentian. We encourage submissions as the magazine is all about you and the work that is done across Canada.

You may send articles and photos anytime at the postal address of the National Council Ottawa office, or via internet at editor@ssvp.ca.

We take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a very good year 2008.

The Vincenpaul-Canada editorial team

Penny's Piece

However great the work that God may achieve by an individual, he must not indulge in self-satisfaction. He ought rather to be all the more humbled, seeing himself merely as a tool which God has made use of.

(St. Vincent de Paul)

Greetings to all!

It certainly has been a very busy six months! So much to learn! But also so rewarding! With any new administration comes changes, and changes are healthy for any organization. As we all know changes need to be "managed", not just "made". Changes need to be related to what the organization has defined as its priorities so that results can be seen as meaningful for all concerned.

One of the questions I have been asked concerns the Strategic Planning directions and how this new administration will continue to address these directions at this time. I think I have put structures in place that will continue to assist us to make gains in becoming true "People of the Water and the Towel" so that we may serve both members and those in need.

The last three strategic directions/issues identified rested a great deal with the work of the National Council Board of Directors and Administration. These directions included:

- Administrative Processes
- Public Relations and Media
- Education

For me, accountability is of paramount importance. I will keep you the membership, up to date regarding the progress of these issues

Administration

In the area of Administration: Since I am able to travel to Ottawa fairly easily this provides the opportunity for me to be more "hands on" in the day to day administration of the Ottawa office. Thus, I have chosen to work with two Administrative Assistants. Joanne, working 30 hours per week in the Ottawa office, and Nicole working 14 hours per week in Montreal. Together, they are willing and able to meet the administrative needs of the members of the National Council.

To assist with smooth communication, it follows that a description of who will do what is in order. Joanne will focus on the day to day management of the Ottawa office. Her duties will include processing requests for aggregations and institutions, filling sale requests for ordered items such as Rule Books, prayer cards etc., answering telephone and email messages, maintaining the data base for Vincenpaul magazine, forwarding submissions to the editor for the magazine, acting as contact person between Canada and Paris, receiving correspondence and of course, staying in contact with me via email.

Nicole will continue to work with Kathy regarding Twinning. As well, she will manage web-site information and Vincenpaul with Ellen Schryburt. Members' feedback to the last magazine indicates that members like to see pictorials in the magazine of the activities of the National



*Penny Craig,
President National Council*

Council, so together they will manage the magazine. A very big thank you to them and to all of our contributors for the last fall 2007 issue! The preparations for each AGA will involve a combined effort of all of us. We continue to develop and redevelop administrative procedures to serve our members, the public and those in need so much more efficiently.

I would like to also pay tribute to Jean Noel at this time and thank him for all his efforts!

Public Relations/Media

This is a relatively new area that will deal with maintaining the image, look and messaging with regards to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and its work in Canada. Public Relations and Media will also focus on the production of materials for both public distribution and education materials in keeping with the branding of the Society. We are now moving into the realm of advocacy in a more formalized fashion, and The Voice of the Poor Committee will require a professional look and communication style.

Members have asked National Council office for the "official version of prepared materials they could

Penny's Piece

use for displays, distribution etc. We have just recently completed the draft revision to the national brochure. This was an often requested item that had not been revised for some time, and it should be available in November.

Looking for Members to form Public Relations Committee

At this time I am looking for three or four individuals with this type of knowledge/experience who may wish to volunteer their time to assist the council with these types of activity. Experience/knowledge can include: journalism – writing of press releases, position papers, education materials etc; graphic design – to assist with the development of the look of education materials, public displays etc. If this interests you, please do contact me.

Education

We have Carol Horne as the chair of this committee. She has recruited one member from each region to act as the National Education Committee. They will focus on organizing training materials, developing courses for member development, and developing trainers in each region using “train the trainer” models. Educational opportunities will be developed using various modalities. The Education Committee will work closely with the Public Relations and Media Committee. Members of this Committee are: representing BC/Yukon is Nora Criss; Western is Lynne L’Heureux; Ontario is Bill Graham; Quebec is Gerald Croteau; and Carol Horne will represent the Atlantic region. Welcome everyone!

National Audit

As you may know we are conducting a national audit of all Conferences and Councils in Canada. This is important on two levels. First, it will provide some accurate data related to numbers in Canada. Secondly, these numbers will relate to our standing at the International Council General Executive Committee level in Paris. Canada must have 1000 Conferences to be a member with a voice and a vote at these meetings. We were not allowed to attend last year because it was determined we did not have the 1000 number. I urge all of the Regional Presidents to work diligently to accomplish this task by December 1, 2007. If you know that your Conference is not aggregated, please contact your Regional President.

At this same time, the International Council General is also now conducting an audit in all countries. We are very timely with our audit.

On the International Front

Turn to God with Faith
To your own with love,
And to all with kindness.
(Scottish Prayerbook)

We have received a communication from Ernesto Balladeres, Treasurer of the National Council of Nicaragua. He was requesting \$3000 US in financial assistance to help with a special project. They wish to repair a module to a machine they use for X-rays. The SSVP in the city of Leon was offering Odontology (dental work) to the poorest of the city of Leon and of its bordering regions. Their services are given free

to those who cannot pay, or a fee of \$5.00 to \$ 10.00 for those who can pay. Also they provide services of X-ray services for about 60 patients each week, a very useful service they do not want to discontinue for those with the least resources.

Of course, after discussion with Kathy and the Executive... Canada will come to the aid of these people. Where the money is to come from is a good question. I am hoping that I can appeal to the regions for some assistance to cover the costs. This is such a nice tangible project for us to become involved with!

May we accept afresh our calling
To make visible our unity in Christ
With all other Christians by
working Together with them
in the service of those In need!
(Scottish Prayerbook)

ON THE ROAD

Your word is a lamp for my feet
A light for my path. (ps 119)

September Travel

Austin, Texas

One very nice aspect of my position as President thus far has been to meet so many brothers and sisters on a personal level. I had the pleasure of attending the USA Annual Meeting in Austin Texas in September. A great event! The workshops and meetings were very informative. The Voice of the Poor Committee seems to be forging ahead in many regions of the USA. Issues identified in the USA are not much different than those we have in Canada. In some regions there is an identified need to address

the utilities costs for families that are unable to cope because of their low income. As well there was interest in connecting with Canadian Vincenians to make the voice stronger. We will do that.

Historical Moment: Among those attending the USA meeting was the Vice President of Mexico. He was there to formally request assistance from their Brothers and Sisters in the USA to strengthen the Society in Mexico. A delightful and energetic young man, his intent is to get a fully functional National Council in Mexico. Joe Flannigan, the USA President promised his support by having an official document signed indicating the kind of support that USA will provide. I was asked to attend the signing to show the Canadian solidarity as regards assisting the Americas.... to "help in all possible ways".

Joliette Quebec

A celebration of 150 years of the Joliette Particular Council. A beautiful Mass was celebrated followed by a luncheon. What a happy and proud, yet humble family they were! Jean Claude provided a wonderful summary of the history of the Council. It was certainly a marvelous tribute to all who came before them.

Bowmanville Ontario

The Lakeshore Particular Council celebrated their first Mass as a Council. Another spirit filled meeting and luncheon! The focus of the meeting was to share insights into the topics of love and charity. Great presenters animated that aspect. The

other portion of the meeting allowed all those who attended the AGA 2007 in Kelowna to bring back to members the pictures and reports related to certain workshops, meetings and fun they experienced. What a delightful way of being responsible and accountable!

Quebec Regional Council Annual General Assembly

A very warm welcome as always. The meeting was very spirit led and spirit filled. It had the sense of a very large family coming together to pray, to share food and experiences. The depth of work conducted in Quebec is commendable. Of particular interest the projects called Bonne Mine and SAGE. These two projects are related to helping school children. BONNE MINE assists financially with the purchase of school supplies and extra curricular activity expenses. SAGE provides assistance to those children who are having difficulty keeping up in class. This involves coaching and mentoring them through their homework and studies. The emphasis on this activity is to prevent these children from dropping out of school. These two activities are unique to Quebec, but certainly not impossible everywhere.

AGA 2008

Remember that accommodations will be limited, so please do register early! To celebrate our 175 year anniversary of the Society, I have invited the International President General Jose Ramon Diaz-Torremocha and he has indicated he will be delighted to be in attendance!

Call For Workshops

As you may know the theme in 2008 will be around "Putting our faith into action...let us go to the poor!" Please think about workshops that can be provided that will develop this theme, which is so rich with possibilities! Please submit your proposals and requirements for workshops to the national office in Ottawa. These will be forwarded to planning coordinator in Quebec.

In summary, I have to say it certainly has been very busy three to six months. I wish to thank the staff Joanne and Nicole for their patience and understanding as we implemented administrative changes. Also, thanks to the Executive for their contributions toward building a stronger administrative process. All members in their respective roles have been excellent "Stewards"! Again, thanks to the contributors to the Vincenpaul!

A light will shine on us this day,
The Lord is born for us;
He shall be called Wonderful God,
Prince of Peace, Father
of the world to come;
And his kingship will never end.
(Is 9; Luke 1)

May each of you be blessed throughout the Christmas season with love, peace, and joy!

As always, I continue to pray "that we may all be one in truth and charity!"

Penny Craig, President
National Council of Canada

AGA 2007 - Comments

I had set up an account with Westjet for delegates attending the AGA and the arrangement was that for every fifty flights arranged on Westjet the company would give a free flight as a prize. When I contacted Westjet on the Friday of the AGA week they advised me that only thirty-five bookings had been made using the special number they had quoted. I announced this fact to the delegates at the Plenary Session on the Saturday morning and stated there would be no prize given out as we had not met the minimum requirement.

On July 19, I received an email from Westjet advising me that they had in fact processed fifty-two flights and the email included an attachment which was a certificate for a free flight. I emailed the company for the database of those who had used the booking number and we placed all these names in a bowl for a random draw at the meeting of our Conference on July 25. Ann Ormston, our president and my co-convenor of the Transportation Committee of the AGA, drew the winning ticket.

The winner is Jean Shuart of Sudbury, Ontario and the voucher has been forwarded to him. We hope that he is able to enjoy his flight. Over 100 delegates flew Westjet to Kelowna.

Reg Humphries
Transportation and Entertainment
Chairman, 2007 AGA

Hello Ellen and Nicole,

I received the copy of the Fall Vincenpaul magazine for our conference at St. Charles Garnier, here in Kelowna late last week and I want to say how delighted I was with the feature article on the 2007 AGA. The photos and the write-up were superb, Ellen, and they gave me time to reminisce on what was a special time in the lives of so many Kelowna Vincentians. In the hurly-burly of all the organization, planning, details etc of the AGA we didn't quite have the time to savour the AGA but now we have a lasting memory to enjoy. Well done!!

Thanks for all you both do for us. God bless and keep up the good work.

Reg Humphries
Coordinator of transportation



Reg Humphries, Transportation and Entertainment Chairman, 2007 AGA with Ann Ormston, president of the St-Charles Garnier conference in Kelowna who draw the lucky ticket !

PRAYERS REQUESTED

Recently Joe Flannigan, National President of the SSVP in the US, learned through medical tests that there are spots on his lungs and bones, in addition to his liver. More tests are planned to determine the approach to treatment. We suggest that all Vincentians nationwide appeal to Blessed Frederic Ozanam asking him to intercede and if it be God's will to cure this cancer. The prayer to Blessed Fredric is provided below. Joe and Pat and their family will be grateful for your prayers.

Council General asks that we make this known to all our members and encourage them to participate in this effort on Joe's behalf.

Prayer for Those in Desperate Need and for the Canonization of Ozanam

O God, our Father, You alone have the power to bestow those precious gifts of Yours which we rightly call miracles. If it be Your will, be pleased to grant such a gift in behalf of those persons for whom the prayers of the Society have been requested; and for Joe Flannigan. We humbly ask that You grant this favour to glorify blessed Frédéric Ozanam, that it may serve to have him called Saint by our Holy Mother the Church.

We make this prayer through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son.
Amen.



Msgr Peter Schonenbach
Spiritual Advisor

Mercy and Justice:

As Christians we are asked to show mercy, while at the same time building a world where justice prevails. This may sound simple, yet it is extremely complex. For Vincentians, balancing these two realities is both of highest importance and a constant challenge.

The person who calls for help requires assistance, but the merciful act must be part of an overall pro-

gram to make society a more just enterprise. How to do this becomes possible when we work together, when merciful outreach is done by a Conference that meets for prayer, for coordination and for solidarity. The lone ranger approach simply is not acceptable.

The problem that comes from isolating mercy from justice is well demonstrated in a text by G.K. Chesterton, quoted in a recent issue of Christian Week:

The modern world is not evil, in some ways the modern world is far too good. When a religious scheme is shattered it is not merely vices that are let loose. The vices are, indeed, let loose and they wander and do damage. But the virtues are let loose also; and the virtues wander more wildly, and the virtues do terrible damage. The modern world is full of the old Christian virtues gone mad. The virtues are gone mad because they have been isolated from each other and are wandering alone.

A good example of what Chesterton is talking about would be a situation where in the name of charity one builds a dependency in a person, thereby preventing growth and self-reliance. Those who have long experience with Vincentian work will realize that the line between mercy and justice is fine indeed. That we err on the side of mercy is understandable but that we forget about mercy altogether is inexcusable.

Vincentian work must remain discreet, but is not to be done alone. Just as Christianity is a community affair so is Vincentian work. May the Spirit of Ozanam inspire you and may the 2007-2008 pastoral year be rewarding for all.

Msgr Peter Schonenbach,
Spiritual Advisor,
National Council

SUBSCRIPTION COUPON

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WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

All of us are familiar with the parable of the workers in the vineyard. (Matt 20 1-16). At the end of the day when the landowner settled his accounts with the workers, rather than paying each worker in proportion to the work done, he paid everyone a full day's pay. We all know how the workers, who were first on the job, were upset when they realized what had happened --- they felt that they had worked longer and deserved more than the late arrivals. As long-time unionist, I have struggled over the years to understand what God was trying to tell us.

It has taken me a long time to realize that the money issue is hiding the real issue of the story. The amount of funds is not what is significant here. It is the work that we do in the field that is important. Those who began working earlier expected to receive a greater reward than the ones who started later in the day but it does not matter to the Lord when you started – the important thing, for the Lord, is that you have answered His call to serve. Regardless of when our work begins, the works we carry out in His name will judge us all.

The landowner promises a certain wage to those who came early. He keeps that promise. He does not break that promise when he pays those who came late the same wage. He knows how difficult it is for the workers to feed themselves and their families and he knows that half or a quarter days' salary would not be enough. So he acts with compassion and gives all workers a full wage.

Needless to say the workers who labored only part of the day were very pleased with what they received. How wonderful it must feel to be treated with such compassion and mercy!

As Vincentians and indeed, as Christians, we are called to treat all those we meet with the same mercy and compassion that the landowner shows to the workers in the field. "Love one another as I have loved you," He tells us and that means we are to show the same tender, unmerited compassion to our neighbor that He has shown us. When we stand before Him on Judgment Day, he will only ask – "how did you love?"

We show how well we love by the works we do and the way we respond to one another. Do we treat all we meet with respect and dignity? Do we take the time to listen when they want to talk? When we make a home visit or work in a food bank or visit someone in prison, do we try and show love and compassion and not judge them? When we fill out a food voucher, do we do so without prejudice? Do we pray before we make a home visit and ask our God to allow us to be His hands and His ears so that we carry out His work in the manner He wants? Do we look upon those we serve with gratitude because, through them, we see the face of the suffering Christ?

He has asked us to be workers in His vineyard. Where is His vineyard? It can be as close as your family and your next-door neighbor and as far away as a third world country. We may not be able to directly help those

in other countries but we can give spiritual, emotional and financial support to them. We are blessed because we are an international organization and this makes it easier to provide assistance to other countries. The emotional and financial support is important but spiritual support is an absolutely essential. We are a fraternal and spiritual family and we need to try and develop a strong spiritual base in order to carry out His work. Personal prayer is very important but family prayer and sharing is also important. Just as we need to meet at the conference level to pray and work together and learn from one another, so we must also meet at the particular council level, the regional level and the national level. We are a family and as a family, we must come together to help each other carry out His work and to grow together fraternally and spiritually. We must remember that we are workers in His vineyard but we are also part of that vineyard and so must "feed" one another.

All of us will stand before Him on the last day and all will be treated with love and compassion. There will be an accounting for what we have done in our lives. It doesn't matter how long you have been working. Some may have worked for years, yet others may only work for a few months, weeks or days - we will each receive our reward come judgment day.

Maureen MacIsaac,
Spirituality Committee

Youth



*Caroline Gilbert,
Youth representative, National Council*

THE VISIBLE MINORITY

They affectionately call us “the youth”. We are tall, or short, heavy, or light, a bit younger, or a bit older, male, or female, but we all recognize ourselves in “the youth”. Oh yes! We have another thing in common, all of us volunteer for the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul!

Most of us are part of the ATSO: Always the Same Ones. There are those who go to school and never have time for anything else. And then, there are the ATSO. They go to classes, get involved in student associations, participate in extra-curricular activities, and find the time to volunteer. What is even stranger, they are often quite successful at school! Which proves that the secret is good time management!

The ATSO are a minority. In general, they caught that hereditary disease before becoming teenagers.

They look like everybody else, although they thoroughly radiate joy and self-esteem.

To be an ATSO is an incredible stroke of luck for those who were hit. They can meet other same-age ATSO who are really interesting, as well as share wonderful moments with more experienced ATSO: those whom we do not call “young” anymore, but who are involved in the SSVP in greater numbers. They are indispensable brothers and sisters! They contribute their wisdom, life experience, advice, and support. They welcome younger ATSO with an open spirit, and thus allow them to grow, to blossom, and to learn. That kind of mutual assistance is essential to meet our common objective: helping those in need.

So, I raise my glass to the marvelous family of Vincentian men and women across Canada! Thank you to young ATSO who keep finding time to help in the community. Thank you to our colleagues, the experienced ATSO, who support and encourage us, and allow us to live great unforgettable moments with them.

Caroline Gilbert,
Youth Representative,
National Council

Christmas is almost here!

The Vincenpaul-Canada team asks Conferences and Councils to take pictures of their Vincentian Christmas activities and send them to us with an article, or simply a description of the activity.

We would like to present those activities in the next December 2008 issue of the Vincenpaul-Canada.

You may send your pictures and text to the National Council of Canada in Ottawa, or via internet at editor@ssvp.ca.

May this joyful season bring peace and happiness to all our readers, and to our Vincentian friends!

The Vincenpaul-Canada team



International President's
Circular Letter

Paris, September 3, 2007

TO THE MEMBERS OF
THE GENERAL COUNCIL,
PRESIDENTS OF THE
SUPERIOR AND ASSIMILATED
COUNCILS

My dear friends:

At the beginning of the new course year, once the summer vacation is over for so many of our Brothers and Sisters, I think it most convenient to address all of you in order to bring to mind some important topics that deserve our special attention as members of the General Council.

Natural Disasters

As you know, as a result of the most recent natural disasters in several places on our planet, and in particular, due to its magnitude, that which has taken place in Peru, our Conferences in those locations have appealed to the Council General of the Confederation for help. We have sent to different places, the first emergency aid taken from the Funds assigned for these types of calamities, while expecting the arrival of funds from different Superior Councils for each of these disasters. These first emergency help has obviously been very limited; you know very well that we do not have the adequate resources.

I entreat you, facing such great suffering, that we make an effort to assuage it through our prayers, as well as, through our financial contributions. As we have done on other occasions, the General Council sends an appeal to all the

Conferences, in the whole world, through the respective Superior Councils, so that they take collections to that end, and then send them here so that they are equitably distributed.

The General Council does not keep any other funds than those sent by the Conferences and the Councils for different ends. The General Council distributes what it receives from you. That is all it can do.

Christianity in the Orient

As you have no doubt learned through our web site www.ozanet.org, the situation of our brothers in different places in the Orient, and in particular in the Middle East, is frankly terrifying. The Gospel finds increasing difficulties in those places to its expansion, or even just keeping it alive, because in many of those places Christianity is clearly receding as a result of the systematic persecution undergone by the followers of Christ. Meanwhile, most of us, Christians who do not experience persecution, do absolutely nothing on their behalf.

As regards the Conferences, I cannot hide from you the most difficult conditions which affect some of the works we carry out in those countries because of the scarcity of the means to keep them working. I could mention many cases in the different countries of the region, but I will limit myself to two of them: our brothers in Lebanon cannot meet the expenses to maintain the Christian schools where the future believers in Christ could be educated: in Iraq, a country ravaged by a terrible war, Christians are persecuted so pitilessly that whole families undertake a terrible exodus



*José Ramón Díaz-Torremocha
XIV Président Général*

to save their lives and those of their children. Because of all that, the General Council receives crying demands for help that it cannot attend to because of the lack of sufficient means.

The General Council does not keep any other funds than those sent by the Conferences and the Councils for different ends. The General Council distributes what it receives from you. That is all it can do.

Campaign for Africa

As you will remember, last April 25, I addressed all of you to remind you of the Campaign "The Conferences for Africa" that we have been preparing during the last two years, and that will be in full swing during the next two years.

The Commission, which has prepared this Campaign and which will be meeting in Nairobi at the time that you receive this letter, has received more than two dozen projects, drawn up in full detail and viewed as most adequate, to be developed in several African countries. Examples: orphanages (Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe), rural projects (Zambia, Liberia, Malawi), distribution of clothing (Gambia), wells and clean water projects (English speaking Cameroon), apiculture farm (Zimbabwe), school (Benin), aviculture (Zambia).

With these projects they intend to not only diminish the present levels of poverty but to achieve a long range capacity to fight against poverty in the future. They are basically Development Projects. But we are so far not receiving the aid necessary to guarantee their functioning.

The General Council does not keep any other funds than those sent by the Conferences and the Councils for different ends. The General Council distributes what it receives from you. That is all it can do.

How often do we lament in our conversations the situation in Africa or that of the Christians in the Middle East? How many times do we regret not being able to do anything? Are those feelings sincere if when we can do something we do not do it;, when all we have to do is share our prayers and our money? Do we really care about what happens in the world, or do we just concern ourselves with our small personal world? Do we feel solidarity towards the aliens, the strangers? Do we really feel to be Catholic, and so universal? Let us feel in tune with the universal Church. Let us feel sympathy for the problems of our brothers. Let us help them.

International Youth Days

In the same letter of April 25, mentioned above, I spoke also of the International Youth Days. Attached to this I am sending the first pieces of information about the Meeting and the inscription form so that the young members that you are thinking of sending, as representatives of your country, may start working with the other members of their own countries on the topics to be studied there. By this I am intend-

ing that the young Vincentian who will finally attend the Meeting really represent the mind of the brothers and sisters of each country and not only their personal points of view.

To that end they should appoint, the sooner the better, the young Vincentian who will be the representative of his country so that he can start receiving the opinions of the other young members. Please review carefully the attached information that I am sending for the preparation of these Youth Days.

The Meeting, through the working groups that will meet every day, and through the talks they will listen to every morning, will try to endow the attending young members with a deep knowledge of the Society in all its aspects, both regarding its philosophy and its organization.

The conclusions arrived at by the young Vincentians about the topics presented to them will be published later by the General Council and will serve as working documents for the General Council itself. Due to the lack of resources, the General Council cannot give any amount of financial help to the attending members. This means that the Council of each attending member, no more than one for each Superior or Assimilated Council, will have to finance the expenses of its corresponding young representative sent to the Meeting.

The General Council does not keep any other funds than those sent by the Conferences and the Councils for different ends. The General Council distributes what it receives from you. That is all it can do.

Internal Statutes

As you know, on the 31st of December of this year comes to an end the period of time (which has been extended on several former occasions), for presenting for approval by the General Council the new Internal Statutes of each country, redacted in keeping with the Basic Requisites approved during the General Assembly of October 2003 held in Rome. Those countries not sending the text of their Internal Statutes to the General Council before that date run the risk of losing their condition as "members by right" of the Confederation. I beg all those countries that have not yet sent the text to do so with the greatest hurry, so as to avoid the inconveniences resulting from not sending it.

At the beginning of this course year, after many of us have been able to take some days of rest, I make an appeal to all the Brothers and Sisters throughout the world through their Councils and Conferences, to be generous in the aid entrusted to the General Council, so that it may have the capacity of sending that same aid to those who never take a rest because their poverty does not allow them to enjoy such a luxury.

I pray to Mary to move our hearts; to help us to move from talking to acting; to make us conscious and responsible towards each of the poor of the world, who reflect for us the image of her Son.

With my prayer and all my affection,

José Ramón Díaz-Torremocha
XIV General President

DISASTER REPORT FOR THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Hurricanes Dean and Felix

Dominican Republic, WI

Not too much devastation, only a great deal of rain and damage to some homes in the south coast of the country.

Mónica Alcántara, National Secretary.
(Mrs. Alcántara was elected national president October, 2007)

Commonwealth of Dominica

We are slowly getting over Hurricane Dean. Many homes were badly damaged; about 25 needy persons require major repairs to their homes. Materials needed: Galvanized sheeting, plywood and lumber. Many farms have been destroyed and banana trees uprooted, foodstuffs are in short supply. It is hard for the communities in remote areas because of landslides and fallen trees. A mother and son, 27 and 7 years of age, died when a landslide covered their house, they had no time to get out. Thank you for your prayers; the Good Lord



protected us because I feel the hurricane could have been much worse.

Rhoda Basdeo,
President National Council

Jamaica

Coordinator Mary-Rose Knight spoke to Maxine Gooden, national president of the Council of Jamaica. Maxine was unable to give much information as power lines and cell phones were not working. However, she said that there was no damage to the Ozanam Home for the Elderly. She had personal damage to her home as she lost half of the roof. There is no electricity and water; computers do not function.

Maxine Gooden,
National Council President

Sainte-Lucia

Loss of roofs, landslides, downed power lines, devastation in banana industry and one death directly attributed to the hurricane. 27 households lost their roofs affecting 98 persons. St. Lucia Red Cross distributed hygiene kits, but much help is needed. There are 11 functioning Conferences in St. Lucia.

Jacqueline Tobierre, President
Particular Council-South

Belize, Central America

Hurricane Dean struck Belize, mostly in the northern part of the country. The regions of Corozal (border with Mexico), Orange Walk

and San Pedro were the most affected. Much assistance is needed. Corozal was declared a disaster area. Estimated damages are in the \$100,000,000 dollar area. Agriculture has been devastated as sugar cane, fruits and papaya crops lost \$30,000,000 alone. Many are now out of jobs, a great number in shelters and many others who have to be supplied rations of food, water, clothing and medicines. There is also need for building supplies and materials. Government, Red Cross and other business houses are assisting with repairs to homes and roofs. SSVP in Belize is putting resources together in order to send some contributions of food and clothing to our brothers and sisters in Corozal and some villages in Orange Walk. This will be a great set back for our country. Thank God no lives were lost.

Marion Marsden, National
President

Honduras, Central America

The northern sections of the country were the most affected, in particular the province of Yoro (this is the region in which the national president of the SSVP resides). Damage analysis by the government of Honduras on Hurricane Felix and subsequent heavy rains is as follows: 4 fatalities, 11,591 in shelters, 32,216 evacuated, 97 homes severely damaged, 118 homes destroyed, 67 roads badly damaged, 6 roads totally destroyed, 3 low-water bridges damaged, 5 bridges impaired, 7 schools with severe damage, 4,117 farms devas-

tated and 145 domestic animals lost.

Agricultural losses are estimated to be about \$4,000,000 dollars (US), mostly devastation to crops of corn, beans, vegetables, bananas and sugar cane. El Progreso is the main city in the province of Yoro. The national president of SSVP says, "we are on Red Alert, we have more than 2,000 victims of Hurricane Felix here and we are trying to provide some food, especially to the shelters, since there are a great number of children. We would like to help more, but financial resources are almost non-existent. As always, it is the rural areas that are most affected and in this case, the poorest have lost all their crops."

María Antonia Medrano,
National President

Nicaragua, Central America

The passing of Hurricane Felix through northern Nicaragua has been most devastating to the poorest and most vulnerable area of the country. This is the north Atlantic zone where the villages are made up of small wooden homes with tin roofs. In the town of Sandy Bay 99% of the homes were destroyed and similarly in all the small communities. The major city in the region is Puerto Cabezas or Bilwi, as the indigenous refer to it. It too received major damage. This area is made up of villages with natives called Miskitos, Sumos, Ramas, Mayagnas and mixtures of all of these who speak their own dialects

and are extremely poor.

The people are in need of everything: water, food, clothing, medicines, roofing materials, linens, etc. At this writing there are at least 100 missing or dead persons and the number increases daily as bodies are found floating in rivers or in the Caribbean Sea. Those affected now reach 100,000 in number.

In Puerto Cabezas there is a Conference of the Society, although we have not been able to communicate with them, but will keep trying. International help has begun to arrive. We hope the government will handle this aid honestly and efficiently. The International Red Cross is already cooperating in the effort. We are expecting the assistance of the Council General in Paris so that we can begin to take help in the best way possible to our brothers and sisters, victims of this disaster in the Atlantic north region of the country. The National Council of Nicaragua, depending on the amount of aid received, will decide on the best method to insure its arrival at the most needed locations. We will attempt to form a committee of Vincentians in Puerto Cabezas who will supervise the manner in which the help will be distributed. We are secure in the knowledge of the past generosity of our North American brother and sister Vincentians, just as was done when Hurricane Mitch devastated our country a few years ago.

Submitted, by
Ernesto Balladares, National
Treasurer

PERU

The National Council of Peru sent its report about the use of the 3,000 euros CGI sent them as an emergency instalment for the victims of August earthquake.

Señor de Luren and San Vicente Conferences, Ica, prepared food in 38 charity meal and assisted around 4,000 people in Asentamientos Humanos. They also bought dishes (12 dozens of plates and soup plates and tea cups) as well as 30 beds and 40 tents.

In Santuario de Luren, Ica, they assisted around 200 poor people in canteens, and bought 3 tents and a gas furnace.

San Clemente Conference in Pisco, helped in charity meals in the parish, and bought 15 gallons of oil and 100 kg of dried vegetable stews and potatoes.

Last, the National Council could repair the drinkable water cistern in Villa Federico Ozanam, SSVP Peru main work, sheltering, feeding and educating many orphan children.



SOME EXAMPLES OF VINCENTIAN WORK

Here are a few examples of what the Society of St Vincent de Paul has been able to achieve in the past through your generosity, in these countries that have suffered natural disasters.

Following the tsunami in December 2004, after two years of work, Indian, Thai, Sri Lankan and Indonesian Vincentians have enabled several thousand children orphaned because of the tsunami to obtain normal schooling, and helped hundreds of families to find accommodation, or take up their working lives again, as the Society has been able to provide them with boats, fishing or other equipment, or train for a new profession.

The hurricanes (Stan, Katrina) and tempests (Alpha, Gamma) of 2005 left their mark on Central America, but the Vincentians in Guatemala or Mexico were able to build dozens of houses, as in the Philippines, following the repeated mudslides in 2006, where the « SSVP Village » was built at St Bernard (see below)



As ever, Council General would be completely helpless without the generosity of our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

The Confederation could not support Vincentians in so many countries after this unprecedented wave of disasters without the mobilisation of such ever-ready financial resources.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT, MRS. ANTONIA MEDRANO:

The Permanent Commission on Contingencies, COPECO, documents the Evaluation of Damages and Analysis of Needs, EDAN. This information was accomplished as a result of Hurricane Felix and the subsequent deluges, and the following are the results at national level:

Dead 4, Sheltered 11,591, Evacuated 32,216, Damaged roadways 67, Destroyed roadways 6, Washed out roads 3, Damaged bridges 5, Damaged schools 7, Agriculture (blocks of houses) 4,117, Cattle and domestic animals 145.

Yoro is the county where the Ulua River passes and is still on Red Alert. We have more than 2,000 victims and are studying the best way to help and give attention to our brothers and sisters. Until now we have helped with prepared food for the shelters since there is a large number of children. We wish we could help more but we have great limitations due to a lack of funds.

There is a need to buy grains to make up some provisions. These people have lost all their crops which is where they extract their alimentation. As always it is the rural areas that are the most damaged.



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!

Vincentians at work in the Vineyard

HARD WORKING ONTARIO CONFERENCE BRINGS HELP TO THOUSANDS

Simcoe, which is the largest urban centre in the new municipality of Norfolk County, has a population of approximately 16,000. Nearby Waterford, about 8 miles away, is a town of about 3,000. The two parishes have been clustered for approximately eight years.

The Simcoe St. Vincent de Paul Society has been in operation since 1958. At present we have 24 members. One of the original members is still active.

In 2006 we are the only agency in the Simcoe area which delivered groceries to up to 539 families comprising 1624 people. Each year 50 families are provided with Christmas baskets from the Christmas Exchange.

We provide funds for special cases for lodging, medicine, the payment of utilities, etc..

The retired priest at St. Bernard's in Waterford, Father Jim Dunne, is our spiritual director and he gives out food vouchers, from the rectory in Waterford, which allows recipients to purchase \$30 worth of food at the local supermarket. Over 60 such coupons are handed out each year. 160 bagged lunches were distributed from the rectory in 2006.

St. Vincent de Paul Simcoe has a Soup Kitchen which has been in operation for 29 years. In 2006, 2240 hot meals were served there. We estimate that over 50,000 meals have been served in the Soup Kitchen during its 29 years of operation. If you consider 3 dishes per meal that is 150,000 dishes, 150,000 pieces of cutlery, plus pots and pans, etc., that were all washed by our volunteers.

However, more importantly, the Soup Kitchen provides not only a warm meal but a much-needed opportunity for social interaction between participating individuals.

Another part of our work involves shut-ins and residents of nursing homes. We visit these people, and each nursing home resident from our parish family gets a small gift at Christmas and Easter. Last year over 90 individuals were visited.

A large percentage of the funds, that we need to carry on our work, is donated by the parishioners of St. Mary's in Simcoe and St. Bernard's in Waterford.

Special drives at Holy Trinity High School, St. Joseph's and Ecole Ste Marie bring in thousands of cans of food to assist the needy in the community.

Many individuals, organizations, churches, lodges, farms, stores and businesses provide financial assis-

tance or gifts in kind.

Most of our neighbours in need are not connected with the Catholic Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicholas Volk



Vincentians at work in the Vineyard

September 9, 2007

On the 10th anniversary of the beatification of Frederic Ozanam by John Paul II (September 9), the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of Joliette celebrated its 125th anniversary of existence and activity.

A thanksgiving mass, presided by our bishop Mgr Gilles Lussier, was celebrated in the cathedral, and it truly set the tone for the festivities. Of course, the SSVP is a lay organization, but it is Catholic in essence. It is essential for all of us to celebrate within the Church.

A gourmet brunch followed, served at Château Joliette for past and present volunteer members. It was a pleasure to meet again several people who were part of various stages of the growth of our parish Conferences and the store.

The Joliette SSVP has contributed to the well being of our poor in several different ways in the past 125 years. Of course, volunteers meet thousands of people, and distribute thousands of coupons for food, clothing, and temporary assistance each year. But we must remember that the SSVP is also the promoter of non-profit community-owned housing (HLM), S.A.J.E. and Opération Bonne Mine. As for the Joliette SSVP, it has promoted the Hébergement d'urgence Lanaudière – HUL (Lanaudière emergency housing), the Soupière (Soup Tureen), the Manne quotidienne (Daily Manna), and the birth and growth of its two stores.

In 1849, the parish priest of the Village de l'Industrie (now Joliette), Father Antoine Manseau, wrote to his bishop that poor people were many in this area, and that there were always more of them here than elsewhere.

What has changed in 2007?

Not much.

The number of poor people is increasing, although perhaps they are different. They are young people, single parent mothers, welfare recipients, unemployed... Fortunately, what has not changed in 125 years is the generosity and devotion of volunteers and benefactors.

But succession is difficult.

SERVIENS IN SPE.

To serve in hope.

It is our motto, and it means everything. The SSVP is, and will be.

Lucille Bienvenue
Secretary and Treasurer of the stores
Joliette



Jean-Claude Bienvenue, president
Regional Council of Québec,
Penny Craig, President, National Council
and Jean-Marc Duranleau, president
Particular Council of Joliette



Past presidents of the Particular
Council of Joliette :
Jean-Guy Desroches from 1972 to 1994,
Jean-Marc Duranleau, present president,
Jean-Claude Bienvenue from 1996 to 2003
and Marcel Perrault from 1965 to 1969



Mass of the 125 anniversary of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of Joliette



*Kathy Weswick, chairperson
National Twining Committee*

TWINNING PROJECTS

The National Council Board has accepted the possibility of having twinning projects.

What is a twinning project?

A twinning project is a request from a Receiving National Council, on behalf of its conferences or councils, for financial support for a plan, usually for a structure, that would benefit a larger number of the poor that they serve, or enrich their lives. The Canadian National Council's conferences or councils would support these plans, which would require funds greater than \$1000 per year.

What led to us considering twinning projects? Currently, we have a policy that no more than \$1000 per year can be sent to a twinned conference or council. The basis for this was that large sums require much organisation and personnel to administer, and that

the Canadian dollar is converted to much more value in the countries with which we twin. The National Twining Chairperson committed to developing a way for Canadian twins to be able to send more funds, if their receiving twin had a particular plan for their use. A process is in place, to make this possible, under the guidelines which would be helpful to all concerned.

Plans such as these are called 'projects', as outlined in the International Twining Guidelines, Appendix B. Data from Scotland, as a Giving National Council, and India, as a Receiving National Council, were used to establish guidelines and forms.

Guidelines are available in a separate document. Some examples are:

Projects are an integral part of twinning, and are done through twinned Conferences and Councils.

Every project must contain details, such as the necessity and purpose of the project, how it will benefit the poor, details of cost, nature of the operation or organisation, and data on the beneficiaries.

The types of projects that Canadian conferences and councils may support are:

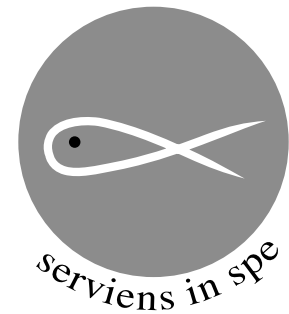
- self help projects for adopted families
- self help projects for other poor

families

- vocational training institutions
- employment oriented programs
- community welfare
- hygiene and health care
- housing (structure should be restricted to exceptional cases, and should not be larger than 40 square meters)

It is our hope and prayer that we will better be able to help the poor, through the development of projects with our twinned conferences and councils.

Kathy Weswick, chairperson
National Twining Committee



We always have conferences waiting to twin.

If your conference is interested in a twinning *project*, please fill in the twinning *project* application form.

If you are interested in a *regular* twinning, please fill in the twinning application form. Both forms are available on our Web Site:

www.ssvp.ca

AGA 2008 - Invitation

Dear Vincentian brothers and sisters,

The Québec Central Council is proud to invite you to the 37th Annual General Assembly of the National Council of Canada 2008 that will take place in the city of Québec, where the first Canadian Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Conference was born.

DATE: From Wednesday June 18 to Sunday June 22 , 2008

LOCATION: Val-des-Neiges Hotel, Ville de Beaupré

THEME : “I will show you my faith by my works (James 2.18)
Let us go to the poor...”

The assembly coincides with the 400th founding anniversary of the city of Québec. Therefore, we have organized the schedule to allow you to visit downtown Québec and enjoy our hospitable city, while having a chance to participate in the festivities of the 400th anniversary. The Assembly overlaps with another major event as well, the 49th International Eucharistic Congress. In that context, the Pope might visit the city for a grandiose mass to take place on June 22. If his visit is confirmed, we will do everything possible to give you the opportunity to attend the mass. The National Council has already received confirmation that the International President of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul will also be present. Do not miss this opportunity to meet him.

The Assembly will take place in a charming and very comfortable hotel, which has a limited number of rooms, so we suggest you reserve soon. On Thursday evening, all visitors to the AGA are invited to eat at the summit of one of the highest mountains in the Québec area, Mont Ste-Anne. The panoramic view is worth the trip. As for the Friday evening dinner, you will enjoy a true Quebec tradition, eating at a very popular sugar shack on Île d'Orléans, home of the well known writer-composer-performer and poet, Félix Leclerc. We are ready to bet that our musicians will succeed in making you dance, to help digestion...

In addition to the essential work accomplished by Conference members over the years, the Québec Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has put in place several works intended for youths, to ensure that they can achieve their own potential, whatever their family's financial situation. We invite you to come to Québec, and discover these hope-carrying initiatives that were our inspiration for the theme of the 2008 AGA. When we act to alleviate the daily miseries of poor people, especially those affecting youth, tomorrow's active citizens, do we not work concretely at propagating the Gospel, and display our faith? “I will show you my faith by my works (James 2.18) Let us go to the poor...”

In a few words, the Vincentians of Québec join me, and officially invite you to come and visit in great numbers next June. Looking forward to meeting you,

Pierre Morissette, President of the Québec Central Council

AGA 2008 - Program

**Theme: I will show you my faith by my works (James 2.18)
Let us go to the poor...**

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Noon – 9 p.m. Arrival and registration at Val-des-Neiges Hotel, in Beaupré
5 p.m. – 6 p.m. Dinner on your own

Thursday, June 19, 2008

7 a.m. Mass and rosary
7 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Breakfast
8:30 a.m. Word of welcome by the President of the Quebec Central Council: Mr. Pierre Morissette
9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. National Council Board meeting
9 a.m. – 9 p.m. Registration
9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Workshops
11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch
12:30 p.m. Bus departure for the city of Québec
1 p.m. – 4 p.m. Free visit in the Vieux-Québec (Basilique Notre-Dame de Québec and Monseigneur Laval Center where the archives for the 1st conference in Canada are kept)
5:30 p.m. Bus departure to Mont Ste-Anne
6 p.m. – 10 p.m. Opening and dinner at the summit of Mont Ste-Anne

Friday, June 20, 2008

7 a.m. Mass and rosary
7 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Breakfast
9 a.m. – 9 p.m. Registration
9 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Official opening by the National President: Mrs. Penny Craig
9:30 a.m.– 10:15 a.m. Guest speaker presentation: International President, Mr. José Ramon Diaz-Torremocha
10:15 a.m.– 10:30 a.m. Coffee break
10:30 a.m. – Noon Workshops
10:30 a.m.– Noon Meeting between the President and voting members
Noon – 1 p.m. Lunch
Noon – 1 p.m. Spiritual Advisors luncheon
1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. Workshops
13:30 p.m.– 3 p.m. Meeting of the various National Council committees
3 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Coffee break
3:30 p.m.– 5 p.m. Meeting of the Regional Councils
5:30 p.m. Bus departure for the Érablière l'Entailleur, Île d'Orléans
6 p.m. Dinner and animation at the Érablière

Saturday, June 21, 2008

7 a.m. Mass and rosary
7 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Breakfast
9 a.m. – 9 p.m. Registration
9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Regional Councils and National Committees reports
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Coffee break
10:45 a.m. – Noon National Council Statutory meeting
Noon – 1:30 p.m. Lunch
1:30 p.m.– 2:30 p.m. National Council Statutory meeting
Presentation of the 2009 AGA Committee
2:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. Closing address by the National President
3:45 p.m. Bus departure for the Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré Basilica
5 p.m. Mass in the Immaculée-Conception chapel under the Basilica
6:30 p.m. Closing banquet at the Val-des-Neiges Hotel

Sunday, June 22, 2008

7 a.m. Mass and rosary
7 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Breakfast
9 a.m. – Noon Free time

***Possible papal mass ***