



WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL EDITION

Cadotte Lake, Alberta, Catholic Church - **article page 11**

For more information on Cadotte Lake : <http://www.ssvpsttheresas.org/social-justice.html>

IN THIS ISSUE

CLICKABLE!

Message from the President	2
Elections - National President	3
Vincentian Family Symposium	4
Spirituality	6
In Memoriam	7
Twinning	8
North of 60 - Ulukhaktok NWT	9
Cadotte Lake, Alberta	11
Western Regional Council	13
New President	13
Parables from the Parking Lot	14
Ozanam Day	15
Mission and Values / Contacts	17

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Dear Vincentian,

Frequent member meetings generate an environment that is favourable to the development of Vincentian spirituality, friendship and solidarity. Most of us do not have training in social intervention, and we often have to manage stressful situations than can be difficult. A few tools are available to help us address those situations. I would say that prayer is certainly the primary means to help us step back and see Christ in those we serve. Regular meetings with our Vincentian sisters and brothers help to bring conference members together in a supportive family. This solidarity fosters a dialogue that is rather liberating and can lead to solutions that help us continue giving the best possible service to needy people. It is very important to avoid becoming overcome by difficult situations that we face while volunteering. Our neighbours' difficulties must not become our difficulties because, if that happens, there will come a time when we are unable to serve efficiently. It is therefore very important to take the time to recharge our spiritual batteries and meet frequently with our sisters and brothers, sharing various difficult situations that we encounter along the way.

Regular conference meetings are essential and as important as our meetings with those in need. These meetings help them to regain their human dignity and ease their feelings of rejection by society. However, the welfare of our sisters and brothers is as important as that of the people we serve, and it is through frequent meetings that we make sure that no conference member is left alone in difficult moments. You all know the importance of family reunions. They reinforce our sense of belonging and make us experience unique pleasurable moments. Through our volunteer action on behalf of needy people, we are united within the Vincentian family and that family also needs to meet. Meeting not only helps to reinforce the members' sense of belonging, but also gives them the support they need in difficult times and allows them to share wonderful experiences. We must stop for some breathing room regularly, to catch our breath and recharge our batteries. Since the very beginning of the Society, meetings have proven to be useful in accomplishing exactly that.

**WE ARE UNITED
WITHIN THE
VINCENTIAN
FAMILY AND
THAT FAMILY
ALSO NEEDS
TO MEET**

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT



NATIONAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT POSITION

I would like to invite all full members interested in running for the position of National Council President to prepare their résumés and a brief speech, in order to officially present their candidacy at next June's General Assembly in St. John's, Newfoundland. Early in 2018, the official procedure will be sent to aggregated conference and instituted council Presidents, as well as to national vice-presidents. Please make sure that you do not miss the official announcement, since that document will outline the steps to follow to apply.

THE POSITION OF NATIONAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT MOST CERTAINLY ENTAILS SOME CHALLENGES, BUT THAT SERVANT LEADER POSITION GIVES BACK A LOT TO THE PERSON WHO ACCEPTS IT. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT GOD IS VERY GENEROUS AND THAT HE SEES TO IT THAT THE SALARY AND BENEFITS FULLY COMPENSATE FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT.

Moreover, you will never be alone in bearing the responsibilities of the position; employees, former Presidents, and members of your Executive and your Board will be there to help and support you. I would even go further, by saying that more than 15,000 Vincentians are ready to answer the call as soon as you ask.

It is important that you consider this opportunity by asking yourself what you can bring to our Society. As for the things that are most difficult for you, there will be enough people around you to help in those domains and you can always delegate various tasks. So, to all of you, good luck!

*Jean-Noël Cormier, President
National Council*

VINCENTIAN FAMILY SYMPOSIUM IN ROME

POPE FRANCIS MESSAGE TO THE VINCENTIAN FAMILY

More than eleven thousand people gathered around Pope Francis on October 14, in St. Peter's Square, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Vincentian charism, on the theme "I was a stranger, and you took me in." (Mt 25,35). In a speech, the Pope recognized that Saint Vincent de Paul gave rise to "a charitable élan that has endured for centuries" and wanted to share with the audience a reflection on three forms of action, which he said epitomize the Vincentian charism and are of the essence to Christian life in general: adoration, welcome, and being on the way as pilgrims in the world.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Thank you for your warm welcome, and thank you to the superior general for introducing this meeting of ours.

I greet you and together with you I thank the Lord for the four hundred years of your charism. Saint Vincent generated a zeal in charity that has lasted through the centuries: a zeal that came from his heart. That is why today we have here the relic: the heart of Saint Vincent. Today I would like to encourage you to continue this path, proposing three simple verbs I believe very important for the Vincentian spirit, but also for Christian life in general: to adore, to welcome, and to go.

TO ADORE

There are countless invitations from Saint Vincent to cultivate inner life and to dedicate oneself to the prayer that purifies and opens the heart. For him, prayer is essential. It is the compass for every day, it is like a manual for life, and, he wrote, the "great book of the preacher": only by praying can we draw from God the love to pour into the world; only by praying can we touch the hearts of the people when we announce the Gospel (cf Letter to A. Durand, 1658). But for Saint Vincent, prayer is not only a duty, far less a collection of formulas. Prayer means stopping before God to stay with Him, to dedicate oneself simply to Him. And this is the purest prayer, that which makes space for the Lord and for His praise, and nothing else: adoration.

Once discovered, adoration becomes indispensable as it is pure intimacy with the Lord, Who gives peace and joy, and melts away the sorrows of life. Therefore, to someone who was under particular pressure, Saint Vincent also advised staying in prayer "without tension, turning to God with simple glances, without seeking to have His presence with perceptible efforts, but abandoning oneself to Him" (Letter to G. Pesnelle, 1659).

This is adoration: placing oneself before the Lord, with respect, with calmness and silence, giving Him the first place, abandoning oneself trustfully, to then ask that His Spirit come to us and to let what is ours go to Him. In this way even those in need, urgent problems, difficult and burdensome situations enter into adoration, so much so that Saint Vincent asked to "adore in God" even



the reasons that we struggle to understand and accept (cf. Letter to F. Get, 1659). He who adores, he who attends the living source of love, cannot but remain, so to speak, "contaminated". And he begins to behave with others as the Lord does with him: he becomes more merciful, more understanding, more willing; he overcomes his own rigidity and opens up to others.

WE THUS ARRIVE AT THE SECOND VERB: TO WELCOME

When we hear this word, we immediately think of something to do. But in reality, welcoming is a deeper disposition; it does not demand merely making space for someone, but of being welcoming people, willing, accustomed to giving themselves to others. Just as God does for us, we do for others.

Welcoming means cutting the self down to size, straightening out our way of thinking, understanding that life is not my private property and time does not belong to me. It is a slow detachment from all that which is mine: my time, my rest, my rights, my plans, my agenda. Those who welcome renounce the self and bring you and us into life.

The welcoming Christian is a true man and woman of the Church, because the Church is Mother and a mother welcomes life and accompanies it. And just as a son resembles his mother, bearing her same features, in this way the Christian bears these features of the Church. And so, he is a truly faithful son of the Church who is welcoming, who without complaining creates harmony and communion, and with generosity sows peace, even if this

VINCENTIAN FAMILY SYMPOSIUM IN ROME

is not reciprocated. Saint Vincent helps us to value this ecclesial “DNA” of welcome, of willingness, of communion, so that in our life we may “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away ... along with all malice” (Eph 4: 31).

THE FINAL VERB: TO GO

Love is dynamic, it comes out of itself. Those who love do not stay in their armchair, watching, waiting for the advent of a better world, but with enthusiasm and simplicity they get up and go. Saint Vincent put this well: “Our vocation is thus to go, not in a parish or even just in a diocese, but in all the earth. And to do what? To inflame the hearts of men, doing what was done by the Son of God, He Who came to bring fire in the world to inflame it with His love” (Conference of 30 May 1659). This vocation is always valid for all. It poses to each one the question: “Do I go towards others, as the Lord wishes? Do I take where I go the fire of charity or do I stay at home to warm myself before my hearth?”.

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you because you are in motion on the streets of the world, as Saint Vincent would ask of you today too. I hope you will never stop, but instead continue to draw every day from adoration the love of God and spread it in the world through the good contagion of charity, willingness, and harmony. I bless you all and the poor you encounter. And I ask of you, please, the charity not to forget to pray for me.

Pope Francis

Renato Lima de Oliveira, SSVP President General International had a brief audience with Pope Francis, during which he gave him as a gift his book entitled “In love with charity and justice” (original title : “Apasionados por la caridad y la justicia”), along with a document on Frederic Ozanam’s Canonization.

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SPIRITUALITY

A REFLECTION ON OUR ACTIVITIES AND MOTIVATION

Having been a Vincentian for a few years and participated in a number of home visits and other activities, I have come to appreciate the significance of our contributions to meet the transitory needs of some of our community members that arise as a result of exceptional circumstances not covered by our government social assistance programs. Although our contributions are definitely helpful to the individuals we serve at the time, and in some ways, satisfactory to the members involved in having accomplished a good deed, I sometimes wonder if the activities and the way we carry them out may have actually missed the principal objective of “serving the poor” in our society today. In present day Canada, we have a better-than-most economic safety net designed to meet the basic material needs of its citizens who are occasionally caught short. Our actual material impact in supplementing this system may not be very significant especially if we can effectively align our services with these programs. On the other hand, the secular nature of our society exhibits a clear impartiality towards and sometimes even undermines the spiritual values that sustain personal and communal resourcefulness. As a result, we are poorer in the spiritual sense more than the material. Our broken families, our drug addictions, our feelings of isolation, loneliness and despair reflect mother Teresa’s comment in New York that she saw more poor people who are dressed in expensive clothing and drive expensive cars than in the streets of Calcutta.

It certainly has been my experience that, apart from the new immigrants who simply benefit from having some free furnishings to ease their settlement, most other people visited have some deep seated life situations that cause them to require more assistance than what our government social services can legitimately provide - situations that would likely

not arise if they or their families would be more resourceful in the spiritual sense or more disciplined in their life habits. These observations make me wonder if our contributions would not be more meaningful and impactful for our friends if we can reflect our spiritual motivation more openly and clearly in the way we select our activities and the way we carry them out. What I mean is that the sharing of our faith and spiritual values should become an

important part of our interaction with the people we serve. I know this may sound controversial and requires some explaining. But, first of all, what distinguishes our Society from other secular service organizations for the needy is that we strive to be Christ-like in recognizing the whole person of our neighbour – body, mind and soul and that we bear the good news of God’s love and His ultimate justice even as we may be poor and disadvantaged in this life.

Throughout the New Testament, Christ reached out to the poor and healed the sick in miracles, not only in the physical realm but He referenced their spiritual state and well being – “repent, sin no more; your faith has healed you”. Both St Vincent de Paul and Federick Ozanam were concerned about the needs of the whole person served, not just the physical. Ozanam, in particular, was also a staunch defender of the Catholic Church’s historical contributions to the development of the western mind, culture and civilization. To be relevant today, our Society needs to emphasize looking beyond the physical needs of our friends and try to recognize and impact their spiritual poverty. In so doing, we may find that we share their poverty and can develop our spiritual well being in the process.

We see that some of our Conferences in Canada do provide services in non-material areas such as ministering to prisoners, visiting hospitals, providing assistance in education and job training. Nevertheless, in my experience in Western Canada and as much as I am aware of in other regions, our services are by far more transitory and material in nature such as home visiting for the purpose of identifying immediate food and household needs, working in food banks, and deliveries of supplies both locally and to far reaching communities. These are certainly good acts of charity, but their transitory nature does not necessarily encourage a deeper understanding of and empathy for the people being served. Our culture in general also discourages a genuine reaching out to understand the mental and spiritual state of the “stranger” friends we meet in these services. For a lot of us, it may be more comfortable and easier to provide only for the physical needs and shy away from any deeper understanding and lasting relationships that may affect life changes. We may even justify this attitude by thinking that we should not preach or proselytize. Indeed, we should not, but at the

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SPIRITUALITY

same time, it is both our privilege and our responsibility by virtue of our being the grateful and humble bearer of God's good news and a proclaimed servant to Him in the whole person of the poor. That is not to say that we have to arbitrarily bring up the Catholic faith to the friends we meet, although as St Peter clearly said we should be ready always to explain and defend what we believe when the occasion arises. However we should be fully mindful that any interaction with our friends is an occasion for evangelization, not necessarily by words, but most of all, by our genuine respect and concern for their overall well-being, and then by embracing any opportunity to develop a deeper understanding and trusting relationship that would help bring about life changing impacts.

We are not a secular charitable organization. There are many that are, which are more successful and significant than ours, but we do have a unique heritage and a role in serving the needy in our communities – service in love to our neighbours as a whole person even as Christ is – body, mind and soul. We can only do that if we truly reflect our own motivation both individually and as a Society - one that is based on a firm knowledge of faith, a lively relationship with Christ Jesus, and a steady dependence on our father God in prayer.

*Joseph Tsui, member
National Spiritualité Committee
Western Regional Council*

**WE HAVE
A UNIQUE
HERITAGE
AND A ROLE IN
SERVING THE
NEEDY IN OUR
COMMUNITIES.**

IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep regret that we announce the following deaths:

*Robert Matthew Hagel
St. Augustine Conference, Taber AB
January 8, 2011*

*Hélène Beaupré
Sainte-Maria-Goretti Conference, Montreal QC
September 8, 2017*

*Ronald Frederick Williams
St. Augustine Conference, Taber AB
June 30, 2017*

They were our brothers and sisters serving the poor. Lord, we pray that all the good they did bear fruit and be continued. Help us keep their memory alive in our hearts. Let us keep them in our prayers.

Please send your death notices to editor@ssvp.ca

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TWINNING

OUR SSVP TWIN CONFERENCES IN JAMAICA

Our first twin, for the last 8 years, has been St. Jude SSVP Conference in Kingston, Jamaica. Our relationship with this twin was maintained through emails, the occasional telephone call, Christmas cards, pictures and a few financial reports on where the assistance we send was being used in the community.

Then in February 2015, three members of St. Theresa's Conference, Maria Lupul, Cathy Pidhirney and Stephen Dufresne, while in Jamaica on a Social Justice Mission Trip, had the opportunity to meet with the members of the St. Jude SSVP Conference face to face.

When we arrived at St Jude Church in Kingston, we were met by Hazel Wright, the Particular Council President and the St. Jude Conference members. After a brief tour of the church, some sharing and discussion, we distributed Canadian pins and were formally welcomed, asked to introduce ourselves and the relationship building was well underway. We hope it will last for a very long time.

After the formal part of the visit was over, we were treated to a nice lunch of meat patties and cool refreshments. This was the first time that many of us had tried meat patties and they were very tasty.

Next, we visited the Ozanam House, a senior's home partially financially supported by St. Jude Conference. Here we met another wonderful lady, also called Hazel, who has been the manager of the home for the past 25 years as an unpaid volunteer. We talked with many of the residents and met several "sweethearts".

A bit of history - In 2010, during another Mission Trip to Jamaica, an SSVP member, Maria Lupul met the priest of the extremely poor village of Porus, Fr. Baylon. For the next 5 and half years, with the support of St. Theresa's Conference in Edmonton, Maria and Fr. Baylon worked to form an SSVP Conference in Porus.

So, in 2015, two days after our visit to the twin St. Jude, we visited Our Lady of Assumption Parish in Porus to attend Mass celebrated by Fr. Baylon. It was a very joyful and hymn filled event with even a bit of dancing in the pews. The music was provided by a keyboard and set of drums.

With the extended sermon, by the elderly deacon, the Mass lasted 1 hour and 20 minutes.

After Mass, a SSVP meeting took place in the church itself to celebrate the aggregation of the Our Lady of Assumption SSVP Conference and the formal twinning of this new Jamaican Conference with the St. Theresa's Conference in Edmonton, Alberta. The Jamaican National President was present and presented the formal certificate to the members of the new Our Lady of Assumption SSVP Conference and officially recognized the twinning, when Maria presented the officially approved Canadian twinning paperwork.

After lunch under a tree on the church grounds, which we shared with some of the local kids and those who had attended the Mass, we went on a client visit and met a gentleman who lived in a hut by the railway.

Having a SSVP twin is a wonderful opportunity to learn about their events and activities. We encourage each Canadian Conference and Council to obtain and support a twin Conference in another country.

*Stephen Dufresne & Maria Lupul
St. Theresa's Conference
Edmonton, Alberta*

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NORTH OF 60

ULUKHAKTOK, NWT

Shopping for basic necessities in the Canadian Arctic North can be prohibitively expensive. Visit a grocery store in a community accessible only by sea or air and you may find a gallon of milk for \$12, a jar of peanut butter for \$15, a can of Chunky soup for \$6 or a pound of butter for \$7.50 and – if you can afford a treat – \$30 jars of Cheez Whiz, \$8 for a bag of Chip Ahoy cookies or \$5 for one can of pop. Ulukhaktok, formerly named Holman, a hamlet of 450 people on Victoria Island, north of mainland Northwest Territories, is one of those communities, challenged by extreme weather, unemployment and a remote location.

Ulukhaktok has been a beneficiary of the North of 60 project, an initiative of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul since 2015. The project annually ships sea containers with much-needed food and supplies, offsetting the extreme costs of essential products for those in need, to twelve Arctic communities, including Ulukhaktok.

There is no road to Ulukhaktok so the sea container leaves the St Albert/Edmonton area in June, travels by truck to Hay River, NWT, then by sea barge down the Mackenzie River and across the Northwest Passage and arrives in Ulukhaktok, in September. This trip can be made only in the summer, when the Passage isn't frozen over. The community relies on water transportation for most of its deliveries, receiving one barge annually with a year's worth of the supplies, fuel, vehicles, housing materials and more. Throughout the rest of the year, items such as fresh produce are flown in.

Linda Tutt, chair of SSVP St. Albert Conference's North of 60 Project is responsible for coordinating the packing of a sea container, specifically for Ulukhaktok. Tutt made the trip last fall to Ulukhaktok to meet residents and get a sense of how SSVP can collaboratively serve the community. Contact with the Community Services, RCMP, Health Centre, Hamlet's administration, School, Sewing Groups, Prenatal classes, Art Centre and Traditional Dancers were made and are now a part of the collaborative process of deciding what the needs of the community are and how the North of 60 Project can fill those needs.

One such group is the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program under the leadership of retired educator, Helen Kitekudlak. CPNP participants learn to cook and sew for their families. "The Baby Box Company <https://babyboxcanada.org/> donations and the dehydrated vegetables and fruit from Gleaners <http://www.prairiegleaners.com/> in Medicine Hat, AB and Oliver, BC have been something the young CPNP participants appreciate and look forward to – especially those who can't afford much," says Helen. "When we opened the Baby Boxes (boxes serve as a safe bed for newborns to 6 months) full of beautiful items for the babies, we were

all in awe and so appreciative. I had Grandmothers calling me with thanks." The Baby Box Company sent Ulukhaktok baby boxes as a pilot project last year and expanded their donation to include the seven Arctic NWT communities in 2017. Helen said that the women had fun creating and sharing new recipes using the Gleaners vegetables with local wild meat and fish and appreciated the nutrition it provided their families.

Although the North of 60 Project's main focus is non-perishable food for those needing assistance, the sea container shipment this year also included donations of hockey sticks, baby items, quilts, bicycles, small appliances, sewing machines, furs, playground and school supplies, toys and winter clothing. David Kuptana, a respected elder, is responsible for distributing the sea can contents. David has lived his entire life in Ulukhaktok and is deeply committed to the community. David says Ulukhaktok is grateful for the Ulukhaktok-St Albert SSVP North of 60 Project partnership and hopes both will "keep working together by helping each other."

Helen Kitekudlak,
Canadian Prenatal
Nutrition Program
Coordinator,
holding a
Baby Box donation.

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NORTH OF 60

Ulukhaktok is world renowned for its prints, Musk Ox Horn–Swan sculptures and traditional dance. It is a close knit community that very much relies on living off the land (caribou, polar bear and musk ox) and sea (seals, fish, whales). Most of the residents are Inuvialuit or Inuit and were born and raised in the community. The beautiful coastal hamlet on Victoria Island has extreme weather, 24 hours of sunshine in June and July and 24 hours of darkness in December and January. The main mode of transportation is ATVs and snowmobiles and 2-3 flights per week to the closest cities of Inuvik and Yellowknife.

The North of 60 Project brings donors and recipients together for common goals of learning more about each other and providing support, love and care for our northern Arctic neighbours and friends in Christ.

“A version of this story first appeared on techlifetoday.ca, the online magazine of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology.”

Linda Tutt, Chair, SSVP North of 60 Project at St Albert Conference of the Edmonton Central Council

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David Kuptana,
Ulukhaktok “North
of 60 Project” main
contact in front of a
Grolar (Grizzly-Polar
bear hybrid)
that he hunted.

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

NORTHERN ALBERTA PROJECT - CADOTTE LAKE

A SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL
ST. THERESA'S CONFERENCE IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA

INTRODUCTION

For as many reasons and excuses, as there are stars in the night sky, the stark reality is that many of our indigenous sisters, brothers and their children living in numerous and remote communities in Northern Alberta, in other provinces and territories across Canada are faced with issues related to the lack, of or access to, the necessities for a healthy life. Such necessities as: good food, warm clothing, adequate shelter, a good education and proper sanitation – clean water.

NORTHERN ALBERTA PROJECT

The purpose of Project Northern Alberta was to address the lack of these necessities for a healthy life in one selected indigenous community in Northern Alberta in the initial year.

For the successful operation of Project Northern Alberta, the Northern Alberta indigenous community selected had to have the following two operational capacities in their community:

- the means to identify what and amount of resources needed by individuals and families in the community.
- that they have the operational capacity, people and resources in place, to distribute these resources to identified individuals and families when delivered.

As time passed various means were used to find such a Northern Alberta indigenous community, with these two operational capacities. After some time, the community of Cadotte Lake near Peace River, Alberta was selected as the first Project Northern Alberta indigenous community.

Once the community was identified, several meetings were held between the Edmonton Project Committee and the local committee members in Cadotte Lake. After answering many questions and listening to their many concerns about how this project was to be undertaken, they agreed that

their first task was to somehow determine the type and amounts of resources needed by individuals or families in the community.

We mentioned that SSVP uses Home Visits to determine needs of an individual or family. We were immediately told that in an indigenous community, individuals do not visit the homes of others for such purposes. We listened and encouraged the local committee members to find other ways to collect the Needs information.

After a couple of months, the Needs collection task was completed for 67 individuals and families in the community and sent to the committee in Edmonton. Now it was the job of the Edmonton Committee to gather the requested needs and deliver them to the Cadotte Lake committee as soon as possible.

SO WHY ARE WE DOING THIS

During his short public ministry on earth, Christ gave us numerous examples and parables of the requirement for his followers to be concerned for the poor and their suffering. If you and I proclaim to be followers of Christ, now is the time for each of us, as Catholics, to respond through real and tangible actions, such as, sharing our time, talents and treasures in a practical way like the Cadotte Lake project.

**PUTTING OUR
CATHOLIC FAITH
INTO ACTION
IN REAL AND
TANGIBLE WAYS.**

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

HOW DID IT WORK?

From many sources, the requested needs and more were collected by the Edmonton committee. These Needs were then packed into a 53' trailer and a 5-ton truck for delivery to the committee in Cadotte Lake.

On the weekend of July 9 – 10, 2016 the Edmonton Committee delivered 30,000 lbs. of requested Needs and more to help the 67 individuals and families in Cadotte Lake. Food, summer and winter clothing for babies, children, older children, women and men, furniture, beds and bedding, cleaning supplies, books and small kitchen items were handed over to the Cadotte Lake committee for distribution.

They assumed the responsibility to deliver the Needs to the individuals or families that had been identified in their Needs collection phase of the project. Over a period of two weeks the distribution process took place in the community.

The project was completed and it was a success!

For additional information on the Cadotte Lake project, see our SSVP website at www.ssvpsttheresas.org.

Project Update: On the weekend of June 10 - 11, 2017 the members of the Edmonton Committee met with the Cadotte Lake committee in Cadotte Lake to review Phase 1 and to discuss Phase 2 of the project.

THE CHALLENGE:

That within a period of 2 years, every province in Canada will have completed a project, where a SSVP Conference or a group of Conferences in the south have assisted an indigenous community in the north of their own province.

Reaching out a hand in reconciliation!

Stephen Dupresne, member of the Western Regional Social Justice Committee

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WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

NEW REGIONAL PRESIDENT

My name is Anthony Francis Xavier (Tony) Barry & I have been a Vincentian Servant for over 30 years, the last 25 in St. Patrick's Conference, Calgary, Alberta. I am Irish by birth but Canadian by choice since 1975. Maeve & I are blessed with 5 adult bilingual children. I am a new grandfather since 1 year ago.

It is always an honor to serve with Vincentians who are beautiful people.

Since 2014 Peter Ouellette persuaded me to become active in Calgary Central Council – and then he retired! So, by the grace of God, here I am to serve some more.

Engineers love (rhyming) rules of thumb so here are mine:

1. It has to be fun.
2. It's not about you.
3. God is with thee.
4. You can always do more.
5. Alive with love.s of the President and Executive - Conference/councils

Your humble servant,

*Tony Barry, President
Western Regional Council*

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Tony Barry and Vincentians of the
Western Regional Council, at the SSVP Annual
General Assembly of Canada in Quebec.

WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

PARABLES FROM THE PARKING LOT!

Saturday September 9th, what a beautiful day! BBQ Day! A joint celebration seemed like a good idea...and it was. A Day to Celebrate the 400th Charism of SSVP and Canada's 150th year. A grant from the City of Edmonton, a proud Canadian flag flying and shining Vincentians combined to set the right atmosphere.

What awesome Vincentians; what delighted guests. We served approximately 750 burgers to our friends and could not have done it without the menagerie of committed and joyful volunteers.

Live music from two Vincentian bands and a Karaoke maestro was enjoyed thanks to the Dunnigan Gang, the Engel Brothers and Joe Silvaggio.

It was wonderful to have time to sit with our friends and chat. One grandmother said it was full circle for her. She was there with her grandson. They lived across the street and just came to see what was going on. She said, ["When times were tough for me, you helped pay my rent when I was short and gave me food"](#). Now she is working on her Master's degree. How terrific is she?

One of the people delivering our rented tables and chairs said ["You guys are doing a great job. The first pair of shoes that I got when I arrived in Canada nine years ago was from this place"](#) referring to the Distribution Centre. ["Thank you"](#).

Another lady brought granola bars from home for us to give to families in food hampers.

When a friend was told he could have a second burger, the response was he couldn't as "he had already had three". That day he ate well.

Having two cakes, one for Canada's 150th and one for SSVP's 400th Charism allowed us to talk about why we were hosting the party. The rain held off and the sun shone. We all gave thanks.

It's true, you just never know what effect you may have upon others, most likely we never will, but we do make a difference! We could not do without all of our Vincentians. Thanks to all of you for allowing God to fulfill his purpose through us. "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him". Philippians 2:13

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WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

OZANAM DAY IN CALGARY

Ozanam Day provides an opportunity for SSVP Conferences within the Calgary Diocese to gather, worship, and celebrate accomplishments and to share experiences. This year, the occasion took place at St. Peter's Catholic Church located in Silver Springs, Northwest Calgary. This year's motto was chosen to be: Serve to Learn & Learn to Serve. This account summarizes the events that took place and can serve for event planning purposes in the future.

Father Jerome Lavigne, Pastor of St. Peter's Parish, celebrated the morning Mass. As September 23rd was the feast day of Padre Pio (also known as Saint Pio of Pietrelcina), Fr. Jerome's homily focussed on the Saint Pio's accomplishments and shared details about the struggle Saint Pio had fighting demons while striving for holiness. He emphasised the point that living in the footsteps of Christ comes with a tremendous challenge of dealing with the dark side.

The music during Mass was lead by Mrs. Judy Montes, an accomplished pianist and Past President of St. Peter's CWL.

Theo van Besouw, President of the Calgary Diocesan Central Council (CDCC), who welcomed all participants and led in the SSVP Opening Prayer, opened the Conference.

The Keynote Speaker for this year's Conference was Father Jerome, Pastor of St. Peter's and Vicar of Diocesan Catholic Education. Fr. Jerome Lavigne presented a high powered 45-minute speech that started with Vincent de Paul, the influence he had on Frederic Ozanam, and the in-depth reflection as to what it means to meet the face of Christ. As Vincentians we are constantly serving to learn and learning to serve by tending our less fortunate brothers and sisters. Fr. Jerome developed his theme by examining the lives of Saints, the importance of recognizing Christ's face and implications of Vincentian service. The presentation was videotaped and can be reviewed on: <https://st-peters.ca>.

Mrs. Barbara Raleigh-Smith of the Diocese of Calgary presented the implementation of Diocesan training on vulnerable persons. All volunteers in the Diocese of Calgary who are potentially working with people considered vulnerable are to complete an on-line course prepared by Armatus for Praesidium. Currently there four (4) modules that need to be completed and other modules will be added over the years in an effort to have Vincentian volunteers current on topics and training. Ideally, the information of training will be distributed and administered through parishes but if the resources are not in place, the Diocese can be contacted.

Father Adrian Martens, Chancellor of the Diocese & responsible for volunteer organizations, provided a high level explanation as to where organizations stand from the Canon Law point of view. SSVP is a Pontifical organization due to its international nature. However, the Bishop of a Diocese has the ability to direct operations and ensure that there are no conflicts in matters of executing work or fund raising. There are presently 25 SSVP Conferences in Calgary and Fr. Adrian will be instrumental in the effort to add more parishes to the SSVP organization.

During lunch, an opportunity was found to introduce Ms. Jodi Segura, who is currently working with Des Peplinski on the Helping Others network. She explained that the network is set up as a virtual warehouse where people can list items they can spare and were those in need can find items they think essential. There is no money exchange and transportation has to be arranged between the parties. SSVP will explore methods to improve awareness of Helping Others within the Diocesan network.

There was a presentation of Jeff Cavins video. Jeff Cavins is a familiar name as presenter of the courses:

- Bible Time Line (Old Testament)
- Revelations (Apostle John's apocalypse)

He is a scholar on Biblical Israel and traveled to the Holy Land over 50 times. He speaks Hebrew, trains guides in the Holy Land and shares his thoughts on podcasts. He also rides a Harley Davidson motorcycle and that seemingly totally unrelated pastime caused a friendship link with Sean Lynn of Saint Peter's, who is President of the God Squad Canada.

WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

Twice now, Jeff and his motorcycle friends have toured Western Canada and conducted evangelical works on the way. Sometimes presentation talks in Churches, sometimes proclaiming the Good News in bars and gas stations. The video presented was recorded at St. Peter's last month. In this video, Jeff explores the question; How do we know what God wants from us? The video can be viewed on St. Peter's Facebook page.

The outgoing CDCC President Tony Barry was thanked for his tenure as he has now volunteered to assume responsibility for Western Region. Thanks to Vincentian cooperation three Particular councils are active and there is greater unity in the organization.

The Conference was closed by reciting the SSVF Closing Prayer.

The Surf-n-Turf Dinner was an initiative to fund Ozanam Day. In contrast with other organizations, SSVF relies on donors who expect that all their donations go to those in need. Although it is considered reasonable to budget funds for training and special events (like the Ozanam Day Conference), the concept of holding an event to cover expenses took root. Aside from making it a modest fundraiser, the dinner was also seen as an opportunity to bring more visibility to SSVF. The dinner was organized with the essential help of CWL members and some K of C members, both from St. Peter's parish.

The emphasis was on community building so the participation cost was kept low. In fact, the ticket costs barely covered the food (whole lobster and boneless prime roast), so the 117 attendees received excellent value for their money. Some profit was made through the cash bar.

Donations received during for the needy were not included in the dinner finances. The plan worked and enough ticket revenue was raised to cover the Ozanam Day Conference expenses.

An event like Ozanam Day can only succeed when people work together and contribute their time, talents and energy to the cause. With the risk of not catching all contributors, we mention (not in any particular order):

Father Jerome Lavigne, Rina McDermott, Carol van Besouw, Rick Bujnowicz, Marg Norris, Gabe Simpson, Carmel Sick, Judy Montes, Gisele Gerlitz, Lena Fernandes, Catherine Jeffrey, Sheila Morris, Angela Wotherspoon, Karin Prenner, Joan Speir, Marie Sieben, Annie Chirka, Sean Blair, Murielle Smith, Estelle Lorenz, Greig Hyland, Richard McCabe, Pat Lawrence, Tony Barry, Barbara Raleigh-Smith, Father Adrian Martens, Seminarian Troy Nguyen, Gary Belecki, John Hanharan, Gerry Duchemin, John Carey, Lorand Szojka, Alfredo Fernandes, Mikaelah Paul, Chandra Schubert, and K of C Chestermere.

Images have been removed
for easy printing



MISSION

The 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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Canada Revenue Agency
Charity Registration No. 132410671RR0001

Official publication of the
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - Canada
ISSN 2560-824X
Made with the collaboration of:
Ghislaine DuNord, Ellen Schryburt, John Grochol-
ski, Denise Miron and Mary Baskin
Editor: Nicole Schryburt
Graphic Design: Nicole Schryburt



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