



“North of 60” project - Nunavik, page 3

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“Together  
as Family”  
Annual General  
Assembly  
June 19 - 23, 2019  
Windsor Ontario

Information:  
[www.ssvp.ca/2019-aga](http://www.ssvp.ca/2019-aga)

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



### ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

There is still time to register for our **annual general assembly** in **Windsor, Ontario, June 19 to 23, 2019**. Most of our activities will take place on the University of Windsor campus, and for those who have difficulty moving around, we will have on-site transportation to make things easier. However, if you wish to use this transportation service, make sure that you indicate it on your registration form.

As you know, our annual meetings allow us to **meet Vincentians from all over the country and to share with them in a spirit of friendship**. It is a wonderful opportunity to share with sisters and brothers we have not seen for a while and to renew the friendship.

We have prepared **excellent workshops** for you and, during the **plenary session**, we will have presentations that, I am certain, will greatly interest you. President General International Renato Lima de Oliveira will be among us and you will have the opportunity to consult with him during the **presidents' round table**, or following his presentation on Saturday morning.

As in previous years, there will be **time dedicated to spiritual renewal**. Indeed, in the late afternoon on Thursday and Friday, we will have a period for recitation of the rosary and Mass celebration. Mass will also be celebrated before the closing ceremony on Saturday evening, and followed by the **installation of the new president** of the National Council and the **Vincentian commissioning ceremony**.

**You will find the entire program of the meeting on our website at: [www.ssvp.ca/2019-aga](http://www.ssvp.ca/2019-aga)**

I hope that you will find the time to join us and experience that extraordinary family time among Vincentians. I can assure you that you will go back home tired, but with your mind full of ideas to share with your conference. Your sisters and brothers will thus be able to benefit from the new knowledge you will have acquired.

I look forward to meeting you in Windsor.

### HOME VISITS

More and more Vincentians are making home visits, taking time to listen to the people we serve. It is an excellent initiative and I encourage all our members who experience such privileged moments to do everything they can to ensure that those meetings take place with full respect for those we serve. If you have not had the opportunity to attend a training session on home visits, I strongly suggest that you do so before you embrace that activity. The home visit must always be made by two full members who are present at all times, and we must let people open up at their own pace.

We must not interfere in their lives and open doors that, often, they have closed to protect themselves. If we venture along this track and do not close the door again before we leave, we may force someone to relive difficult moments from their past while they are alone and unaided. We may also find ourselves in an awkward position, feeling entirely powerless in dealing with the difficulties they experience.

For people like us, who do not have the training required to help people overcome their difficulties, we must simply **LISTEN** and let people open up if they wish to do so.

After a few meetings, people will feel more comfortable, and you can then have very interesting conversations, in mutual respect, and then be able to envision solutions more easily.

So, we never visit alone; we attend a training session on home visits; we open our ears and we **LISTEN**.

You will find, on our website, at **[www.ssvp.ca/national-training-modules](http://www.ssvp.ca/national-training-modules)**, our training module on home visits. As a complement to reading the document, I recommend training with someone who is experienced in that field, to better understand the Vincentian approach to home visits.

Have a good training session and good visits.

*Jean-Noël Cormier, President  
National Council*



# NORTH OF 60 PROJECT - QUEBEC REGIONAL COUNCIL

## WHY THIS PROJECT?

The project started a few years ago, prompted by the cost of food products in the communities located north of the 60th parallel that can be exorbitant and thus increase poverty, a major concern in the North. Within the scope of SSVP initiatives north of the 60th parallel, it is possible to set up food banks and used clothing distribution centres, staffed by local volunteer residents. In Quebec, that responsibility is in the hands of the Ungava Community Housing Centre (Centre d'hébergement communautaire d'Ungava), located in Kuujuaq.

## SINCE WHEN IN QUEBEC?

The Quebec Regional Council started working on the project at the beginning of 2018, looking first for an SSVP coordinator (Myriam Bergeron, QRC Youth representative) and for someone in charge in the North (the director of the Community Housing Centre in Ungava). After several months of discussions with the centre in Kuujuaq, we were able to determine the immediate needs, as well as the best way to help the mostly indigenous population of northern Quebec, totalling approximately 13,000 people, with only four communities of over 1000 residents: Kuujuaq, Puvirnituaq, Inukjuak and Salluit.

It is therefore with great pleasure that this year, the Quebec Regional Council joined that great initiative!

Thanks to the Saint-Jean-Vianney Conference and the Boutique d'Amélie (SSVP store) in Montréal, we were able, on April 7, 2019, to complete our first free consignment of goods from Montréal to Kuujuaq. As a matter of fact, the First Air airline has offered us free monthly transportation.

We sent 21 boxes containing clothing, bedding and kitchen utensils, to be distributed among the 14 communities in Nunavik by the volunteer staff from the centre and teenagers in social reintegration, aged 12 to 17 (see picture #1).

Unlike the rest of Canada, we do not plan at present to send food via sea container, since the Kuujuaq hospital gives food surpluses regularly to the community centre.

However, the Kuujuaq mayor and the director of the housing centre will discuss the possibility of opening a permanent location to accommodate the homeless, who, during the winter, are housed mainly in summer work camps. We assured them that once that project is operational, we will be able to support them by sending food, mattresses, small furniture, etc., that could be sent via sea container. We will have to work even harder to find food and volunteers, and to collect the funds necessary to transport the container (the cost of which alone is about \$20,000).



Until now, financial donations received by the QRC for the project amount to \$11,100: \$100 from the Saint-Alphonse Conference, in Chicoutimi, \$1,000 from the Trois-Rivières Particular Council, and a wonderful donation of \$10,000 from the Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu Particular Council, to whom we awarded a certificate of recognition for their generous donation, during their AGA of March 25, 2019 (see picture).

Since we have year-round access to a small storage space, we will communicate our needs, as they arise, directly to our various store managers. Only money can come in on an ongoing basis, as we will certainly need it

at a later date, and no donation is too small!

You may express your interest anytime by sending an email to the QRC: [info@ssvp.qc.ca](mailto:info@ssvp.qc.ca)

*Myriam Bergeron, Youth representative  
Quebec Regional Council*



## SOCIAL JUSTICE... WHO WORKS ON THAT, REALLY?

Looking for a definition of social justice on the web, we can read the following in the “La toupie” website, “Social justice is a political and moral principle whose goal is equal rights and collective solidarity that allow a fair and equitable distribution of wealth, whether material or symbolic, among different members of society.”<sup>1</sup>

Officially, for the Church, “Social Justice” came to life with a papal encyclical in 1891; however, 50 years before, Frédéric Ozanam had stated a certain number of principles of social justice.<sup>2</sup> Three more encyclicals (1931, 1961 and 1991) followed and, in 2004, John Paul II prepared a synopsis in “Social Doctrine of the Church”, based on ten principles related to various aspects of human life. Those principles include human **dignity, respect** of human life, **association, participation, preferential protection** of the poor and vulnerable people, **solidarity, stewardship, subsidiarity**, human **equality** and **common good**.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of Frédéric, social organization was quite different from today’s. We are talking about two very different worlds: life expectancy was more or less 40 years old in 1850, while today it is 80 years old and over. Needs were enormous then, and they still are. Nevertheless, my mother-in-law, Béatrice, born in 1899, who lived with us from 1980 to 1986, often told us that “It was the good old times!”, even with her 14 children! However, the way of life has evolved quite a bit since then, but difficulties remain. Many people still have a difficult time getting enough food, finding adequate housing, succeeding in both endeavours, educating themselves, participating in life fully in all kinds of ways. In addition, when we look at the gap existing between the great in this world and the regular citizen, is there really a difference between the kings of that time and those of today?

There is space for us to question ourselves further and to participate, as we have been doing for a long time, but by adding perhaps new viewpoints or new Vincentian approaches. Several of us recognize that possibility, as a number of actions are undertaken here and there: someone accompanying a person to the clinic, a more special welcome, listening with a warmth that goes beyond basic food assistance. It is necessary to foster and create meth-

ods aiming at reaching out to people and intervening more globally. The example provided by the “Le Marginal and La Bohème trailers that, since 1993, have been touring the streets and some municipal parks in the city of Québec Haute-Ville and Basse-Ville sectors”<sup>4</sup> is particularly inspiring.

Be it as Christians, citizens or parents, we already participate in various organizations, whether sports-related or animating a Cub Scouts meeting, and so many others. Those initiatives motivate us to participate in the making of a better world. That reality becomes more concrete when we share with couples during marriage preparation sessions. Their mutual “Yes, I do” engagement is, in that way, an engagement for them, for their families and even the entire world. It is that Christian engagement that prompts us to become Vincentians. All of that aims to establish a human quality of life in a world of **love, peace** and **justice**. Our world needs it so much.

In a spirit of renewal, in the spirit of the “Social Doctrine of the Church” and of our engagement with Christ, the national Social Justice Committee (SJC) and the national board of directors (BoD) will propose a rallying project aimed at bringing a Christian response to numerous injustices and, hopefully, at creating positive societal changes. That is the mission of the Social Justice Committee, and it can become yours.

The BoD and the SJC have therefore proposed the creation of a national social justice network, where each conference, particular council, central council and regional council will be able to play a role. To do so, they will propose a national action theme allowing everyone to participate, each in their own way, in their own area, from the conference level to the national level, in one or several collaborative actions. You will have access to concrete and sustainable tools that will allow you to go forward along the path of new actions, to change things in a better world of **love, peace** and **justice**.

**Be vigilant, and if you want, we will work together.**

**Who works on that, really? All of us!**

*Claude Laffèche  
Member of the Social Justice Committee*

**1** [http://www.toupie.org/Dictionnaire/Justice\\_sociale.htm](http://www.toupie.org/Dictionnaire/Justice_sociale.htm)

**2** [https://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/social\\_justice\\_guide\\_2018-04-20.pdf](https://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/social_justice_guide_2018-04-20.pdf), Appendix 6.

**3** [https://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/social\\_justice\\_guide\\_2018-04-20.pdf](https://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/social_justice_guide_2018-04-20.pdf), Appendix 3.

**4** <https://ssvp-quebec.org/programmes-et-services#Roulottes>

## TWINNING BETWEEN LAVAL AND HAITI

I am very happy to share our twinning experience with a conference in Haiti. In the fall of 2017, we received information on a twinning project with needy conferences in various countries, including Haiti. Conferences in approximately 15 countries are involved in the project and send funds to their twinning recipients on a quarterly basis. Touched by that project, conference presidents from the Laval-Est Particular Council decided to unite their efforts and collect funds to participate in assisting in Haiti. As we entered 2018, we started twinning with the Immaculée de Morne Blanc Conference in Haiti. Mr. Délande Joseph, our correspondent, and I started corresponding by email on various subjects. Over the past year, very interesting and fraternal exchanges took place concerning the various needs of our beneficiaries in each one of our regions, the projects carried on by our different assistance services as well as our motivation for succeeding in this wonderful mission of assistance to people in need.

The Immaculée de Morne Blanc Conference is located in the centre of Haiti, in a very small community where vulnerable people earn a living from agriculture and livestock farming, in very difficult conditions. Sadly, that population does not have access to drinking water or to electricity. The conference was created on September 24, 2004, and for the past 14 years, has brought assistance to the poorest people in the area, thanks to the collective means of all members. The twinning project was later established, and they were then able to upgrade their level of help to the beneficiaries. Their main activities are ministry to the sick, distribution of non-perishable foods, repair of small houses, schooling assistance to a few children and organization of workshops for vulnerable youth in the area. With this help, they are able to improve their quality of life and support their day-to-day lives. It is that common mission that we share the most.

Mr. Délande Joseph and the conference members are grateful for the prayers we say for them and the help we provide. They hope also that their socio-economic situation will improve with time. We hope that their mission will be easier to accomplish in 2019 with the financial help we send them, and we look forward to continuing our wonderful communication.

I will conclude by stressing the importance of fraternal assistance to our Vincentian brothers and sisters in conferences in developing countries, since our help is often the only significant source of funds for them.

*Johanne Lamer, Secretary  
Laval-Est Particular Council*



**A VERY SMALL COMMUNITY WHERE  
VULNERABLE PEOPLE EARN A LIVING FROM  
AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK FARMING,  
IN VERY DIFFICULT CONDITIONS.  
NO ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER  
OR TO ELECTRICITY.**



## 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:  
Mary Baskin, Ghislaine DuNord and  
Denise Miron.  
Editor : Nicole Schryburt  
Graphic Design: Nicole Schryburt**



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