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CLICKABLE!

**For many,
food insecurity
and isolation
are not new.**

*Celebrating our Vincentians
who continue to deliver food
and hope to those in need
while being careful.*

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL FORMATION COMMITTEE

ANF

I am pleased to report that the National Formation Committee has had some positive movement this year. Right off the top, we have changed

our name from “Training Committee” to “Formation Committee” in keeping with a focused direction within the National Council to renew the framework of SSVP in Canada.

The Formation Committee has a fairly extensive mandate because almost every part of the Society has a component of formation. It is important to note that much work has already been done by previous training committees of the National Council and the Executive Director, Richard Pommerville. The regions have been especially productive in developing training materials. We have had the good fortune of finding four exceptionally qualified members to represent the regions of Ontario, Western, Quebec and British Columbia. The committee has benefited from their input in our meetings and email conversations.

We have worked closely with the Executive Director, drawing on what is already in place and the work that the national office has been doing. This has led us to identify four pillars of formation to give us some direction in our work plan.

These four pillars are: **Leadership, Vincentians, Spirituality** and **Special Works**. There is much to do but it is important to recognize that a great deal of work has already been done to assist the committee to go forward. All members of the Society can view what already exists by clicking on the Members portal on the national website.

It is important that all of our Vincentians working at every level of the Society have the opportunity to acquire the skills they need to be safe and to provide quality services to those we serve. There is much to learn from each other and we hope to draw on our existing resources as well as filling the gaps as we identify them.

You may have noticed that the name for our annual gathering has been changed to **Annual National Formation (ANF)** as our meeting has become a lot more than a statutory Annual General Assembly (AGA). The Formation Committee has the responsibility of reviewing the applications for workshops for the annual meeting and this year we had about 16 in total, both French and English, lined up for the event. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 virus, the ANF has been cancelled. This is a disappointment, I am sure, for many of us. Those meetings are a great opportunity to meet and greet our faithful Vincentians and to share information. Networking can offer so many benefits, not only to our work but to our spiritual, emotional and mental well-being. We have come away with some very good ideas for our formation agenda and we will be looking at how we can offer the proposed workshops in a variety of ways.

The Formation Committee was looking forward to a Strategic Planning session in Calgary at the end of March but, unfortunately, we had to postpone this also due to the COVID-19 virus. The agenda was to develop a 2-year work plan which would form the foundation of the Formation Committee mandate. We will do our best to plan and work electronically until it is safe to meet face to face.

The more we review our goals and objectives for the Formation Committee, the more I realize that formation is an essential component to the growth and stability of the Society. I say this in the sense that formation offers support, consistency, connection, information, and competency that elevates the good work of the Society.

Yours in Christ,

*Deborah Joyce, M.A., MACP, RCC, Chair
National Formation Committee*

Due to the global COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul's National Board of Directors has made the necessary decision to cancel the SSVP Annual National Formation, originally scheduled for June 24-28, 2020, in Calgary.

Protecting the health, safety, and well-being of our members and attendees is paramount.

Registration fees paid to the SSVP-National Council of Canada will automatically be reimbursed within the next two weeks.

Members are responsible for contacting SAIT and the appropriate transportation company to cancel their accommodation and transport reservations.

Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT):

1-855-782-9722

calgary@stayrcc.com

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, National Council statutory meeting will be postponed, more information will be posted as it becomes available.

SPIRITUALITY - LOOK UP, NOT DOWN

The Sainte-Catherine de Sienne Conference helps an average of 93 people every month. The majority (64%) of them live on social assistance and are unable to integrate into the working world in a stable manner, due to breakups, dead ends, life difficulties, addictions, physical or mental illnesses, or a low level of schooling.

Sixteen per cent are minimum wage workers who cannot make ends meet; others are immigrants (17%) who have recently arrived in the country: some face various barriers (including language and recognition of diplomas), while others (13%), are refugees, fleeing the violence, war or misery that prevails in their country.

Explaining why they live in poverty requires knowing more about the people who suffer from it and changing **the way we look** at them. Knowing more about the factors that lead to poverty takes us away from blame. When we understand, we no longer judge. They stop being **unknowns, faceless strangers** on whom to project all kinds of fears or prejudices, and become **real people** with their own history, their own reality.

And the way we look at these people largely determines what we are willing to do to help them.

When we heard about the wave of refugees who arrived in Quebec via Roxham Road in the summer of 2018, we were all a little wary and worried. But when I meet those same people in the church basement here, when I talk to them month after month, I get to know them. I realize that those people are refined, educated. They are little different from you and me. Their courage is admirable. The majority do not stay long on social assistance; they quickly find work at minimum wage.

As Cardinal Lacroix said in his address to the AGM in 2017, it is important to welcome each person with kindness, respect and discretion. Following the example of Jesus, taking inspiration from his attitude towards people who come to him for help, we must welcome everyone with a look of respect. You have to **look up** to people, like Jesus with Zacchaeus.

In Luke 19, 1-10, we see how Jesus did not look at Zacchaeus the same way his fellow citizens did, who judged him. He did not look down on him with contempt; on the contrary, he looked up at him and invited himself into his house. He got interested in him. In our society, there is no shortage of people to look first and only at the crime, to confuse the person and the act committed. We often hear people say: "So and so is a thief, a scoundrel, he is corrupted, unscrupulous, violent... etc."

The same goes for anyone who asks SSVP for help. Too often, we hear people say: "They are lazy people, drug addicts, alcoholics..."

So, as Cardinal Lacroix suggests, let us rather be inspired by Jesus, and welcome each person who comes to us with a look of respect and love. Let us try to know the person, to see them beyond their "sins" or their faults, to look up at them.

Likewise, let us learn to **listen** to others in depth, what they have to say. Let's listen to their life story. Let us be available to welcome them, to understand them, to become closer, to walk with them, as Jesus did with the disciples of Emmaus. Let us dare to believe in their sincerity. Let us trust them, rather than always being suspicious. Instead of thinking "Does he really need our help? If she didn't smoke, she would have enough money to buy food," etc., let us instead say when they come to ask for help, it is because they need it. That is all.

And finally, let us try to help them up, as Jesus did with the possessed.

So if, following the example of Jesus, we manage to become closer to our poor neighbours, to welcome them with openness, if we get to know them more deeply, if our gaze rises towards them, rather than looking down at them, if we are ready to listen to them, we will also be ready to help them with joy and generosity.

*Alain Besner, National Spirituality Committee
Quebec Regional Council*

*From the presentation of Mrs. Susanne Emery
to her parish community in December 2019*

**THE FACT THAT SOMEONE LOVES HIMSELF
COMES FROM THE FACT THAT SOMEONE
LOVES HIM AND LOOKS AT HIM WITH LOVE.**

CARDINAL LACROIX

COVID-19: CONSEQUENCES OF A PANDEMIC

Certainly history repeats itself. COVID-19 reminds us of the great plague of the 14th century, which had reduced the population of Europe by a whole third. At that time, medicine was less advanced than it is today and the post-pandemic period had led to far-reaching social reforms, thus strengthening the role of the police, rather than religious authorities, in ensuring the protection of the population.

With the evolution of medicine today and with regard to the measures taken by the authorities to curb the crisis and ensure better protection of populations, the consequences of COVID-19, particularly in Québec, will not be counted in terms of deaths, so much as in terms of people or households experiencing poverty. In other words, when this actual health and economic tsunami wears off, in addition to the cases of death that will be reported, Québec, like other provinces in Canada, will count by thousands the number of unemployed, which in turn will increase the number of people in vulnerable situations. This reality, with respect to COVID-19, concerns us at the level of the Québec Regional Council of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP-QRC) and our members.

When the pandemic was announced, SSVP-QRC did not wait to take measures to protect its members, volunteers and clientele. Those measures, contributing to the Québec government's efforts to counter the COVID-19 pandemic, are posted on the SSVP-QRC website www.ssvp-quebec.ca.

All members of SSVP in Québec are invited to work in a context of prevention and precaution, and to avoid any person-to-person contact, as recommended by the governments of Québec and Canada. Particularly, members are instructed to (1) always check if the beneficiaries are or have been ill lately; if necessary, send them back home, postpone the appointment or, if possible, deliver the food to their home, (2) if the beneficiaries are healthy, ask them to wash their hands before entering the food storage room and (3) members should use gloves when handling food.

In any case, the world will have to learn many lessons once the pandemic is brought under control. Priorities must be redefined and investments must be made intelligently. People in countries where the crisis has been mismanaged will seriously question the authority and, without fail, the victims will go so far as to demand the resignation of their government.

In Québec, the management of coronavirus by the authorities is greatly appreciated. More and more, we see the government approaching the population, doing everything it can to reduce the consequences of the pandemic. This suggests that the Québec government will continue to work with its social partners to rethink or strengthen its intervention approaches in the event of a future epidemic or pandemic. Of course, it is based on the great lessons to be learned from this crisis, the most important of which remains the dizzying increase in the number of people and households experiencing poverty that may be anticipated.

In this sense, the SSVP-QRC has taken the initiative of approaching the fight against poverty advisory committee to initiate a reflection on post-crisis poverty issues. As this committee's mandate is to guide the government and all of Québec society towards planning and carrying out concrete actions to combat this plight, prevent its causes, mitigate its effects on individuals and families, counter the social exclusion and work towards a poverty-free Québec, the SSVP-QRC is convinced that the Québec government will use the results of such a reflection to help Quebecers in poverty absorb the shock inflicted on them by the pandemic.

Because the fight against poverty and social inequality is the DNA of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the QRC wants to ensure that the consequences of the coronavirus in Québec are better managed and that vulnerable individuals and households are reassured by a better support plan. The sooner this plan is implemented, the sooner we will put this pandemic behind us and be able to restore among all Quebecers the joy of living in a rich and strong Québec.

*Baudouin Kutuka Makasi, Coordinator
Quebec Regional Council*

Notre-Dame de l'Eau Vive Conference, Gatineau QC

POVERTY HAS NO FACE: SSVP-QRC GETS INVOLVED NORTH OF THE 60TH PARALLEL

Child poverty is an excellent indicator for assessing the environment and living conditions of households in a community. In view of the statistics available, it must be concluded that in Canada, including in Quebec, the Aboriginal communities in general, and those north of the 60th parallel in particular, register the largest percentage of people and households living in conditions of poverty.

As a reminder, the study carried out jointly by researchers from the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), the results of which were published in July 2019 by the Upstream Institute and relayed by the CBC, confirms that 47% of Aboriginal children lived in poverty in 2016, while the average of Canadian children, in the same year, was 17.6%. The same study recognized Quebec as the province with the lowest child poverty rate compared to the other provinces.

This result is the positive consequence of the various agreements that the Government of Quebec has signed with Aboriginal peoples. It is also due to the province-wide enforcement of its anti-poverty law. However, when we bring the national statistics back to the provincial level, we also note, despite all the efforts made by the various partners, that the gap between child poverty among Aboriginal children and other children in the province remains as high as one can imagine. Action must therefore be taken to further lower this rate and help Indigenous households out of poverty.

Thus, in order to join forces with the provincial government, the Quebec Regional Council of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul took the option of revitalizing, through a well-structured project, the community thrift store in Kuujjuaq, aiming to make it a strategic vector in the fight against poverty and social inequalities north of the 60th parallel.

The revitalized thrift store will help combat the social isolation of Inuit households, create jobs and contribute to the care of young people struggling with mental health problems. The initiative is supported by the various development players in Nunavik, in this case the Kuujjuaq town hall, the Kuujjuaq municipal housing office, the Regional Health Authority and so many others.

Nunavik, formerly known as Nouveau-Québec, is the name given to the Quebec territory located north of the 55th parallel. As part of the Nord-du-Québec region, Nunavik covers an area of approximately 507 000 km² made up of lakes carved by glaciers, tundra and boreal forest.

The approximately 13 000 inhabitants of Nunavik (the Nunavimmiut), 90 % of whom are recognized as Inuit, live along the coasts in fourteen northern villages forming the Kativik. There is also the Naskapi village of Kawawachikamach and the Amerindian village of Whapmagoostui, that has a Cree community.

POVERTY HAS NO FACE: SSVP-QRC GETS INVOLVED NORTH OF THE 60TH PARALLEL ... continued

Those who are familiar with Kuujjuaq know that the thrift store that we are restructuring and revitalizing today is a six-year-old initiative. Its origin dates back to 2014. When it was created, it was known as the “Wellness Centre”. At that time a responsible person was hired through a Health Canada program to manage it. In 2017, when Health Canada withdrew its subsidy, the CLSC (local community service centre) had to stop operating there. The Ungava community accommodation centre, Ippigusugiursavik, with the agreement of Kuujjuaq City Hall, then took over in 2018 and continued to offer services for the benefit of low-income individuals and households.

Faced with the increasingly growing need and taking into account certain hazards, the SSVP-QRC will be asked to support the Ungava community accommodation centre in the restructuring of the second-hand clothing store, the supply of linens, kitchen utensils and so many other items likely required to meet the basic needs of people and households living in poverty. To crystallize the project, the director of the Ungava community centre will be invited to meet with the QRC to redefine, in a concerted and coordinated manner, the objectives and results to be achieved over the next three years.

And because we are talking about the Aboriginal population, the SSVP-QRC approached the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (AAS) to include it in the process as a financial partner.

During the first meeting with its team responsible for the northern program, the SSVP-QRC delegation presented the main objectives of the project as well as the funding needs to ensure its implementation. At the request of AAS, SSVP-QRC and its local partner, the Ungava community centre in Kuujjuaq provided additional information. The complete dossier will be submitted to the AAS this summer and the necessary arrangements are in place to start the project before the fall of 2020.

*Baudouin Kutuka Makasi, Coordinator
Quebec Regional Council*

**Baudouin Kutuka Makasi, QRC Coordinator, Myriam Bergeron, Chair of the project, Michel Olivier, QRC President, and Jacques Bertrand, Chair of Kuujjuaq thrift store, our contact for the project.
Lise Boyer, QRC VP (taken the photo) is also a member of the Committee.**

Ungava community accommodation centre

IN MEMORIAM

IT IS WITH DEEP REGRET THAT WE ANNOUNCE THE FOLLOWING DEATHS:

Lionel Dubeau

Most Precious Blood Conference, Windsor, Ontario
October 1, 2019

Lillian Long

Holy Name of Mary Conference, Windsor, Ontario
October 13, 2019

Margaret Bertrand

St. Columbkille Conference, Pembroke, Ontario
November 17, 2019

James Francis McAlpine

St. George Conference, Ottawa, Ontario
December 3, 2019

Lynn Patrick Ryan

St. Anthony of Padua Conference, Harrow, Ontario
December 8, 2019

John Leyzer

SSVP store, Brant, Ontario
December 12, 2019

Gil Gourdine

Good Shepherd Conference, Edmonton, Alberta
December 16, 2019

Robert Gay

Most Precious Blood Conference, Windsor, Ontario
December 17, 2019

Declen Whelan

St. Anthony of Padua Conference, Kincardine, Ontario
December 26, 2019

John Power

St. Leonard Conference, New Waterford, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia
January 7, 2020

John Thomas MacDonald

St. Ignatius Conference, Bedford, Nova Scotia
January 13, 2020

Louise Shurman

Divine Mercy Conference, Edmonton, Alberta
January 17, 2020

Thomas Kelly

St. Joseph Conference, Bowmanville, Ontario
January 24, 2020

Eugene Mailloux

Good Shepherd Conference, Tecumseh, Ontario
February 3, 2020

Benjamin Marcos

Mother Teresa Conference, Edmonton, Alberta
February 14, 2020

Dianne O'Neill

All Saints Conference, Edmonton, Alberta
March 17, 2020

Lina Lalancette

Saint-Jean-Vianney Conference, Montréal, Québec
March 29, 2020

Bert VanBerlo

Saints Simon and Jude Conference, Belle River, Ontario
April 6, 2020

Joseph Chartrand

Most Precious Blood Conference, Windsor, Ontario
April 6, 2020

*They were our brothers and sisters serving the poor.
Let us keep them in our prayers.*

Please send your death notices to: editor@ssvp.ca



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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