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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the new National Council of Canada Newsletter format. Our hope is to provide all conferences and councils with current news and information, thereby assisting all our members, associates and volunteers across the nation. Thank you everyone for your continued dedication and services for the needy, the marginalized, the forgotten and the oppressed during this time of pandemic.

Society seems to be tearing itself apart, much as it was when the first Christians appeared following the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The landscape today is strangely similar. This was a time when slave population estimates ranged from 25-40% within Rome itself and 2-10% in outlying provinces, a time when slaves, women and children, most notably girls, had no rights except those accorded to them by a loving and compassionate master, husband or father. They were expendable at a whim. The slaves, the needy, the widows, the orphans, the disabled, the disadvantaged and the oppressed were all left to fend for themselves with no one seemingly caring or willing to help. Unbridled sexual excess was rampant, coexisting alongside abortion, infanticide, murder and violence everywhere. Who or what would come to their rescue?

The front line of this rescue mission fell solely on the shoulders of the Christian Church, which formed immediately after the Apostles started preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ risen from the dead. One has only to read the Acts of the Apostles to see how quickly they started changing society. The Christians followed Christ's example of sharing all things in common to the benefit of the whole church. Soon after, they started caring for the slaves, the needy, the widows, the orphans, the disabled, the disadvantaged and the oppressed regardless of race, nationality or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. Before long, they were building homes for the homeless, hospitals, hospices, schools; the list goes on...

Within a mere 300 years, they managed to completely change society in spite of the high costs inflicted by persecution and martyrdom. The Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity in 313. It became the official religion of the Roman Empire within 10 years thereafter. The foundations of Western Society were basically built and laid down by the Catholic Church.

(How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization by Thomas E. Woods, Jr.)

Today we stand at the crossroads again when everyone and everything appears to be tearing apart the very fabric of our society. As Vincentians, we are being propelled to the front lines, as were the first Christians. With love and compassion, we serve the most marginalized and vulnerable in our society. Reaching out with love and providing care and sustenance, we are living our faith in a tangible and visible manner. We are the "hands and heart" of Jesus ever present to our neighbours during their hour of need. Let us live and serve by following the

example of the first Christians and our founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam. Let us go boldly and prayerfully forward for the benefit of persons in need and society in general.

“Every Christian needs a half-hour of prayer each day, except when he is busy; then he needs an hour.” – St. Francis de Sales

Let us pick up the torch as witnesses to love, service and civility in our communities when so many seem to be so bent on tearing down and destroying all that has served us so well in the past. This is in no way intended to impede genuine progress. Progress is not progress if achieved by simply tearing down the past, which at present is not in vogue with contemporary thought. If we do not heed the lessons of the past, we are bound to repeat them.

“No fear. No worry. No doubt. Jesus is my Security now and always.”

Daily Bible Verse April 30, 2021 @ Seekfirst.blogspot.com

Serviens in Spe,

*Claude Bédard, President
National Council of Canada*

CANADA ANSWERS THE COUNCIL GENERAL INTERNATIONAL'S MARCH APPEAL FOR HELP

Each month, the Commission for International Aid and Development of the Council General International selects one of the Society's projects that is in need of funds and invites the Society throughout the world to support it directly.

The project chosen for the month of March was "A Healthy Start", a daily breakfast program for pre-primary school children in Grenada.

The Situation: Children in need of food

This project seeks to provide a daily breakfast to 31 children between the ages of three and four at the New Hampshire Pre-Primary School in Grenada (Caribbean Islands). The school is located in a rural community with a high unemployment rate, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and where many of the families live in poverty. There is a recognized need by the school authorities and parents to support the children's growth and development through the provision of daily breakfasts, which they do not always have at home. Lack of a healthy start to the day compromises the children's development in their most formative years.

The appeal: The project will ensure that each child receives a healthy breakfast daily.

This will support each child's physical, mental, emotional and academic development. It will also lay the foundation for them to progress into primary and secondary school. This is consistent with studies, which indicate that the early years are critical to the development of well-rounded individuals. It will also ease some of the burdens and stress faced by the parents in trying to cope with the COVID-19 crisis.

Three Canadian conferences twinned with Grenada, as well as one Vincentian, through a personal donation, covered the entire project. The funds were sent to CGI and then forwarded to the SSVP in Grenada that is managing the project.

Council General International thanked the Vincentians of Canada for this beautiful gesture of solidarity.

SPIRITUAL ADVISOR FORMATION

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Some of us were asked to be spiritual advisors for the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, as our fellow Vincentians note our spirituality and commitment to the work of the Society. Congratulations on the endorsement of your brothers and sisters and thank you for accepting this appointment. More and more, spiritual advisors are regular members of the Society without a history of in-depth study of our faith. I am the Chairperson of the National Spirituality Committee and that is my experience and, yes, it is a bit unnerving. I need formal training and I know it.

The National Council also saw this need and, in conjunction with Newman Theological College in Edmonton, they have developed the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Certificate Program, which is available online. The program takes approximately one academic year to complete (September to June) and, as of September 2020, the total cost of the program (academic fees and books) is approximately \$570 / student. Please note that while there is some funding available, it is anticipated that the local conference or council will arrange for covering these training costs. There has been significant input (time, talent, and treasure) from members of SSVP National Council into the development of this program. It was developed by us for our formation as Vincentian spiritual advisors.

The following description from the Newman College website is a very good overview that I will not attempt to improve on:

Participants in the Study of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Certificate Program will come to appreciate the purpose of doctrine and the process of theology through the study of the Catholic faith; examine, from a variety of theological perspectives, what we know and believe about the central figure of the Christian faith - Jesus; the theology of the sacraments: the public and the liturgical prayer of the Church, as well as the sacraments within the context of their role in the lives of the faithful; to discover the world of the Scriptures and consider the Bible's history, its development, and the cultural factors which influence the events of the writing of the Old and New Testaments; Frédéric Ozanam, the founder of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul; and study and reflection on the history and spirituality of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Participants enrolled in the Saint Vincent de Paul program will be able to appreciate the purpose of the doctrine and the theological process by studying the Catholic faith. The first part of the program focuses on the person of Jesus Christ, the theology of the sacraments, the foundations of Catholicism and biblical writings. The second part deals with the life and spirituality of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, the founder of the SSVP, the history and spirituality of Saint Vincent de Paul, the social teaching of the Church and

the role of the spiritual advisor in part of an SSVP conference. These eight courses are offered in English and French.

A link for more details is: <https://www.newman.edu/ccs/ssvp>

We encourage all our members (especially the spiritual advisors) to take the course as it will make us all more effective in the vital role we fill in the conferences. Completion of the course of study will guide us all in our growth as people, Christians, and as Vincentians in a disciplined, academic, theological manner. As noted above, I need training so I am currently in the process of completing the course and it is a very rewarding experience which has already greatly deepened my understanding and appreciation of Vincentian spirituality. Thank you all for the wonderful work you do in His name. May God bless us all and especially the poor we serve.

Yours in the Service of the Servants of the Poor

*John Carey, Chair
National Spirituality Committee, SSVP Canada*

PATRON SAINT OF THE SOCIETY IN CANADA

My Dear Friends in Christ,

The National Spirituality Committee invited members to submit nominations of Canadian Saints to be considered the Patron Saint of the Society in Canada. Four wonderful nominees were put forward and members made the decision by ballot.

Thank you to all who participated in this process. We are pleased to announce that the Patron Saint of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Canada is Saint Marguerite d'Youville.

It is the intention of National to hold the consecration to the Patron Saint at our Fall Board meeting in Québec City in conjunction with the celebration of the 175th anniversary of the Society in Canada.

The biography of this truly remarkable woman is available on our SSVP website: [Marguerite d'Youville Bio](#)

Discover all stages of Marguerite d'Youville's life in pictures: [Illustrated Story on Her Life](#)

May God bless us all and the poor we serve.

Yours in the Service of the Servants of the Poor,

*John Carey, Chair
National Spirituality Committee*

FRIDGE-SHARING: A COLLECTIVE CITIZEN ACTION AGAINST FOOD INSECURITY

Many food banks have seen an increase in demand over the past year and some of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul's points of service are no exception.

The need to find initiatives to address this new reality is paramount. Thus, the development of inclusive citizen practices would represent part of the solution. Those practices could undoubtedly be complementary to the more traditional methods, in order to respond to this huge rise in demand.

Moreover, citizen empowerment over an ever-present reality such as food insecurity would notably generate a social transformation anchored in the community, optimize collective autonomy, increase the power of action and ease the difficulties of people in a situation of food insecurity, and reduce social inequalities. One of the initiatives to decrease food insecurity is fridge-sharing -- making available a fridge containing fresh and free food for anyone who wishes to use it. The fridge is filled by committed citizens on a rotating schedule, as well as by businesses who want to contribute that are in the neighbourhood where a food-sharing fridge is located. This is also a good way to avoid food waste.

In Montreal, we are currently considering the possibility of setting up food-sharing fridges in certain areas where the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul points of service have been affected by the significant increase in requests for food assistance. Citizens will be able to access this fridge at any time, either to ensure its safety, or to drop off or pick up food.

A collective action such as a food-sharing fridge therefore helps to avoid food waste, while offering an alternative way to provide food. Ideally, this should be seen as a service of last resort, rather than a permanent solution to a recurring problem.

*Justine Boisvert-Corcoran, Development Worker
Conseil central de Montréal*

<https://ssvp-mtl.org/fr/nouvelle/89/le-frigo-partage-une-action-collective-et-citoyenne-contre-l-insecurite-alimentaire>

HE HAS PROVIDED HUNDREDS OF MEALS TO PEOPLE IN NEED

"If someone is hungry, you have to arrange for them to eat!"

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Claude Desrochers has prepared and distributed more than 500 lunch boxes to homeless people in downtown Joliette to meet their daily energy needs. This winter, Desrochers was able to deliver up to 40 meals per week, which required nearly 50 hours of work.

"I couldn't expect the demand to increase that much," said Desrochers, who has lived near the downtown area for about five years. He had already been sharing food for several years, whenever he came across people in need, but it was in March 2020 that his initiative gained momentum and he started doing twice-daily distributions.

"Some agencies had closed their doors, as had restaurants and stores. The homeless couldn't get warm anymore, couldn't beg. I couldn't let them starve, so I did it because it was a necessity and so they could eat despite COVID-19."

When he started, he was handing out about eight lunches a week. "My goal was to give them everything they needed in a day, in terms of calories and protein, to properly support them." To do that, he paid for all the expenses out of his own pocket.

Then in April, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Joliette, where he was already volunteering, decided to provide the financial resources to allow him to continue his initiative.

"I'm grateful and I really don't want to waste donor money, so I go to all the businesses where there are discounts and I'm very careful when I give the meals, so that those who receive them don't abuse what they are offered and me."

The financial analyst by training mentions that each lunch bag has production costs of less than \$5 and that it contains all the necessary nutrients so that the body of the person who will benefit from it has enough energy to fight the cold.

In fact, it was during the month of December, when temperatures were very cold, that the need for lunches peaked. "It hit hard; I went from 10 meals a week to about 40. In addition to sandwiches, I was adding chocolate and nuts and also making soup, it was the only way I could find to give them a little more vitamin."

The dedicated man spent up to 50 hours a week preparing and delivering those meals. In his biggest week, he served them to 11 different people. "Sometimes I had to go to the grocery store at least four times a week!" Then, on Christmas Day, he met with the homeless downtown and brought them a dozen hot, full meals.

It should also be noted that when preparing the meals, Mr. Desrochers follows all sanitary rules, including wearing a mask and net.

Recognition and mutual aid

The demand has gradually decreased and in March, Mr. Desrochers was distributing about ten meals per week. Desrochers says that most of the homeless people are just passing through downtown and disappear after two or three days. Among those he sees most often, he says that some cheerfully thank him every time he gives them a meal, while others start to take the gesture a little more for granted.

He added that he sometimes feels some judgement from people who see him handing out his meals. "Some citizens look at me a little sideways, but in general I get more positive than negative reaction!"

Desrochers wants to continue his initiative until COVID-19 and its consequences are resolved. "If someone is hungry, we have to organize for them to eat!"

Afterwards, he will continue, but in a different way. Those who want to contribute can do so by making a donation to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. "This is the best way to help; it is thanks to this money that I was able to make so many lunches!"

Another way to give

In addition to this action, Mr. Desrochers has been letting his hair grow longer for almost a year in order to donate it. It will be used to make hairpieces for people who have undergone chemotherapy.

From L'Action.com - March 31, 2021

<https://www.laction.com/article/2021/03/31/il-a-offert-des-centaines-de-repas-a-des-gens-dans-le-besoin>

Mélissa Blouin - mblouin@lexismedia.ca

FIRST FOOD, THEN WHAT? BEING THE LINK FROM AWARENESS TO ACCESS THE GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT (GIS)

Do you serve seniors through your conference or in your store? The Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) is a **monthly payment** the persons we serve can receive if they are 65 or older and receive the [Old Age Security](#) (OAS) pension.

How does it work? The supplement is based on income. It is not taxable. Qualified recipients must have filed their taxes every year.

Is there a cut off? If the person has income below \$18,744 and is single, widowed, or divorced, the maximum monthly payment is **\$923.71**.

What if they are not single? If his or her income plus the income of the spouse/common-law partner is below \$24,768 and if the partner receives the full OAS pension or the GIS, the maximum monthly payment is **\$556.04**. If it is below \$44,928 and the partner does not receive an OAS pension, the maximum monthly payment is **\$923.71**

So what? While in many cases, the person in need will be enrolled automatically, sometimes he or she may have to apply for the Guaranteed Income Supplement if the government does not have enough information to enroll them automatically. They may have to apply if they are receiving their Old Age Security pension and never applied for the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

We have learned that there are still many who are unaware and not benefitting. **One in 10** in fact is falling through the cracks, even though we are probably talking to them face to face each month!

This is where Vincentians can help. We can be the link from awareness to access and walk alongside those in need to ensure they will receive these monthly funds.

Want to learn more? Follow this link to [Canada.ca](#) for more information so you can reach out to those in need and ask if they are receiving the GIS and, if not, help them to apply.

[Guaranteed Income Supplement – Overview - Canada.ca](#)

For more information, contact:

Linda Alexander, Seeds of Hope project coordinator
seedsofhope@ssvp.ca

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q: What are the requirements to obtain and maintain charitable status for a conference or council?

A: An organization must meet a number of general requirements to qualify for charitable registration under the Income Tax Act. The charitable purposes are the objectives that an organization is created to achieve. Activities are the ways that an organization furthers its purposes. To be eligible for charitable registration, an organization must show that each of its purposes is charitable at law, and that its activities further these charitable purposes in a way that complies with the requirements of the common law and the Income Tax Act.

A charity, in the legal sense, must be set up to carry out activities that fall within one or more of the following headings:

Relief of poverty;
Advancement of education;
Advancement of religion;
Useful for the community (provide a tangible benefit to the community), such as:

- Health promotion
- Contributing to the appreciation of the arts by the public
- Environmental Protection
- Treatment and prevention of the special needs of children and young people
- Treatment and prevention of problems facing families
- Relief of conditions associated with old age
- Relieving conditions associated with impairment
- Provide public services
- Promotion of Trade and Industry

The general requirements for charitable registration guidance is reflected in guidance CG-017.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/policies-guidance/guidance-017-general-requirements-charitable-registration.html>

with more explicit description under “What is charitable?”

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/registering-charitable-qualified-donee-status/apply-become-registered-charity/establishing/what-charitable.html>

Once charitable status has been obtained, the main obligations of a registered charity are:

- Devote its resources (financial, human and real estate) to its charitable purposes and activities;
- Manage and direct the use of all its resources (financial, human and real estate);
- Ensure that official donation receipts are complete and accurate at the time of issuance;
- Maintain up-to-date accounting records in Canada and allow the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to review them upon request;
- File the annual T3010 form, Registered Charity Information Return, within six months of the end of the fiscal year.