

# Vincenpaul

The Magazine of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul  
National Council of Canada  
Volume 42 No. 3 - Fall 2016

# Canada



Let us embrace the North  
in our network of charity

NATIONAL FUNDRAISING  
details page 5



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## Mission

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organisation 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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# Message from the President

Dear brother and sister Vincentians,



I would like to start with a reminder to all Vincentians across the country. **On Saturday, November 12, 2016 we will celebrate the 170th anniversary of the foundation of the first Conference in Canada.** It was indeed on November 12, 1846 that the Society was established in Quebec City. In order to highlight the anniversary, I invite all Conference Presidents to organize an activity. It could be a mass, followed by a meal, a meal on its own, a garage sale, etc. Whatever you decide to do, please take pictures and send them to the National Council, at [editor@ssvp.ca](mailto:editor@ssvp.ca). We are looking forward to seeing your pictures.

As you will see, a number of articles in this edition are dedicated to the arrival of refugees. All of us have seen in 2016 various stories about people escaping unimaginable horrors. The types of atrocities these people have had to face can send chills up anyone's spine. That is why Vincentians must participate in receiving those refugees. We have an obligation to be there, present, with all other organizations which participate in the common effort. Our listening and welcoming skills may bring great comfort to the newcomers. Of course, they need a roof over their heads, clothes, furniture, household appliances, etc., but some human warmth and a feeling of being accepted are just as important.

You will also find in this edition an article about our activities in Fort McMurray. I know that I often talk to you about the importance of personal contact in our relationship with people who call us for help, but the articles on refugees or the one on Fort McMurray clearly

show the importance of such contact for each individual. The refugees have been through very difficult times and when we stop and take the time to listen to them, they appreciate that gesture as much as the material objects they have received.

That reality is as true for the people we serve on a regular basis. Wherever they go to ask for help, people ask to see an ID card and give them, or not, what they came to get, period. When we take the time to welcome them and listen to them, it makes all the difference for them.

Therefore, at every opportunity, let us take the time to listen to those we serve. That helps them find some human dignity and it helps us serve them better. Let us think also about people who live alone. A brief visit brings them so much happiness and joy. Let us remember them as well.

I understand that for some people, human contact is difficult, while for others it comes naturally. Even if it is difficult for you, the more you will participate in personal meetings, the more you will feel at ease and the more you will be able to establish a productive communication with those who suffer.

**Let us remember that the mission of the Society is to live the message of the Gospel, by serving Christ through the needy with love, respect, justice and joy.** That is what we are known for, and I believe that because of the great solitude experienced by so many people nowadays, those personal contacts must continue, since human contact is such an absolute necessity for them.

To conclude, **I invite all Conference Presidents to fill in the strategic plan evaluation questionnaire** that was sent electronically. That questionnaire will help us evaluate where we stand with regard to the objectives which were set for the next five years. If you wish a paper copy, please contact Josée at the national office, at 1 866 997-7787.

Thank you for participating and I wish you a good autumn.

**Jean-Noël Cormier,  
National President**

# Invitation - AGA 2017 - Quebec QC

**JUNE 21-25, 2017**

## **NOTRE-DAME-DE-FOY CAMPUS - QUÉBEC**

*On behalf of the Québec Central Council, I am very happy to invite you to the next Annual General Assembly (AGA) of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul National Council of Canada.*

*The various AGA activities will take place in an enchanting site, near the city of Québec. We have chosen that countryside location for its accessibility and comfortable accommodations, and the vicinity of the site.*

*Those of you who participated to the 2008 AGA will remember the good times we had, and we believe that you will be as delighted by your stay in 2017. Moreover, if you wish to come accompanied, please note that we are preparing a particular programme for spouses, who will have the opportunity to enjoy activities and attend workshops especially designed for them. You may also take the opportunity to extend your visit among us and visit our beautiful city which is getting ready to celebrate its 409th anniversary, in 2017.*

*It should be noted that the Conference will end on June 24th, on St. John the Baptist feast day, National Holiday of Québec. Special invitation to Francophones from all over the country!*

*We invite you to register early. All details will be communicated in an upcoming edition of the VincenPaul.*

*It is under the theme “**The joy of serving**” that our meeting will take place. It is in the same spirit that we will welcome you and that we will socialize together during those few days.*

*Welcome to Québec in 2017!*

*Jean-Marc Vaillancourt, President  
Quebec Central Council*





# National fundraising



We invite all Conferences, Councils and Vincentians to join us in a project that we plan to launch for the **400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Vincentian charisma**: a national fundraising campaign on behalf of northern communities.

Since 2008, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is present in the Canadian Far North, and a few Conferences have been created. Every summer, the Western and Ontario Regional Councils send sea containers full of food, household products and other articles to northern communities with which we have established contact. **In 2016, 11 sea containers were sent, each one of them containing supplies worth between \$25,000 and \$100,000, according to the size of the community.**

Every year, new contacts are made with adjoining communities and we must increase the number of sea containers we send to be able to help a greater number of people. In 2016, we helped 12 communities (8 in the Northwest Territories and 4 in Nunavut), and in 2017, at least 3 new communities will be added in Nunavut. The first years, the sea containers and the transportation were offered free of charge, but over the years, with the increasing number of containers, we have had to pay for a few of them and part of the transportation costs. Unfortunately, due to financial difficulties experienced by the shipping company, we will have to pay all transportation and container costs in the future.

**In celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Vincentian charisma**, the National Council of Canada wishes to get involved as well in the Canadian Far North, to ensure that our assistance to northern communities will continue. We wish that **“North of 60”** becomes the project of the entire **Canadian Vincentian Family**, so that we can embrace the North in our network of charity.

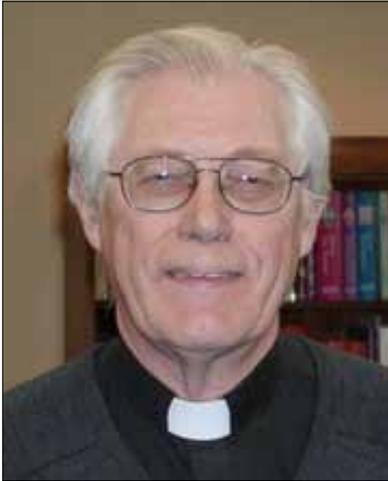
Your monetary donations to **“North of 60”** will allow us to continue supporting northern communities. You may send your cheque to the National Council office, to the order of “SSVP Canada”; please indicate “North of 60” as a note. **In 2017, we will need \$125,850 to purchase sea containers and pay for transportation costs to the 16 northern communities that we hope to help.**

In addition, we are looking for Councils, Conferences and Vincentians who would like to become involved practically in supporting northern communities; for example in contacting new northern communities, collecting food and supplies (the lists are pre-established by the northern communities), preparation of sea containers, negotiations and shipping of sea containers. For additional information, please contact the national office.

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# Spirituality

## THE JOY OF SERVING



The dictionary definition of the word joy indicates that it is a sentiment of intense happiness, what makes arise in the individual a rich state of well-being. We can say, therefore, that joy is an important element for good mental health.

Quite a few interesting scriptural quotes concerning joy exist. Here is a small sample:

- From the Gospel according to John, 6:16: **that my joy remains in you**
- From the 1st Letter of John: 5:11: **that your joy be full**
- From the Book of Nehemiah: 8:10: **for the joy of the Lord is your strength**

We can conclude that intimacy with God has a lot to do about finding joy in our service. Indeed, to fully understand the idea of joy in serving, I suggest that we revisit the 12 major elements that are of great importance to Christian life.

Our Christian life is based on the 2-part fundamental teaching of the Lord: **Love God and love your neighbour as you love yourself**. This is the filter that we must use on a daily basis as we proceed with life.

In the Baptism ceremony, the celebrant, once the ritual with water is done, makes a cross on the forehead of the baptized person with Chrism and indicates in prayer that the baptized person is now a full-fledged disciple of Christ, following the Lord in his 3-part vocation as Priest, Prophet and King.

Yes, every baptized person is in a very real sense, a priest, called upon to link his or her corner of the world to God Almighty. This mirrors the fundamental function of the ordained priest to be a bridge between the here and now and eternity. Two small examples indicate the power of the baptized laity:

- In an emergency, the baptized Christian can validly baptize someone.
- Present with a dying person, when no ordained priest is available to provide the sacrament of anointing of the sick, the baptized person can validly call upon God to pardon the sins of the dying person.

The baptized person is also a Prophet. This means courageously standing up for what is right and just. It also means to strive to properly explain one's Faith. It means that making the world a better place is not merely an option, but an imperative.

The Kingly vocation points to the responsibilities that we have. They must always be accomplished through the filter of the two-point teaching of the Lord, as I said earlier: to love God and to love neighbour. Also we are to integrate in one's life the teaching from Jesus himself, that leadership is service.

We have considered five of the 12 points. The seven remaining are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, received in the great sacrament of Confirmation.

The first two are very important. The wisdom to know clearly what is to be done and the courage to do it. To make these two gifts work in tandem is something we must strive to always do. Then comes prudence, a gift that becomes ever more precise as we use it throughout life. It helps us not to jump to conclusions, to take the time to find out what is right and just. The gift of intelligence helps us study and learn what our vocation in life requires. It gives us a wise curiosity. The gift of understanding makes us see the connections and solutions that bring about growth and happiness. It helps us appreciate the gifts that others bring.

The sixth gift is reverence. It helps us make every ordinary occasion of life an extra-ordinary event in the adventure of life. It fosters a clearer picture of our environment.

Finally, piety gives us the understanding of our great need to foster, on a daily basis, our intimate love relationship with God. To cherish the sacraments and the liturgy. To understand that through the practice of Faith we become fully human, made in the image of God.

The fully alive Christian should be able to serve with joy, but we do not live in an ideal world. Many are those who consider the idea of joy in serving as far-fetched, if not impossible. The reality in which we swim is the Secular World. For many what I have spoken is just so much nonsensical talk.

Why is it so? To better understand this Secular World, I suggest we look at four areas where the Christian conception and the secular are at odds: The notion of God, the understanding of the Bible, Institutional Religion and the problem of Evil.

We are surrounded by practical atheism. Usually this is bred by sheer ignorance. Regrettably often the idea of God held by some believers is far from solid. Our God is not some power always ready to judge and punish, akin to the Force in *Star Wars*, but rather a God, who, in the words of St Irenaeus, has his glory in the human person fully alive. He is the Trinitarian God who is intimately close to us in the Eucharist and whose Holy Spirit empowers us.

What so many ignore about the Bible is that it is a collection of books, each with its own style. It contains poetry, allegorical texts, stories to teach, audio-visuals and also several books of actual history. If we do not keep all this in mind, the Bible is next to useless.

Our Secular World sees religion as the enemy of science and a continuous source of violence. One has to say loud and clear that solid study of history shows that Christianity has continuously fostered good science. The Church being composed at every age of saints and sinners, has in the past, made some mis-steps but the overall progress has been towards a world ever closer to the goal of our Creator and Lord.

What many see as the greatest obstacle to belief is the problem of Evil. In short why does a loving God permit suffering on a gigantic scale. The believer's answer is above all the cross of Christ. God gives us freedom and so He must be patient when bad things occur.

His Providence watches over us and he relies on good people to pick up the pieces. You can see how terribly important the work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul is. A text to ponder is the answer that God gives to Job (see the Book of Job, chapters 38 to 41).

We must be aware of the Secular World and cooperate with those elements that are authentic. Our Faith must guide us to be the light that may steer humanity back to its true destiny.

In the year 2000, Bruce Wilkinson of the Evangelical Church, published a small book entitled *The Jabez Prayer*. The Bible tells us about Jabez in 1 Chronicles 4:10: **Jabez called on the God of Israel: If you truly bless me you will extend my lands, your hand will be with me, you will keep harm away.**

What is interesting about Jabez is that he is not running away from responsibility but rather, asking that more opportunities to serve be granted, and he wants God very much in his life.

I suggest that to have joy in serving we must see reality somewhat like Jabez does, knowing ourselves and our capacities, yet realizing that with God's help, the impossible becomes possible.

In 1955, a French priest, Gaston Courtois, involved in the Catholic Boy Scout movement, published a book entitled *L'École des Chefs*. In the book he outlines 15 topics essential to become a good leader. His third topic is as follows: **Having faith in the importance and the beauty of the task at hand.**

I believe that the insight provided by Father Courtois is very pertinent to our consideration of the theme *joy in serving*. To have such joy we must truly believe that what we are doing is not only important, but is clearly what our God and Eternal Friend wishes us to do. With such a belief, it is inevitable that joy will be in serving.

**Msgr Peter Schonenbach, Spiritual Advisor  
National Council**

# Social Justice

How do we best judge a nation. It is the way we care for our most vulnerable citizens.

Social justice in today's world simply means seeking justice for all, especially the most vulnerable, which for us are our friends and neighbours in need, our fellow citizens. Our international Vincentian family uses the term systemic change.

The definition of systemic change adopted by the Vincentian family states:

Systemic Change among those living in poverty aims beyond providing food, clothing, shelter and alleviating immediate needs. It enables people themselves to engage in the identification of the root causes of their poverty and to create strategies, including advocacy, to change those structures which keep them in poverty. Systemic Change requires transforming attitudes.

Perhaps the first step in adopting the concept of systemic change is for our Society of Saint Vincent de Paul to transform our own attitudes and systems in order to better serve those in need and to give them some real hope that their future will be brighter.

Social justice offers every Vincentian an option for the poor which can eliminate many of the concerns or comments about those we help which we may hear from other Vincentians. These may include:

*Why can't they help themselves*

*They are just too lazy*

*They are taking advantage of us*

*How can they afford to drink and smoke, yet can't feed their families?*

*How can they waste money on lotteries, even bingo?*

Instead of worrying about any of these why can't we use our energy and time to search for ways we can do more to help them escape poverty.

We could advocate with and for them for changes in current systems that keep them trapped in poverty

We could collaborate with other organizations to address poverty issues

We could use current programs and develop and implement new ones which give those in need some hope for a better future

There are many issues both locally and nationally, which we need to address in a way that gives people a true sense of dignity, self-esteem and accomplishment.

There is no doubt about our role in seeking justice for the poor. Ozanam was a champion of social justice issues of his time. If we look at the foundational Catholic Social Teachings we can again see our responsibility, as Catholics and Vincentians to address injustices in our communities as well as globally.

There are ten principles of Catholic Social Teachings which you can access on our national website under social justice.

Our founder, Frederic Ozanam was a strong voice for social justice in his words and actions. There was no organized charity, there were no lay organizations in the Church and he and his co-founders went into the homes of the poorest of the poor. He is considered to have been a leading resource for the beginnings of Catholic social teachings.

I believe the time is right for the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul to place a strong emphasis on social justice. Pope Francis has certainly spoken out about our obligation to take action. Quote from The Joy of the Gospel. `` The church, guided by the Gospel of mercy and by love for mankind, hears the cry for justice and intends to respond to it with all her might.

It means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter.

It presumes the creation of a new mindset which thinks in terms of community and

the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few.

Changing structures without generating new convictions and attitudes will only ensure that those same structures will become, sooner or later, corrupt, oppressive and ineffectual.

# Social Justice

Pope Francis's words are very interesting for if you remember the definition of Systemic Change which I read it too requires transforming our attitudes. We need to adopt a more holistic approach that is concerned with more than just material assistance for our friends and neighbours in need. What better time than during this Year of Mercy to begin a social justice program at your council or conference level.

Please join us in our social justice efforts by acting as the social justice rep at your conference. Placing social justice on the agenda of every meeting and discuss a topic will also help to educate your members while encouraging their active participation.

**Jim Paddon, Chairperson**  
**Social Justice National Committee**

**Join our new Facebook group:  
SSVP Canada Social-Justice-Sociale**



## Education/Formation

The National Education Committee wishes to thank and congratulate all the presenters at the June AGA for their commitment, preparation and design, and delivery of the very excellent workshops given at these sessions. A preliminary survey results show an overall excellent rating of 89% for our workshops. Specific rating results will be sent individually to all presenters. Once again, thank you for all your hard work and we hope many of you will consider doing another AGA workshop in the future.

Our committee remains dedicated to rejuvenating education and training materials and delivery to the end users, the members of our conferences and councils across Canada. There will be challenges to face as we adapt methods and materials to our diversified locations while continuing to focus on our collective strengths and the importance of giving a united, spiritual message of hope and dignity for all.

Our committee will be discussing ways to approach the regions, mainly the Particular Council presidents, in the late fall and winter, to help us identify the present gaps in the members' knowledge – is it a lack of a comprehensive but succinct training path for new members; is it specific sessions on specific topics – you tell us what you are looking for and we will work with your council

and conference presidents to identify and train local educators so you will have hands-on training help when you need it. Or we can do training sessions in your areas if numbers indicate this is needed.

We are also looking forward to the introduction of the revised National website, and the opportunities this will give us in sharing education and training packages electronically, with more variety, choice and diversity than we have now.

Preparations are starting for the 2017 AGA in Quebec, a special year of celebration of the history of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Canada. Do you have any requests for workshops on specific topics that we could develop in the months leading up to our June 2017 AGA. Our committee welcomes all suggestions – please get in touch with your regional Education representative with your ideas, or email them directly to my general email address at [education@ssvp.ca](mailto:education@ssvp.ca)

Thank you,

**Mary Grad, Chairperson**  
**Education/Formation Committee**

# Twinning

## RECRUITING YOUTH AND TWINNING

The Society has difficulty recruiting and retaining youth. External twinning by conferences could attract youth and young adults to the Society by assigning them responsibility of a twinning under the supervision of an adult member.

Youth and young adults love challenges, a well-defined project and working in group. They particularly like to get involve in a humanitarian activity on the ground, which is possible with twinning. The involvement in an External Twinning with a conference of a developing country offers all these challenges and rewards to the youth and for many, it is also a means to accumulate credits at school.

Conference members could organize a presentation to students at a local high school/college, or a university. The presentation would introduce the Society, its mission, main activities and needs, and propose twinning as a form of voluntarism that should fulfill their aspirations as it has well defined objectives and activities. I believe that many young students, men and women, will answer the call with enthusiasm. Twinning responds to their inner desire to help their neighbors wherever they live, to help those most vulnerable on this planet, correct inequalities and, to give hope and dignity to the poorest of the poor in a Christian spirit.

External Twinning does not require a lot of time, which suit most youth occupied by studies, part-time work and social life. However, those joining this Special Work may want to do more, like supporting the twinning partner in realizing a community project (Systemic Change) by raising funds for a mission trip to visit and assist their partner, under the supervision of an adult member of the conference.

The involvement in a twinning project aims to change the life of their twinning friends, but also their own. The youth become very aware of the great poverty and social injustices in the country visited. The twinning experience should entice them to continue their involvement in the Society. Being a volunteer with the Society forces each young Vincentian to reflect on their spiritual life, their faith.

I invite Presidents of conferences and councils to discuss with members this recruitment proposal of youth and young adults. The Society needs them, now, to renew itself and grow

**Clermont Fortin, Chairperson  
National Twinning Committee**

**Have you visited our new website?  
[www.ssvp.ca](http://www.ssvp.ca)**

**You have until December 12 to preorder your copy of the book *The Mission*, celebrating the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SSVP in Canada.**

**More information on the website: [ssvp.ca](http://ssvp.ca) / SSVP catalog / Presale book *The Mission***

**Like our Facebook page: *SSVP Canada* and join our Facebook groups:**

- ***SSVP Canada Activities-Activités***
- ***SSVP Canada Twinning-Jumelage***
- ***SSVP Canada Social-Justice-Sociale***



## FORT MCMURRAY, HELPING THE VICTIMS

### Fort McMurray AB - Fire Relief Activities

Last May and June, Vincentians followed with anxiety in the media the progress of a huge wildfire that destroyed large swaths of forest in Northern Alberta and Western Saskatchewan, and razed part of the city of Fort McMurray, forcing the evacuation of most of its 80,000 residents. The Athabasca Oil Sands operations in the area as 18 extracting sites were shut down, 665 work camps units were destroyed and thousands of workers had to be evacuated, many losing their job as a result. Overall, the fire destroyed 2400 homes and buildings triggering the largest ever evacuation in Alberta and becoming the costliest disaster in Canada's history. While about 85% of the city of Fort McMurray was reported undamaged by fire, collateral damage (e.g., polluted air and water) was extensive. The residents were allowed to return home, starting June 15th, as neighbourhoods were declared safe (Source: Wikipedia).

### Helping the victims

All three levels of government, the oil industry, the Red Cross and other civic organisations took care of the evacuees and, afterward assisting those allowed to return home. This assistance is ongoing. Major fund raising efforts were conducted, successfully. Insurance companies are actively involved in assessing claims and payments.

### The Society and the Fire

The Society has no Conferences in Fort McMurray or in the Diocese of St Paul, Alberta. The Society, through its National Emergency Relief Committee and in response to calls by Vincentians in Canada, decided early to help the victims of this major natural catastrophe. On May 6, 2016, National President Jean-Noel Cormier, launched an appeal for funds to help families affected by the disaster once they return to Fort McMurray. The response by Vincentians across the country has been heart-warming, with contributions being close to \$73,000. The Western Regional Council President, Peter Ouellette, started to coordinate discussions and made contact with the Bishop of the Diocese of St Paul to offer our help.

There are two Catholic parishes in Fort McMurray, St John the Baptist and St. Paul. They jointly formed the Fire Relief Committee (FRC) for the purpose of helping the many who face challenges as they return home and work. On July 10, the President of the Edmonton Central Council, Mary Dunnigan and Peter Ouellette attended a meeting of the FRC in Fort McMurray to discuss ideas to help the victims and the benefits of adopting our Vincentian assistance model and practices. They agreed to work diligently in forming a Conference and receiving Home Visitor training by Vincentians. The Committee has the financial means and human skills to create a new Conference. There is a sense of urgency at the parish level as about 10% of their community members (2000 families) have lost most of what they had. There is strong desire to help them materially, emotionally and spiritually.

Training will be provided by Vincentian Phil Bondy (Ontario) to parishioners the week end of August 19-21. The formation will include membership in the SSVP, structure of the Society, needs analysis and home visits, etc. Follow up training and mentoring will continue over the next few months. Funds from the National Relief Fund will be used for this initiative as well as material support for those affected by the wildfire, when necessary.

Thank you to all conferences and councils that sent contributions for this disaster. Your prayers are requested for the new Conference in Fort McMurray and for the victims of this major catastrophe. They have a long road ahead of them.

**Clermont Fortin, Chairperson**  
**National Relief Committee**  
**Collaboration: Peter Ouellette.**

# Youth

## WORLD YOUTH DAYS - KRAKOW 2016

In July, 11 young Vincentians travelled to Krakow, Poland on pilgrimage with other young Vincentians and Catholics around the world. For many of our pilgrims, it was their first time joining in on a World Youth Day pilgrimage (and for some the first time leaving the country!).

Our first few days in Poland were spent with the Vincentian family during the Vincentian Youth Days. Over 1,300 young members of the organization under the Vincentian family gathered for 3 days in Piekary, just outside Krakow, at a boarding school run by the Congregation of the Mission. Our days were filled with joyous celebration - music, dancing, speakers and holy mass. And our evenings were filled with even more celebration as each country showcased their talents with song and dance (including a line dance to Shania Twain by the Canadians!). It was a wonderful time to renew old friendships and make new ones with our Vincentian sisters and brothers from around the world.

Even though we did not want the Vincentian Youth Days to end, we knew that we still had the World Youth Days to look forward to. Our World Youth Day days were ones to remember. We had the pleasure of catechesis on the theme of mercy from Cardinal O'Malley of Boston and Cardinal Dolan of New York, two wonderful men who spoke profoundly yet simply. We celebrated a Night of Mercy at an adoration concert at an arena with 20,000 young Catholics that went from zealous singing and dancing with praise and worship music to complete

silence and reverence for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

We also visited many of the churches and chapels in and around Krakow, including the Divine Mercy Sanctuary, on the grounds where St. Faustina had her visions and conversations with Jesus, as well as the Sanctuary of Saint John Paul II. The relics of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, who in his youth was a member of the Society and his now a patron of World Youth Day, were brought to Krakow, allowing us to pray at and venerate his relics.

Our pilgrimage also included a visit to the Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps. While the visit was heartbreaking and sobering to think of the lives lost and families broken on those very grounds, it was also full of hope to think of those who survived and bear witness to light overcoming darkness, hope overcoming fear, and good overcoming evil.

World Youth Day would not be complete without seeing Pope Francis and celebrating with him. On the Friday night we had a beautiful, artistic display of the Stations of the Cross with reflections on each station on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. With every World Youth Day comes the pilgrimage to the Papal Mass - a 13km walk to the site of the mass, including an evening vigil the night before and a sleep out under the stars with all of the pilgrims from around the world.

Overall, it was a truly wonderful event. Our young Vincentians took it as an opportunity to renew their faith, encounter God and strengthen their vocation to serve Christ in the poor. Thank you to everyone who supported us through the trip with your prayers and words of encouragement. And a thank you as well to those conferences and councils who supported our young people financially, allowing them to experience what truly is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

**Jason Hunt, Canadian Youth Rep**



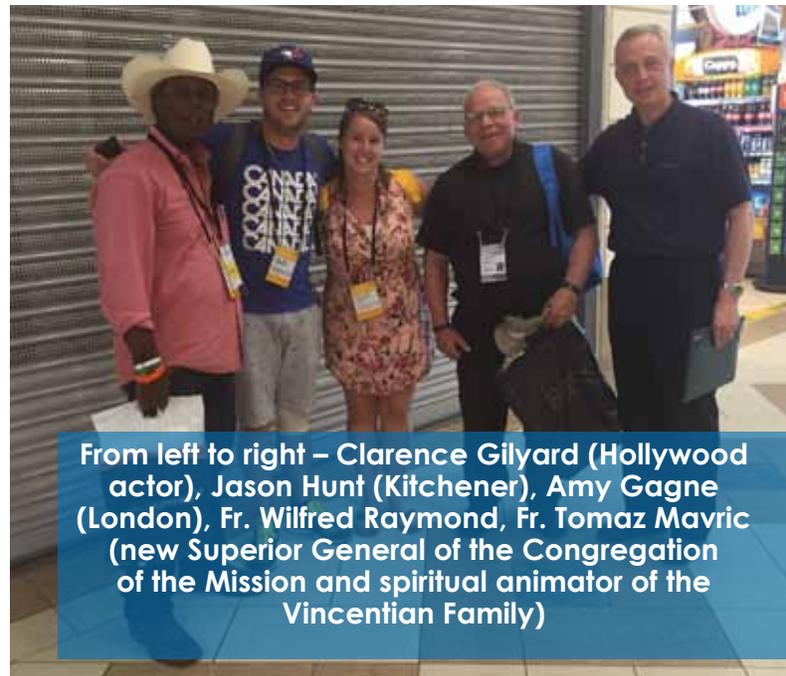
The 11 Canadian Vincentian pilgrims in the centre of Krakow

*“What touched me most today, was a young girl from Iraq whose Christian family was attacked by ISIS and forced out of their homes. She begged us to pray for ISIS and those who persecute Christian in the Middle East. To pray that God would have mercy on them. It was amazing to hear that after she explained all the horrible things done to her family, she asked for mercy not vengeance.” »*

Christina Yeboah, Windsor



Lunch in Krakow



From left to right – Clarence Gilyard (Hollywood actor), Jason Hunt (Kitchener), Amy Gagne (London), Fr. Wilfred Raymond, Fr. Tomaz Mavric (new Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and spiritual animator of the Vincentian Family)

*“FamVin was so inspiring, being with so many wonderful individuals with such a great love for God. Seeing so many people close to my age helped me to deepen my love for God. It didn't feel at all embarrassing as it can sometimes when at school – instead it was like belonging to one big family.”*

Tayo Sogbesan, London

*“What stood out for me was when we were able to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. I found it very powerful praying for God's mercy in such a faith-filled setting. What made this experience particularly special was we were all able to pray in our own language the same prayer. For the first time in my life, I truly felt the world was united together at that very moment, praying for mercy in a world that needs so many prayers.”*

Victoria Goldsack, London



Waiting for the vigil to start (this is where we slept for one night)

# Youth

## FOUNDERS AWARDS

The very first Founders Awards trophy was given to Jason Hunt for his valuable contributions to the International Youth Commission of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. It was presented by Karl Michael Hila, International Vice President for Youth, and Julien Spiewak, Secretary General, on the 3rd day of the Vincentian Youth Day 2016.

This award is an initiative of the International General Council to honour young people who, like the founders of the SSVP, dedicate their lives to the poor. Six awards are granted to the youth or young adults from around the world, one on each continent. Following the number and composition of the SSVP founders, the seventh award is granted to an outstanding leader and mentor who works with the youth and young adult members, this award was granted to Jason Hunt, National Youth Rep for Canada.

Jason started his Vincentian journey as a participant in a youth sleepover fundraiser for a school project over 10 years ago. The work and people soon won his heart and he officially became a vital member of the Kitchener Waterloo Archangels Youth Conference, in Waterloo ON.

His passion for the Society grew as he matured and became more and more involved with the management and administrative aspects of Vincentian life, while still participating in service to the poor through the monthly meal program, bake sales, and the annual school collection program.

Over the years, Jason has been a tremendous support and held several positions at various levels of the Society. These including, Conference President, Conference Treasurer, Youth Representative for the Ontario Regional Council, Particular Council Treasurer, and National Youth Representative. He has also coordinated and led two teams to two World Youth Day events; one

in Madrid and one in Poland, and was on the organizing committee of two National Conferences (AGA), and

Youth Retreats. His knowledge of the Society makes him a welcome and effective participant at any meeting.

Jason is a dedicated member to the Society at all levels, with a sincere and compassionate heart to help fellow members in whatever capacity necessary, and to improve the lives of those we serve.

Congratulations Jason on all of your achievements and for receiving the first Founders Award! We are all so very proud of you!



As well, Mrs. Roula Hadchiti, President of the Marie-Guyart Conference at Laval University in Quebec City, ranked among the finalists in North America. Roula is very inspired by the figure of our founder, blessed Frederic Ozanam. Like him, she studies at a large university, and is preoccupied with helping her brother and sister students who are facing material difficulties, particularly the lack of food. She also wishes to help break their isolation. In that respect, the main work of the Marie Guyart Conference, presided by Roula, is the “bread table”, a food bank for young university students. They lack financial means, but wish to obtain proper food and eat better, while being able to use their limited savings to pay for tuition fees and housing, often consisting of a room on campus.

Coffee is offered as well, and on that occasion every Vincentian student, and chiefly Roula, is twinned with a student beneficiary with whom they discuss and exchange.



# Canada's Councils in Action

## ATLANTIC REGIONAL COUNCIL

### MOTHER TERESA RECOGNIZED AS SAINT

Mother Teresa came to Moncton in June 1985 and many people went to see her then. When the Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul conference was founded in Moncton, several members of the group who heard her in 1985 remained impressed by her commitment to the poorest among the poor. Therefore, Mother Teresa was retained as the patroness of the conference.

The new Moncton conference was extremely happy when Pope Francis declared, on March 15, 2016, that the Blessed Mother Teresa would be canonized six months later, on September 4, 2016. The Pope wanted the canonization of that woman, apostle of charity, to take place during the Year of Mercy.

Mother Teresa was born in Macedonia, in a Catholic Albanian country family. The name she was given when baptized was Gonxa Agnès. As a teenager, she remains small, being barely 5 feet tall, which did not prevent her from becoming a giant in charity.

At the age of 18, she joins the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Lorette, and takes the name Sister Teresa, in honour of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. The Order send her to Dublin, then to Bengal, to study.

Wishing to get closer to the poor, she remains in India to help orphans, malnourished children and the homeless. One day, she feels Jesus telling her, "Be my light." Sister Teresa leaves the congregation to dedicate herself to the poor by living among them. With the authorization of Rome, she founds the new order of the "Missionaries Sisters of Charity". Young women from privileged families join her and become religious sisters.

Wearing a white cotton dress and a white and blue sari, Mother Teresa settles in a Calcutta slum, where she takes care of the poorest strata of society. Searching for funds to finance her work, she calls upon Pope John XXIII to use Vatican riches to help caring for the poor. At her request, Pope John XXIII gives her his Rolls Royce. Mother Teresa has it auctioned to raise as much money as possible.

One of the most respected personalities worldwide for her work and commitment, Mother Teresa received the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. She was beatified in 2003 by John-Paul II and canonized by Pope Francis. Today, her congregation of the Missionaries of Charity has 4,000 religious sisters and 40,000 lay persons in more than 130 countries.

Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul conferences find in Saint Mother Teresa an exceptional model of charity. Among the numerous quotes from Mother Teresa, the one retained by the Moncton conference is, "Give your hands to serve and your heart to love."

**Auréa Cormier, Secretary**  
**Saint Mother Teresa Conference, Moncton NB**



# Canada's Councils in Action

## QUEBEC REGIONAL COUNCIL

### LITTLE HISTORY OF REFUGEES IN QUÉBEC CITY

In the city of Québec, we started receiving refugees about 40 years ago, with a first wave arriving around 1978. At the end of the Vietnam war, we welcomed a great number of boat people. Several parishes set up sponsoring committees and in most cases, SSVP conferences were involved. Those families from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia are still living in our city, and we can find traditional grocery stores and restaurants in various neighborhoods.

The '70s and '80s brought refugees from Chile, El Salvador and Nicaragua, due to various troubles affecting those countries. Later on, the war in Bosnia brought an outflow of Bosnian refugees to Québec City. In the '90s, primarily due to the genocide in Rwanda, we welcomed a great number of Africans from Rwanda, Burundi, Congo (CDR), and Cameroun. Disturbances in Latin America also generated a strong immigration wave from Peru, Colombia and Mexico.

In recent years, refugees have come from Nepal, mostly Bhutanese people who had been living in Nepalese camps for many years.

As for Syrians, our Mayor wanted to welcome 800 of them, but we received approximately 230, most of them sponsored by families or groups.

Every time, conferences from Québec City and the area were very active in welcoming and helping refugees. In most cases, we provided living room furniture and washer and dryer pairs to complete what the provincial government had provided. As well, the families were happy to receive food, Christmas hampers, assistance in playgrounds, etc.

That multi-ethnic contribution to communities has changed the face of Québec City. In schools, we not only find Tremblays, Bouchards or Côtés, we now have Gomezes, Bidondos, Tapas. In buses and commercial malls, we now see a great variety of skin and hair colors, as well as dressing habits.

SSVP members have a major role to play in the integration of refugees. They must help their communities to adopt a welcoming attitude towards the newcomers, because Quebecers remain somewhat private in front of strangers. Fortunately, municipal and governmental authorities have put a lot of effort, in particular towards employers, to show more openness to refugees in the workplace.

In the Québec City region, learning French is essential, as much for adults as for children. Francization courses are not always sufficient for adults to be able to converse easily. Several initiatives were put in place to help newcomers better understand Quebecers and for the latter to become familiar with the various accents. Conferences participated to those initiatives, in the form of conversation workshops.

In Québec City and region, we are able to say that immigration is considered more and more as an asset and an enrichment. During the summer, several multicultural activities are organized and the celebrations organized by communities from different countries are open to all.

**Jean-Marc Vaillancourt, President  
Québec Central Council**

At a family party, I am accompanied by two Peruvians families.



# Canada's Councils in Action

## BRITISH COLUMBIA & YUKON REGIONAL COUNCIL

### THOUGHTS ON SPONSORING A REFUGEE FAMILY

On August 31st, 2016, the SSVP Conference at St. Matthew's RC Parish in Surrey B.C. will celebrate the one year sponsorship anniversary of their Syrian family.

This adventure began over two years ago when Father Augustine Obiwumma, the former pastor, decided with the Parish Council to sponsor a refugee family. Money was set aside and working in conjunction with the Archdiocese of Vancouver, became co-sponsors of a Christian Syrian family.

Father Augustine requested that our SSVP Conference organize and coordinate the actual work of the sponsorship program. Working hard our small group organized, collected all basic necessities, located appropriate accommodation for this family of six.

Having waited almost one full year, our family arrived on August 31st, 2015 via Beirut, Lebanon where they had been living for some six months after having left Syria where Christians were being persecuted. They landed at Vancouver airport with all their worldly possessions: two bags each. Meeting them was an emotional yet satisfying event. We soon realized that the biggest part of our sponsorship entailed the real aspect of settlement, which is the emotional and personal contact one develops with our new brothers and sisters in Christ.

The very next day we were visiting them in their new home using sign language, numerous facial and hand gesticulations we began the task of applying for many a document. We also worked quickly to get the children enrolled in the nearest school, the 4 year old in the Strong Start program and the adults in English language classes. Finding employment for at least one of the two parents was paramount. With God's guidance we located a cleaning job for the father within three days. Eric drove him to the interview to assist with translation then showed him how to access transit. He began work by week's end. Part time employment was also found for the mum in a clothing warehouse. Many trips were made to open a bank account, locate an Arabic speaking doctor and a medical lab, not to mention the local food shops.

The bond we developed with them was one of trust and complete support. They soon became quite confident in phoning us for information and direction. They were quick to attend our own church and be introduced to the congregation by our pastors. This opened new avenues with parishioners. A new contact led to a better paying job with full benefits for dad.



The sponsorship group needs to be there in person to talk, smile, support, lend assistance with rides and simply to have coffee together, share a dinner here or there, celebrate birthdays (Canadians style), Christmas, Easter and other statutory holidays. Parks, recreation centres and libraries are great sources for community information.

Of the many highlights of our journey has been the generosity of our parishioners, our parish elementary school, our regional high school and other groups.

Vincentians and others have made their year event filled. We have accessed community activities such as the Easter Egg hunt at Hawthorne Park, visited the Surrey Museum and Stewart Farmhouse, taken our family to participate in winter activities on Cypress Mountain, swim at the Newton Wave Pool, experience the adventure playground and gardens at Bear Creek Park, and enrolled them in beginner swimming lessons in the open air pool. They were very excited about their first ever ferry trip to the Sunshine Coast where they picked blackberries, were able to try their hand at canoeing, and walked in a forest of towering old trees. At White Rock beach they tested the waters of the Pacific Ocean.

On August 31st we have an opportunity to celebrate all the positives... dad's steady job, bikes, increased English fluency and adaptability to Canada, building friendships, tasting different foods, children's progress at school, enjoying a conveniently located, clean apartment.

Now it's time to start gathering those school supplies for Year 2. Here we go again!

**Eric & Cheryl Andres, President and Secretary of St. Matthew's Conference - eandres@shaw.ca**

# Canada's Councils in Action

## ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL

### WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

We have welcomed many Syrian newcomers to Ontario resulting in an increase in the number of calls received from people in need requesting food, furniture, clothing and household items. We are finding the calls are coming from the government sponsored newcomers, as the privately sponsored newcomers are well looked after by their private sponsors for a period of 12 months.

While the government sponsored newcomers should also be well looked after for the first 12 months of settling in Canada, we are finding that there is still a shortfall for some of these families.

In London, we found language to be a major barrier when receiving calls for help. Once we were able to find translators to assist with communication that was one major obstacle overcome. We were then finding that the voucher requests for furniture was quite extensive, and we were concerned about our ability to fill the number of extensive voucher requests that were coming into our store.

We reached out and invited a settlement counselor, someone who helps newcomers with settling and adjusting to the new culture, to attend a couple of our Saint Vincent de Paul meetings and provide us with some information and insight. The settlement counselor was the person who suggested we use the term "newcomers" which is the preferred word to use instead of "refugees" or "immigrants". She also shared with us what families receive from the government the first 12 months when settling in Canada. She explained to us that the Syrian culture is to say "yes" to anything that is offered to them and it is rude in their culture should they turn down anything that is offered. Therefore, when Vincentians would visit a home and ask if they wanted or needed a couch, the answer would be "yes" even if that was not necessarily a need for them. If the family was asked if they needed a dresser, the answer would be "yes" even if it was not necessarily a need for them, and the list goes on.

The main takeaway for Vincentians who heard the settlement counselor was "needs" vs "wants" ensuring the family being visited was identifying their needs, and allowing the family to identify what their "needs" were, instead of us asking them what they needed / wanted.

In Windsor, volunteers learned the significance of a rug for Syrian newcomers when they visited a family with 5 children. The family did not want to accept food as they wanted food to go to people in need; however, they asked for a rug. When the family has a rug, that is "home". The father of the family explained when you have a tent and you put down a rug, that is "home". The volunteers provided a rug to this family, and the one young son said to the volunteers "thank you for home". The Windsor Essex Central Council has begun a Helping Hands Friendship Centre at which members of the community are invited to attend a craft, cards, bingo or other friendly activity. Recently in July, a summer wrap up BBQ and Family Fun Day was held outdoors at which over 200 members, adults and children of the community attended. We served Halal hot dogs, we had chips, popcorn, drinks and had game play stations for the children. It was heartwarming to see many of the members of the community sitting together and sharing stories. It was not an eat and run sort of event. We had offers of help with next year's event from youngsters and parents that were having such a great time.

We are waiting to see how the newcomer families settle in and whether there will be more calls requesting help from Saint Vincent de Paul after the 1 year mark when families are no longer sponsored privately or by the government. We pray that our newcomer families settle in well and become self sufficient over time.

**Linda Dollard, President**  
**Ontario Regional Council**



# Canada's Councils in Action

## WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

### SPONSORING REFUGEE FAMILIES

For quite a while, we waited for our first refugee family to arrive. They were sponsored by our Church, St. Theresa's Roman Catholic Parish in Edmonton, Alberta. Finally, in June 2015, we drove to the Edmonton International Airport to meet with our first family. Mom, Dad and three beautiful children.

We supported them in every way possible and at the end of their first year in Canada, they are doing well and striving to do better.

This past December, another family arrived. Mom, Dad and a wonderful little girl with dark curly hair and big black eyes that you can get lost in.

Then, in February, off we went to the airport again, to pick up a family of five - Dad, Mom, Auntie and two grown up children.

The different languages and customs have been challenging for everyone to say the least. For our refugee families, because they cannot tell us what they need without an interpreter and for us, the volunteers, because we would love to be able to converse ... exchange stories ... get to know one another.

However, we have had fun with "our families". There have been trips to the library, to see the fireworks on Canada Day, to the Ball Game, etc. When we get together, over their delicious food or our attempt to match it, we speak in any language that we think might communicate our thoughts, we speak with our hands a lot, make faces and take funny positions all to try and explain what we want to say. It is getting better with each passing day and with each English lesson.

Even though it has been an enormous amount of work, we are all very thankful for the privilege of hosting these families when they were in need of our assistance.

May our Heavenly Father keep them safe through the new journey they have started in Canada.

**Maria Lupul, President**  
**South Particular Council, Edmonton AB**

### COLLECTING AND SORTING DONATIONS FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEES IN EDMONTON

Last year all of us became aware of the need to help those escaping from the war in Syria.

St Thomas More Parish Refugee Committee in Edmonton raised enough money to sponsor 14 families from Iraq, Syria and DR Congo. The volunteers divided into subcommittees, each one with their own responsibilities such as accommodations and basic logistics, household furnishings and affects, ESL training, children's needs, medical and dental needs, employment, etc. Now 20 months later, ten of the families have arrived.

How do you handle a flood of donations? Who will sort and deliver the furniture to these new families in need?

Vincentians came through as expected, with teams of workers from the Divine Mercy Conference and from all over the Edmonton Central Council to help several Syrian Refugee Committees from both Catholic and other Faith Groups in Edmonton. A private donor provided an 18,000 sq. ft. warehouse and made it possible for volunteers to work daily to assure that all items presented to our new friends were of acceptable quality. When Vincentians are called on to help, they do great Work.

**Peter Ouellette, President**  
**Western Regional Council**



# In Memoriam

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

- René Martel**, Conférence Saint-Pascal-de-Maizerets, Québec QC, September 7, 2015  
**Guy Fortin**, Conférence St-Jérôme de l'Auvergne, Charlesbourg QC, September 18, 2015  
**Garry Stanhope Richardson**, Christ the King Conference, Comox Valley BC, September 26, 2015  
**Else Maria Forster**, Christ the King Conference, Comox Valley BC, September 29, 2015  
**Gloria Clendinning**, All Saints Conference, Coquitlam BC, September 29, 2015  
**Jacques Poirier**, Conférence Notre-Dame de l'Eau Vive, Gatineau QC, October 14, 2015  
**John Ryken**, Blessed Sacrament Conference, Chatham ON, November 16, 2015  
**Paul Dole**, St Theresa of the Child Conference, Ottawa ON, November 19, 2015  
**Catherine Bedard**, Our Lady of Guadalupe Conference, Windsor ON, November 27, 2015  
**Dorothy Ardito**, St John Vianney Conference, Barrie (Simcoe County PC, Huronia CC) ON, December 4, 2015  
**Jean-Paul Benoît**, Conférence de Saint-Luc, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu QC, December 9, 2015  
**Peter Thompson**, St. Mary's Conference, Collingwood ON, December 21, 2015  
**Germain Dugas**, Conférence Notre-Dame-de-Pontmain, Laval QC, December 21, 2015  
**Rose Tytgat**, Holy Name of Jesus Conference, Essex ON, December 30, 2015  
**Ted Commisso**, St. Agnes Conference, Thunder Bay ON, December 31, 2015  
**Fernand Sabourin**, Conférence Sainte-Cécile, Montréal QC, January 17, 2016  
**Denis Fiset**, Conférence Notre-Dame-de-Foy, Ste-Foy QC, January 24, 2016  
**Joe Richard**, Christ the King Conference, Courtenay BC, January 31, 2016  
**Denise Cayer**, Conférence Saint-Bonaventure, Montréal QC, February 9, 2016  
**George Dorscher**, Corpus Christi/Ascension Conference, Calgary AB, February 13, 2016  
**Eva Bédard**, Christ the King Conference, Comox BC, February 19, 2016  
**Ron Criss**, Our Lady of Fatima Conference, Coquitlam BC, February 20, 2016  
**Elio Paul Lori**, Divine Mercy Conference, Windsor ON, February 26, 2016  
**Catarina Tavares**, Holy Family Conference, London ON, March 10, 2016  
**Barbara Hartnett**, St. Patrick's Conference, Burlington ON, March 12, 2016  
**Henriette Dion**, Conférence Saint-Joseph de Bordeaux, Montréal QC, April 1, 2016  
**Father Vernon Driscoll**, Holy Family Conference, Amherst NS, April 9, 2016  
**Gary Goddard**, Holy Family Conference, London ON, April 17, 2016  
**Anne Bryan**, Hamilton Particular Council, ON, June 24, 2016  
**Clemence Fynbo**, Holy Name Conference, ON, June 26, 2016  
**Brian Smith**, North Particular Council ON, July 2016  
**Fernanda Badke**, St. Matthew's Conference, Surrey BC, July 1, 2016  
**Joseph Chau**, St. Joseph the Worker Conference, Richmond BC, August 2016  
**Bevey Crocker**, Immaculate Conception Conference, Harbour Grace NL, September 2016  
**Claude Janelle**, Conseil central de Gatineau-Hull-Aylmer, QC, September 18, 2016  
**Vangie O'Neil**, St. Anthony's Conference, Glace Bay NS

**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](mailto:editor@ssvp.ca)*