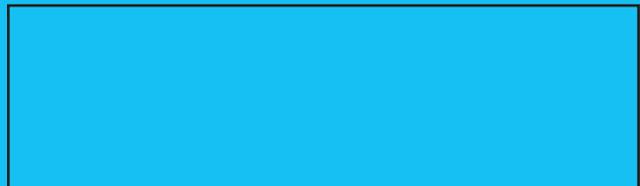


175th anniversary - SSVV

Vincenpaul-Canada

"Come and Work in the Vineyard"

Return Address:
National Council of Canada
1247 Kilborn Place
Ottawa ON
K1H 6K9



Summary

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| SUMMARY - MESSAGES..... | 2 |
| PENNY'S PIECE..... | 3 to 5 |
| SPIRITUALITY..... | 6-7 |
| CONTRIBUTION..... | 8 to 10 |
| YOUTH..... | 11 to 13 |
| TWINNING..... | 14 to 16 |
| INTERNATIONAL..... | 17 to 20 |

SOCIETY OF
SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CANADA

MISSION

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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Messages

Thank you so much for the Vincenpaul-Canada magazine that I just received. When I saw the portrait of Rosalie Rendu on the cover, I thought of informing you about the recent publishing of a fascinating book on Sister Rosalie, written by Sister Louise Sullivan, a Daughter of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul. That book is available in English at the Vincentian Studies Institute. Here are the details:

In English

Sr. Louise Sullivan, D.C., Sister Rosalie Rendu, A Daughter of Charity
On Fire with Love for the Poor
Vincentian Studies Institute, 2006 (Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.)

In French

Sr. Louise Sullivan, f.d.l.c., Soeur Rosalie Rendu, Une passion pour les pauvres
Translation by Raymonde Dubois
Éditions Médiaspaul (3965 Henri-Bourassa East blvd., Montreal H1H 1L1)

With my most fraternal Vincentian greetings,

Raymonde Dubois

Important ...

**The legal name of our organization is
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.**

**Even though we use the article “the” before the name in a text,
we do not use that article when the name is used alone,
for example in a document title or on a poster.**

**The only official acronym for the
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is “SSVP”.**

YOU ARE MOVING, PLEASE LET US KNOW !

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Penny's Piece

NEWS FLASH!!
NEWS FLASH!!!

SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL TURNED 175 YEARS OLD ON APRIL 23, 2008

*The harvest is rich but the workers
are few; therefore ask the harvest-
master to send workers to his
harvest. (Lk10:20)*

“Come Work In The Vineyard ...To Let Us Put Our Faith Into Action”.

In our 2007 theme, we were “called” to the vineyard to do Christ’s work as Vincentians. Usually, when we think about being “called”, we think about the “call for prayers for vocations” by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. We generally think it applies to a call for vocations to the religious life. However, at this time it can also provide us with the opportunity to recall the Vincentian vocation that each of us has chosen.

As we come to the close of the 2007/08 theme of “Come and work in the vineyard”, we certainly can consider ourselves “called” and “sent”. Through our Vincentian vocation, we have been called to serve in the vineyard of the poor and needy.

As we enter a new theme for 2008/09, now is a good time to think or pray about how we have lived out that Vincentian vocation in the past year. I am not sure we do enough of that type of self reflection; “Taking

stock”, so to speak. It provides us with the chance to refill and regenerate ourselves, giving us the physical and spiritual energy required in fulfilling our mission, as it has done for 175 years!

Our Vincentian vocation comes to us in such a special way, that we often do not realize we have accepted a vocational call. Responding to the Vincentian way of life is one other avenue we have chosen to live out a spirituality that will enable us to fulfill our purpose on earth. This purpose is to work our way back to the Father in heaven. Most especially, our call comes to us as a result of our baptism, and what it means to be Christian, hence right out of the Gospel message.

The Vincentian vocation as described in the Rule of the International Confederation of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul states ” The vocation of the Society’s members who are called Vincentians, is to follow Christ through service to those in need and so bear witness to His compassionate and liberating love. Members show their commitment through person-to-person contact. Vincentians serve in hope.”

The 1977 edition of the Rule of the Society in Schema II puts it so well in its title -The “Vincentian Vocation” Heart of the unity of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. (p11) This title has so much meaning for us as Vincentians living out a spiritual way of life. The section of the Rule goes on to explain the specific character of this call as, “the intimate desire personally and directly to par-



*Penny Craig,
Présidente du Conseil National*

ticipate in the service of the poor, by a contract between man and man, by a personal gift of the heart and friendship, and to do this in a brotherly community of lay people inspired by the same vocation”. P11

This vocational attribute has been the hallmark of the Vincentian calling for 175 years!

Therefore, it is not just joining a club or other organization. It is a unique call to be there for each other and to serve those in need in a very special way! To meet them on a one to one basis! To see Christ in all who suffer! To treat them with respect, justice and joy! Above all to help in all possible ways!

Through answering the call to a Vincentian vocation we are obligated to seek out ways to live out the Gospel message and put our ”faith into action!” We are called to dwell with those whom we serve not only in their need, but with the presence of our spirit and compassion to their circumstance as well. What a nice segue into this year’s theme! The challenge before us is to think outside the box. Again the 1977 Rule spells out some important aspects, “This vocation can be expressed in any number of

Penny's Piece

ways with different shades of expression. Concrete translation into action, meditation adaptation to the diverse and changing world – all this is the life of every Vincentian, the life of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul”.

With “action” being the key word, we are called to make real and concrete what it means to be truly Christian and truly Vincentian. If we hope to attract youth and younger members, because they are all about “action”, then as committed members we must be open to the possibilities of what “no work of charity is foreign to the Society” really means! Our AGA 2008 will provide creative opportunities to seek out new ways of serving those in need.

I am sure our invited guest to our AGA 2008, José Ramón Díaz Torremocha, the XIV President General of the International Confederation Council will be most interested in seeing how seriously and creatively Canadian Vincentians take their vocational call.

Let us celebrate who we are as Vincentians! Let us ask our selves if we want to be known by our spirituality or by our works. From my understanding of our spirituality, I say “both”, and therein lies a very special challenge.

Emergency Relief: Quebec City Fire Destroys 16 Family Homes

In the month of March, there was a disastrous fire in Quebec City, on rue La Forest, that left 16 families without a home. While no one was lost, the sad part of all of this is that they

did not have insurance. The call came to the National Council from the Quebec Central Council to help them in assisting the Conference in the area: the St-Louis de France – St-Yves Conference. The Disaster Relief fund provided \$15,000.00 to assist these families. We were certainly pleased to help out.

Certainly, our prayers and support were and, still are, very welcome I am sure. Thanks to Clermont for the quick action and turn around time.

National Council of Canada Pamphlet

Our new National Council of Canada pamphlet is now ready. This new pamphlet is part of the Public Relations/Media strategic plan that identified a need to have updated materials. This pamphlet is available to all Regional Councils and Conferences at no cost to them. Please call or email the Ottawa office to have some sent to you. They will also be available at the AGA 2008 in Quebec.

Website

We are pleased to report that our website is being filled with information. Nicole has been working very diligently at entering information so that we can access what is needed on a timely basis.

Vincenpaul Magazine

Wrong or outdated addresses have plagued our database for the Vincenpaul magazine. There are a substantial number of magazines

returned to the national office in Ottawa. As all of you know, our database is only as good as the information placed into it. Therefore, in January 2008 a printout according to province/region was done. This printout was circulated to each Regional President in order for them to review and update this listing. I would hope that every President receives a copy of the magazine and passes this on to the other members of the Conference or Council for their information.

Please do advise the national office when presidents are changed in your local areas.

Around the world

“I would like to embrace the whole world in a network of charity”...Fredric Ozanam

Nicaragua

I am sad about the report that our brother, Ernesto Balladares has died. Canada has sent condolences to the family and we have enrolled Ernesto in a perpetual Mass. Please keep him in your prayers.

ICG Youth Retreat – Salamanca Spain

June 4 – 8, 2008, Caroline Gilbert is attending as Canada’s Youth representative. She will be connecting with youth from all over the world. I know she will have an interesting report for us when she returns.

Canada was asked to sponsor a youth from a country that cannot afford to

have a youth attend this conference. We have indicated that we would indeed sponsor someone. We have asked that we sponsor someone from Nicaragua.

If any regions can assist with the funding for this youth member to attend, this will help a great deal.

World Youth Days

As you know the WYD are being held July 9 – 14, 2008 in Australia. The Vin Family gathering is occurring a few days before the official WYDays are started. We have four youth, Aiden Masterson, Sara Latouf, Josh Pfaff and Ryan El baba attending. The adult counselors attending are Carmela Addante from Waterloo, as well as myself. This will be a very exciting time for all of them as they will truly experience the vastness of the scope of Vincentians and the work of charity that is indeed encircling the globe. The exciting part of all of this is that they are all part of it! Please, if any region can help to defray some of the costs for these individuals, it would be greatly

appreciated. National Council and Ontario Regional Council will also be assisting financially.

Haiti

Many have been asking what Canada is doing to help our brothers and sisters in Haiti. Vinpaz, is a committee of the International Council General whose function is to assist poorer countries with the establishment of the Society in their countries. This past February saw the end of the commitment of the Irish volunteers in Haiti. They have been there for three years helping to form and strengthen the Society in Haiti. Now Canada and the USA have been asked to take up the task of continuing the work in Haiti. A special meeting will be held with Larry Toumey from Ireland, Ed Gomez, the Vinpaz Coordinator, the USA Vice president or the Executive Director, Clermont and myself to establish priorities and decide the best approach required to continue to assist our brothers and sisters in Haiti. It is our aim to establish an advisory committee that will act to guide and direct

the National Council of Haiti. Of course this will be done with an eye to empowering them to take on responsibilities as they are able to do so.

We will keep you informed as to the progress and any assistance that may be required.

United States

Please keep President Joe Flannigan in your prayers as he moves through his illness.

AGA 2008

I look forward to welcoming and seeing everyone in Quebec City! Please bring your fellowship, ideas and smiles! You will certainly enjoy a real French Canadian good time!

Special note:

We will be looking for hosts for future AGA's. We know that 2009 will be in Waterloo Ontario. The years after that are open!

“All one in truth and charity.”

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

If we seek out the good in others, that is often what we find. If we spend our lives in a non-stop inner monologue of criticism & judgement, we shall find that only fools & scoundrels surround us. If we expect a bad day, a bad day it shall be, for despite the folly of such thinking, we would rather be right than happy. We will look for that which confirms our pre-conceived notions, no matter what the personal cost may end up being.

When St. Paul was asked what the most important elements of life were, he said they were the things that you could not see. The people in Rome said: “What are the things you can't see?” and he said: “Justice, peace, truth, service, humility, kindness, compassion, love.” Those are the things that are the most important, the things that never change.

RELATING TODAY TO TOMORROW

Recently I finished reading the book by James Raffan, entitled, Emperor of the North, a very detailed account of the life of George Simpson who between 1820 and 1860 controlled the business of the Hudson Bay Company. One of the points made by the author concerns the early activity of Simpson on the West coast, at a time when the British Crown's interest in the area was less than adequate. Simpson's activity may well be a great factor in the evolution that has made the great centres of Vancouver and Victoria Canadian and not part of the United-States.

Reading the above reminds me of a similar pivotal role played by Bishop Laval, the first Bishop of Quebec. He stood up to the religious authorities

in France who wanted all clergy to be trained in France and he insisted on establishing the Séminaire de Québec. As a result, from the start, Quebec clergy were instructed at home. Many historians now say that having a locally trained clergy was a great factor in keeping the country together both after the arrival of the British and also at the time of the American Revolution.

What has this to do with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul? Often we may wonder if what we are doing amounts to more than building a hill of beans. Good works have a ripple effect and doing right today inevitably has a bearing on tomorrow. Moreover, if we perceive our work as a ministry following the path of Christ, our response to our neighbour makes us instruments of God's providential care and love.



*Mgr Peter Schonenbach
Spiritual Advisor, National Council*

As Simpson and Laval, by doing well what they were about, became factors in building Canada, so our daily endeavours as Vincentians, are factors in building the Kingdom of God.

Mgr Peter Schonenbach,
Spiritual Advisor
National Council

2008 SUBSCRIPTION COUPON

Please send this form and a \$20.00 cheque to :
SSVP National Council, 1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa ON K1H 6K9

NAME OF CONFERENCE OR COUNCIL: _____

NAME OF PRESIDENT: _____

NAME OF SUBSCRIBER: _____

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CITY: _____ PROVINCE : _____

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Vincenpaul-Canada 2008 Edition - Subscription - 20^{\$}

COME AND WORK IN THE VINEYARD: A BRIEF MEDITATION ON OUR THEME FOR THE YEAR

If you are like me, there are three things that you consider before accepting an invitation: 1) who is inviting you, and what is your relationship to that person, 2) what are you being invited to, and, 3) where will the event take place?

COME

Who is it that invites? It is the Lord, Jesus, who issues this invitation, and He does so out of His great love for each of us. It is not so much a command as it is the call of the lover to the beloved; it is a plea for greater intimacy, one heart gently speaking to another heart. Jesus is God's love, forgiveness, compassion enfleshed for us and in us. He invites us to come where He is, to abide with Him, to share His life, and to allow Him to be an intimate part of our life. As Jesus says in John's Gospel: "Abide in me, as I abide in the Father." Jesus invites us as He invited His first disciples, Andrew and John, to come to spend some time with Him, to learn who He is, to enter into a deepening relationship with Him. The more intimate my relationship with Jesus is, the more apt am I to accept His invitation.

WORK

When I am invited to accept an invitation to work, I usually have

second thoughts before I accept the invitation. What type of work is it? How comfortable am I with that type of work? Here we are being invited to share in the ministry and mission of Jesus: to proclaim the good news, to set the imprisoned free, to bring light to those who are living in darkness. It means dying to self, taking up our cross daily, journeying with Jesus to Jerusalem. We are too weak, too fragile, too afraid; we say the task is too great. But Jesus responds by telling us to trust Him. He tells us He is the vine and we are the branches. We will receive the strength we need through our connection to Him. "Trust in my love," He says.

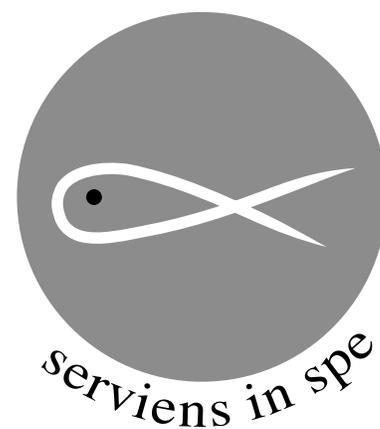
VINEYARD

The vineyard is a beautiful Old Testament image of Israel. Here, of course, it means the whole world. I remember visiting some of the vineyards in Kelowna after the last AGA. I was impressed by their beauty, but I am sure cultivating and harvesting the grapes is hard work. Often the world to which we are invited by the Lord is not beautiful; it is frequently a world of suffering, pain, and despair. Our world is the world of the poor, the alienated, and the disenfranchised.

In his first letter to the Corinthian church, Paul uses the image of the human body to describe the church, which he sees as made up of different members as is the human body. We are all members of the church, the body of Christ, and each of us is unique and important, yet, if we are

honest, we have to admit that even in the church there are parts of the body we tend to overlook. Which parts of the body are these? Of whom is Paul speaking? I think he is speaking precisely of those whom we as Vincentians are called to serve. We are the ones Jesus sends into the vineyard to be close to the poor, the weak, those whom society tends to hide away and ignore. These are the people we are called not only to serve, but to whom we are asked to unite ourselves. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul uses these amazing words: "Have the same mind, the same sentiments that were in Jesus...." These words of Paul succinctly summarize what is meant by the invitation of Jesus: "Come and Work in the Vineyard."

Fr. Joseph Quinn, csb
Spiritual Advisor
Windsor/Essex County
Central Council



Contribution

TEACHING MOMENT

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO? \$? \$? \$?

“What does the National Council of Canada do with the annual contribution?”

Members often ask this very important question...and of course they have a right to know.

The Finance committee has been asked to help answer this question and shed some light for the benefit of all members understanding.

Firstly to begin, as you know councils are created by conferences. Therefore, all conferences and councils have the responsibility of seeing to their financial health. The Rule states “all surpluses shall be shared annually with the next higher council for distribution to the less fortunate conferences and councils (2.2.10 Finance p 39).

Conferences generally, are the only groups that receive funds for the work of the Society. Some councils have the opportunity to have funds generated through special works programs such as stores.

The Canadian Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is present from sea to sea to sea, and their national council represents all parts of the country. Having such a large country, it follows that the issues, concerns and needs are different in each region of the country. The needs of our brothers and sister in the Nunavit and NWT are different

than those of Ontario for example. Therefore the necessity of having countrywide representation becomes self-evident.

As part of his/her responsibilities, the National President must attend the various meetings and activities organized by Regional Councils. Moreover, the President has to represent the National Council of Canada at the International General Council meetings; therefore travel costs are a must.

Further, National Council committees play a very important role in the Society’s administration and assist greatly in providing sound operations and service the members. These national committees include the Executive Committee, the Twinning Committee, the Finance Committee, the Rule and Policy Committee, the Education Committee, the Emergency Relief Committee, the Spirituality Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee, the Voice-of-the-Poor Committee, and the Youth Committee.

As with any business operation, whether it is a charity or not, a sustainable operations/business plan must be put into place to ensure its credibility both among its members and to the public. For any business plan to be successful it must include many aspects, not least of which dollars and cents becomes a salient part.

Members require central services to house information/documents, retrieve and disseminate information, education and gatherings. As men-

tioned above, the National Council has put into place structures to assist with these requirements. As you well know, volunteer members basically operate the Society. However, there comes a time in the organization’s growth that a serious look must be given to having a more permanent presence on behalf of the Society, thus staff are required to assist in maintaining continuity in these organizational areas. Thus, staffing is required to fulfill this function.

All of the above require funding resources. This is where the annual contribution comes into play.

Each year a budget is prepared and presented to the voting members for their support and approval. The National Council then is empowered to move forward with its business based on the promise made by the voting members to ensure that we will have the resources to operate for the year. With regards to accountability, a verbal report by the chair of each committee is presented at each AGA to the voting members, and included in the National Council’s Annual Report.

Further, there may be other objectives that may need to be addressed that may require an upward adjustment in the budget for the next fiscal year. Based on these reports and proposed budgets submitted by each committee, the Finance committee takes all of this into consideration when preparing the next fiscal year budget forecasts.

Auditors indicating that all monies

are accounted for also produce an accounting. This of course is a requirement based on the fact that the National Council, like any other incorporated entity, must present an audited statement to the voting members of the corporation.

As an example, the following information comes from the 2007 financial statements. I hope it will help you gain better understanding on the use of your contribution.

We have a beautiful country, but as you know, it is a very large country.

Therefore,

travel expenses:

to assemblies and meetings are rather high – \$37,856.

The national office moved to Ottawa from Quebec City in 2004, this has helped to reduce some of the travel costs – four Executive Committee members live in the National Capital area – Clermont Fortin, first VP, Marcel Tremblay, third VP, Germain Souigny, Treasurer, and Mgr Peter Schonenbach, Spiritual Adviser

Staffing:

two part time employees take care of office tasks, and help the President and various committee members accomplish their work. Salaries amounted to \$53,440.

Public Relations and Media:

these costs include brochures, newsletters, and translation services required to maintain awareness towards development and expansion - \$22,615

General Office and administrative expenses:

Amounted to \$42, 521. This includes expenses related to leasing, office supplies, telecommunications, professional fees, and insurance.

International General Council –

as with the National Council requiring support, so too does the ICG. They rely on countries for their support to operate worldwide. The budgeted amount is \$50,000.00.

Vincenpaul Magazine –

the only way National Council can facilitate communications among all members is to provide this national magazine. It serves to educate...such as we are doing through this article; it allows other brothers and sisters to share what they are doing in their local areas to serve the needs of the poor (one way of coming together as a family) and to provide spiritual support for all members and conferences and councils. While we hope to have subscription fee of \$20.00 per magazine to help offset costs, this does not always happen.

Other avenues we try to use to generate some funds include: the sale of articles, e.g. pins, Rulebooks, medals etc. and seeking funds from corporate donors. We basically try to generate as much as we can at the national level in order to keep costs at an acceptable level.

As we all know, costs do not seem to ever go “down”, they tend to “rise”. We have had the contributions remain at \$240.00 since 2004.

The fiscal year for the National Council is April 1, to March 31. The process used to calculate the amount of \$240.00 per conference and council is based on the total budget requirements divided by the total number of conferences and councils in Canada.

Regional presidents are sent a letter indicating what would amount to their responsible total for the fiscal year. It is then their responsibility to collect that amount from among their conferences and councils.

However, there are conferences and councils that cannot afford to pay their \$20.00 per month. This is perfectly acceptable. There are many councils and conferences that do share more than is required. This helps to offset the less able conferences or councils.

This is how the process works:

Each region’s conferences and councils are counted and this number is multiplied by the \$240.00.

Step one

For example: BC Yukon could have 50 conferences and councils thus \$12,000.00; Western may have 75 x 240 = \$18,000.00; Ontario 100 conferences and councils therefore 24,000.00; Quebec 150 x 240 thus 36,000.00 and finally Atlantic may have 50 x 240 thus 12,000.00.

Step two

The totals for each region are calculated and a memo is sent to the regional president from the national office indicating the contribution amount for the region. Please

Contribution

remember these are only sample figures I have used.

Step three

The regional president then makes this known to the members of the region so that conferences and councils can forward the required amount to the national council.

Step four

Conferences and councils then forward their contributions to the next higher council stating on the cheque that this money represents their contribution.

Step five

The national council should receive cheques from the regional councils only. This will enable the regional council to track their contributions more accurately. The national council communicates with the regional president throughout this process and does not contact councils and conferences below this level, thus following the established lines of communication.

It would be of great assistance to have quarterly payments of these funds to the national council. This will allow for a minimum balance to be maintained so that timely payments and salary responsibilities can be met. To assist our understanding, the quarters include: April 1, July 1, October 1 and January 1. Any special projects that arise, such as the X-ray machine module for Nicaragua, a special appeal may be sent to each regional president specifically for that purpose asking for their financial support. We had an excellent response for that proj-

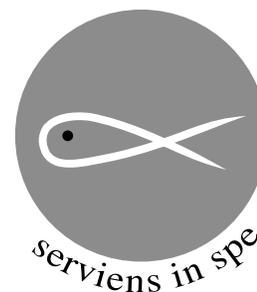
ect. A very big "thank you" to all! This by no means represents the entire budgeting process and line items. It does give you a sampling of what monies are spent on your behalf.

A very important note: It is the prerogative of any region to conduct an assessment of this nature as well. A region would follow the same sort of process. Build a budget, and then develop the assessment fee per conference and council. This budget would have to be approved by the voting members of the region. It would be most helpful if the assessment were not the same as the national fee so as not to cause confusion among the conferences and councils as to what indeed is being requested.

In closing, the National Council Board Members and staff are very prudent and responsible with regard to administering expenses.

Meetings and traveling are synchronized in order to limit expenses I do hope I have been able to assist all members in gaining an understanding of the financial budgeting, expenditures and accountability of the national council, the importance of the national audit (that is the official count by all regions to validate and count all of their conferences and councils) and the membership's role in the process.

Marcel Tremblay,
3rd Vice President
Finance Committee



**YOU WISH
TO CONTACT US?**

**SOCIETY OF SAINT
VINCENT DE PAUL
National Council of Canada
1247 Kilborn Place
Ottawa ON K1H 6K9
Tel: 613 738-1118
Fax: 613 738-4789
E-mail: national@ssvp.ca**

All correspondence with the National Council should be sent to this address.

Be it to reach a member of the National Council, to send an article for the Vincenpaul-Canada magazine, to order an object from the Society, to pay for a Vincenpaul-Canada subscription, to send a contribution for twinning and for any other topic that is under the National Council jurisdiction.

THANK YOU!

ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL STRESSES YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

How important is our Annual General Assembly (AGA)?

It is a major building block in our sharing of SSVP best practices and decision-making by Members and the Board. It is a positive learning situation for Vincentians.

How about engaging more and more of our youth in this vocation building experience?

The Ontario Regional Council has decided that this is tremendously important for the present and for the future of our Society – which is our youth.

Twenty-one youth will be travelling by train, on a special discount rate obtained by our Ontario Regional Council Executive Youth Coordinator, Carmela Addante. Fifteen from Windsor will be making the trip to our AGA in Quebec City June 18-28 with 2 adult SSVP advisors. Six will travel from Kitchener/Waterloo accompanied by 2 advisors.

How is this possible?

A sum has been allocated from the Ontario Regional Council budget to help offset costs because this is such an important initiative. Youth are fundraising for their expenses. There will be a bit of help from the Windsor/Essex Central Council.

At present, of the 11 youth Conferences in Ontario, 10 are in the Windsor area, with a Particular Council in development. There is one expanding youth Conference in Kitchener/Waterloo.



A major emphasis is also put on youth recruiting in Ontario. President John Staley's report in "St. Vinnie's Venue", item # 7 (HYPERLINK"<http://www.ssvp.on.ca/>" www.ssvp.on.ca - click on scrolling St. Vinnie's Venue) reinforces these actions. Ontario Regional Council President John Staley states in # 7, "Youth activities must be expanded... Do not be afraid to approach your local Elementary School, High School, College or University... Approach your local parishes and work with the Youth Minister or Parish Priest. Our Executive Council Youth Coordinator and I are available to assist you. "

(You'll also see more ONPC youth involvement in the same St. Vinnie's Venue on page 2.)

What is the leading Catholic worldwide event for youth, celebrated every 2 years?

You're right - **WORLD YOUTH DAY (WYD)** - this year to be celebrated in Sydney, Australia July 15-20. One of the reasons the Holy Father gave for not being able to attend our 400th anniversary in

Quebec, was to travel to the WYD!

Ontario Regional Council (with a bit of help from National) in its plan for youth engagement is helping 5 youth to attend the WYD. Carmela will lead the group. This is a life long reflection and development of our faith for youth and an experience that encourages leadership growth for all attending. We are excited by the prospect of our youths' report on this experience after their return.

Ontario Regional Council is on a youth roll. These two outstanding events will give our youth a better understanding of the Society's vocation, and a sharing of respect and recognition of Vincentians of all ages. Our recruiting campaign increases.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Volk

IMMACULATA REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, KELOWNA BC

K.L.O. Road, the home address of Immaculata Regional High School, Kelowna's Catholic high school, is a road with a link to the city's historic past and its future. The Mission of the Immaculate Conception founded by Father Charles Pandosy and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate is a short distance from the modern school. K.L.O. Road – (Kelowna Land and Orchards) - links the productive orchards of the southeast benchlands to Okanagan Lake and the water transport that carried the produce to the rest of the country in the years before highways and rail.

Immaculata is also part of the educational link to the future, together with many of the schools that are on or in close proximity to KLO Road. Graduates of these schools will pass on to Okanagan College or UBC Okanagan taking the students from the Okanagan Valley to a wider world of academics or sport-

ing culture way beyond the interior of British Columbia.

As a Catholic school, Immaculata Regional High School has a mandate that goes beyond academics and sporting achievements. Its mission is to nurture and enhance the values and traditions of our Catholic faith that began in the homes, were encouraged in St. Joseph's Primary School and the parish catechetical programs, and moved towards maturity in Immaculata.

Our newspapers and media often report on the achievements of the Mustangs, Immaculata's sports teams, and the honour rolls of Immaculata students, but too often those activities that reflect the Gospel values of caring and sharing with those less fortunate in society do not make the headlines. The walls of the school's gymnasium and the trophy case in the main hallway reflect success in academics and sporting achievement and now have been joined by a banner that reflects a singular honour in the

caring and sharing domain.

At a recent school assembly Mrs. Dana Webster, President of the Okanagan Valley Particular Council of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, presented Nigel Edwards and Scott Lawler, Student Council President and Vice President respectively and School Principal John Campbell with a banner acknowledging Immaculata as a Principal Benefactor of the Society.

"Your care, concern and sharing with those less fortunate in our community are truly outstanding and worthy of special recognition. You are one with Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his four colleagues in their early twenties who founded the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul at the Sorbonne University in Paris in 1833, and which has now spread to 144 countries worldwide," commented Mrs. Webster in making the presentation.

Over the last seven years the students through the Student Council sponsored 20 Hour Fast held in October each year have raised close to \$50,000.00 which has been donated to the four Conferences of the Society in Kelowna, and formerly to the Winfield Benevolent Society, for use in funding their Christmas Hamper drives. The school is the largest contributor to this very important aspect of community giving.

Mrs. Fran Hooker, sponsor teacher of the Student Council, remembers the first Fast, which took place in



2000. "We had an expectation that 20 to 30 students might participate in this Friday afternoon to Saturday noon activity. To participate students had to make a minimum contribution of \$20.00, sleep over in the school and take part in the planned activities. We were totally blown away when 160 students showed up!". The number has grown over the years and as a result of the 2007 Fast the Student Council was able to distribute \$5200.00 to the four SSVP Conferences in November 2007.

The Fast is just one of the activities of the Student Council sponsors to fundraise for community causes. The school year begins with the Terry Fox Run for the Cure for Cancer and the Mexico Mission requires ongoing planning and fundraising. School Vice-Principal Ed Frison couples his administrative duties, classroom teaching, and the demands of a VP with this sortie into the Third World at the Spring Break. The Christmas Snowball Dance has an admission price that sees contributions of cash or canned goods to the Food Bank or Saint Vincent de Paul. Each year the Graduating Class picks out a charity to donate to - recent years have seen contributions in the \$500.00 range go to the Cancer Society or for the furnishing of the Young Persons Psychiatric Ward at Kelowna General Hospital.

Principal John Campbell endorsed the role of the students, his trustees, teachers and support staff, as well as parents, and the Catholic faithful in the following words.

"Our school mission statement says it all, "We are an educational community pursuing excellence and developing the whole person, while striving to see and bring forth Christ in others.' Too often we hear through the media of all the shortcomings of our youth today. Although we don't always hear about the benevolent efforts of our staff and students, rest assured, they are truly making a difference in our community and the world at large. We encourage our students to be counter-cultural in their way of thinking and to look for ways to support those less fortunate than themselves."

Typically 10% of the proceeds of any event held at the school go to charity. Students reach out to help beyond giving money and students can be found volunteering at the Drop-In Centre, at the Christmas Party hosted by ICC Saint Vincent

de Paul, or packing hampers for the Salvation Army Church. Mrs. Hooker is, in her own words, "adamant we reach out to other communities and not forget that 'Catholic' means universal."

Every student at Immaculata is expected to do thirty hours of community service each year they spend as an Immaculata student and many go well beyond the 150 hours in the course of their five years at the beautiful campus on KLO Road - the road to a future of faith in the Gospel teachings of Christ. They are a beacon of faith and pride to the Catholic community of Kelowna.

Reg Humphries



Twinning

Twinning – Dominican Republic Walking in their Footsteps

Walking in their footsteps

by Lynn L'Heureux

March 16, 2008

On a recent trip to Dominican Republic, Tony and I had a chance to travel to Santo Domingo to visit with Vincentians we are twinned with. As it turns out, the President, Monica was in the U.S. welcoming her newest grandchild and helping the new mom.

It took five grueling hours on roads that contained one pot hole after another. We drove by many structures that looked like debris, but in reality were homes. Many were clustered together in very tight communities even though there is a great deal of land. Along the side of the road vendors were selling barbecued pork, chicken and produce. Very much like in Canada except the vendors were younger and older. The reason for this is that the prime age group is working in factories or hotels for small wages to keep the family going.

The gasoline in Dominican is the same price as here in Calgary. Much of the food in grocery stores is not that much cheaper than what we experience. Food in restaurants is almost the same price. Doctors' fees, dentists' fees, and drugs are high, as they are here. Bus fare, on a bus almost falling apart, is about \$1.60 (which for most people is up to two hours wages) to travel to work, to doctors, or to go shopping.

The kicker here is that the wages

are much lower. Imagine having three kids, one 15 years old with a baby and two in university, and being a single mom. It is tough here, but in DR it is a huge challenge. One woman we met, a chartered accountant, makes \$700.00 a month. As you can see by a sample of the above prices that puts her pretty low on the equivalent pay scale.

The list of poor wages goes on. The people look after one another and work long hours; usually 12 to 18 hours a day - 5 ½ to 6 days a week. Possibly the lowest wage was the maids who make probably a dollar an hour, but receive tips and it is considered a good job. Actually even lower than that is the factory worker, but I didn't meet any of them. Policemen make \$210.00 per month, but get to drive a car and usually get free meals and sometimes other rewards.

DR, boasts our tour guide and translator, is the only country in the world that lets you decide which side of the road you wish to drive on. (Of course this is a joke, but never-the-less a true fact). My eyes were wide open, I can tell you. With that in mind the majority choose to drive mopeds or motorcycles (no helmets), public transit, taxi, or other vehicles for a few pesos. Mothers sit on the back of a motorcycle with a small child or baby in each arm and a child in front of them. They also travel with furniture on the moped or cycle and even a 45 gallon drum. There are 4000 motor vehicle deaths each year. Those injured in accidents

usually do not go to the hospital or to a doctor as they have no money and no insurance. They heal crippled, or if they die, they are not counted in these 4000 deaths. These are only those who die at the scene.

Finally making it to Santo Domingo we met the National SSVP Secretary Theresa and the President's husband (Jesus) in a spectacular Cathedral, just down the street from Columbus' House. We talked for about an hour about their projects. They have an orphanage which we had hoped to see, but due to delays and flat tires, we ran out of time. They are now working on a project for physically challenged people. The cost of building is a pittance compared to Canada, but could be a million to them. They are currently in the process of raising \$59,000.00. They are very enthusiastic, loving, giving people.

In the Cathedral we saw a statue that was holding a box and I told Jesus that one of our parishes had a statue like this of St. Vincent and he was holding a money box for donations. The statue intrigued Jesus and I'm sure his mind was searching as to how they could get one built for St. Vincent de Paul. They were most enthusiastic about what was happening in Canada with SSVP and in sharing what they do in DR.

Our time went by swiftly and they thanked us for the box of gifts which we brought and we thanked them for the gifts we received. We



promised to pray for each other until we met again.

Returning to Cabarete tired and filled with love of the people we met, we drifted into personal thoughts and prayer for DR Vincentians and our SSVP at home. On Sunday we went to Church in Sosua and met more wonderful people. We talked to the parish worker and the priest about SSVP and the works in Santo Domingo. They promised to get in touch by email with the address I gave them. They were very excited as they are working with a gentleman, whom we met, to help the Haitian women and children who pour into DR.

They have a wonderful programme to teach the women how to sew. They sew beach bags and sell them on the beach and they bake wonderful bread and pastries to sell to the restaurants and resorts. This is proving to be popular. Some cab drivers give half their fare to help the women and one artist gives half of the cost of his paintings to the project. We were told that not too many people are motivated that way. I guess it is because they all need help in some way.

I want to end with a story that

warmed my heart. Our Lady Queen of Peace Ranch gives us hundreds of Rosaries and we give them to the North and some other places. We decided to bring some with us and distribute them to our Twin in Santo Domingo. They were very pleased and distributed them to the children along with little dolls that my neighbour made for us to take. We had some of these left and after mass we went to visit an older lady and her family. I gave her a rosary and through our interpreter told her that they were blessed by one of our parish priests. She was excited to receive the rosary and book with beautiful colored pictures, but her eyes filled with tears and she lifted her gift to heaven when she heard that a Canadian priest blessed her rosary. She said she would begin praying for the priest and my whole parish and all the good people working with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which she will learn about.

This was the highlight of our trip. Now lest you think we made it to

sainthood, you will be pleased to note, that we are just like you and still trying. We did soak up the sun, swam in the pools, and indulged in the decadent meals and pastries, which we are now trying to work off.

Be at peace with what you do and always take time to pray for the poor you serve every day and don't forget those poor in other countries.

March 16, 2008-03-16



Twining

ARE YOU CURIOUS ABOUT WHOM YOU COULD HELP?

Following is a list of the possibility for twinning at this time. If you have an interest in a twin from one of these listed, please contact me.

From El Salvador:

19 recent twinning applications, one for a Departmental Council, and one for the National Council (for a Regional Council to consider)

From Colombia;

Consejo Particular, Antioquia – They have a home to give attention to seniors during the day.

Consejo Particular Nuestra Senora del Perpetuo Socorro – They own a mini-nursing home for seniors, and 14 houses.

Conferencia San Vicente de Paúl – They have a place to give formation to peasants of 60 regions.

Conferencia Santa Marta – They have a place to help people from the countryside.

Conferencia San Nicolás - They have 30 houses.

Conferencia Nuestra Senora de Chiquinquirá - They have a place for training and 38 houses

Conferencia San Antonio de Padua - They have a nursing home and 6 houses

From the Dominican Republic:

We have 2 applications waiting for twinning, and expect more soon.

Look for the article about this country in another part of this issue of the Vincenpaul.



Kathy Weswick, responsable National Twining Chairperson

Application forms are available from the website www.ssvp.ca, or from your Regional twinning chairperson.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Weswick, National Twinning twinning-chair@ssvp.ca

A REFLECTION TAKEN FROM THE BOOK “PRAYING WITH FRÉDÉRIC OZANAM”

by Father Ronald Ramson, CM

Frédéric had a high sensitivity to the poor and to poverty. He held a preferential option for the poor in his life as did his patron, saint Vincent de Paul, long before the term became operative in theology. The poor meant more than the “financially disadvantaged. While dedicating his life to the service of

truth, Frédéric perceived that he was affirming truth when he showed the vitality of his faith in good works toward the poor. Frédéric’s decision “to go to the poor” was made with others of like mind and intent. He desired to form a network of charity. This network spread itself throughout France, its neighbouring countries, and beyond.

A vivid example of Frédéric’s preference for the poor took place in London. He, his wife, and friend J.J. Ampère had traveled to

London in August 1851 to see the Crystal Palace exhibition. Frédéric left them at the exhibition while he went to visit the poor Irish Catholics who lived in the tenements located on the streets surrounding the hall. When Frédéric returned, his wife and friend found him deeply moved by the plight of “la misère” and somewhat poorer than when he left them. He sat down and shared this experience with them.



José Ramon Torremocha,
President General International.
Keynote speaker at the 2008 AGA
in Quebec.

MESSAGE TO MY DEAR CANADIAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS

« SHARING EVERYTHING »

The excerpt from James' letter, proposed by the National Council of Canada, is very appropriate: "Let us put our Faith into action..." ending with a stimulating invitation: "Let us go to the poor" chosen as the motto of the General Assembly. The reason is that, during the entire history of the Saint Vincent de Paul Conferences, we have always thought that the best way to evangelize and bring God to the poor was to start with showing our personal dedication to those whose suffering we want to alleviate. That is an undeniable truth, rooted in our Society since its foundation, and that has undoubtedly done much good, often by avoiding an invasion of the intimacy of those who suffer, because of an apostolic zeal used inadequately and at the wrong time.

Nevertheless, I sometimes meet brothers who truly exaggerate that demonstration of their faith through their actions, to the extent of expecting those whom they visit to discover Christ on their own, solely by seeing their dedication, without

ever speaking expressly about God, and their own feelings. It is then that we risk letting ourselves be seen only as instruments of a probably useful, but exclusively human, philanthropy. Such an attitude worries me considerably. In effect, if it is true that the poor may see a call in our works, there remains the fact that by acting in such a way, we miss the opportunity of sharing with them an important part of what we really are. That is to say, our vocation.

It is indeed that very personal relationship itself, that shared intimacy with those who suffer and whose suffering we wish to alleviate, that will bring us closer to them, to the point of initiating a friendship leading to mutual trust. Once such a friendly relationship exists, when mutual riches are shared in a sincere meeting between the brother and the person who suffers, why not take the opportunity to share faith as well? Why not tell him or her, clearly and without any ambiguity, that faith is what provides our strength and gives meaning to our life? That, however, must be done simply, without lecturing or becoming teachers, but rather, by acting as imperfect and fragile instruments of the love of God.

Thus, dear Canadian brothers and sisters do not forget to show the love of Christ and His Church towards the poor, through all your works that prevent so much suffering. And then share this love with others, as we now see so many new manifestations of suffering among the weakest.

However, as soon as you have the opportunity, unimpeded by caution, having reached the stage of a friendly relationship with the one

who suffers, do not forget to mention Christ in your relationships. Do not fall into a false human respect that would prevent our friend from seeing clearly what our initial motivation was, and what led us to share with him the best of ourselves. Share with him our conviction that God loves us, and that God loves him as well.

Furthermore, we must proclaim that in 2008, our Society celebrates 175 years of existence. The city of Quebec will also celebrate its 400th anniversary. Our new Canadian Council President therefore starts her term in the joyful atmosphere of important events.

Congratulations on her new responsibilities. I already know, from having met her recently at our International Executive Committee meeting in Paris, that she will, with the support of her dear Council, and with deepest humility, bring precious collaboration to the Council General.

May our Holy Mother help us gather the most beautiful fruit from that Assembly, for the good of each one personally, and for the greatest benefit of those who suffer.

José Ramón Díaz-Torremocha
14th President General of the
International Confederation
of the Society of Saint Vincent
de Paul

Paris, March 11, 2008

"Not every fervour is holy, or
blessed by God. All means are not
appropriate to put new and
Christian teachings into hearts..."
(Prologue to the first Rule of the
SSVP, in 1835)

Confeder@tio News 12

Vincentians news from
around the world

2008... A year for Vincentian Youth...

As 2008 is a “World Youth Day” year, and given the financial impossibility of organizing a huge international Vincentian gathering in Australia on this occasion, Council General decided instead to hold the “International Vincentian Youth Study Days” in June. They will be held in the city of Salamanca, Spain, from 4th to 8th June 2008. The venue for the event will be the Residence of the Vincentian Fathers in Salamanca (this Residence was also the venue for the General Assembly that was held in June 2005). They will only be open to the youngest members of the Society around the world, therefore members over the age of 35 will not be able to attend as participants.

So far, 73 people from 60 countries have already confirmed their attendance! Although it is impossible for CGI to fund the attendance of any participant, 35 of them will come from developing countries, thanks to the support of twins in the countries that can afford it. This is wonderful and very generous, but, unfortunately not sufficient: 16 young people who wish to attend are unable to do so, because of lack of funds in their own countries. Any help to solve this problem will be deeply appreciated! You can send your cheque to the National Council of Canada’s office in Ottawa, with the mention “Youth -

Salamanca”.

All the Council General’s Board Members, as well as other experienced brothers and sisters, will be available to help the younger members throughout the Youth Days. In principle, the idea is that the young people who will be coming to Salamanca will work with the youth in their own countries beforehand, so that they can represent them properly in Salamanca. A special page was created on our Website, ozanet.org, including a forum you can check out <http://ivysd-en.blogspot.com>.

The Youth Days have a dual objective: to put younger members in contact with speakers who can contribute, and to give an international perspective to their Vincentian formation. The Youth Day mornings will be devoted to such activities. Talks will be given by different speakers and will be followed by discussions in which the participants may ask questions and further explore the subject. The afternoons will be used for Working Groups. Since the Youth Days will take place over three days, the participants will deal with three different subjects (the role of young people in identifying new forms of poverty; Young Vincentians in the Conferences and their representation in the Holy Church; Young Vincentians in the “ongoing foundation” of each Conference), one for each day. At the end, the Closing Ceremony will include a reading of the participants’ conclusions which will be submitted to the Council General.



For more info on the World Youth Days in Australia:

<http://www.vinnies.org.au/wyd/international/>

... and for “Golden Years” Vincentians!!

As luck would have it, announcing the Youth meeting for 2008 is also the occasion to announce that thanks to a E.U grant, CGI will from 2008 on, implement a three year programme aimed at increasing interaction among “older” Vincentians, and provide training to those aged 50 years and over in Europe, as well as to attract new volunteers to the Society.

Some News From VinPaz...

As you all know, “VinPaz” missions assist the development of the Society in areas where it is weak or absent, and strengthen its overall impact and response to need, through the commitment of international volunteers relocating to the country of operation for a longer period of time.

Report on work in 2007 ...

The Superior Council of Zambia has benefited from a leadership training programme (see Confe-

der@tioNews nb 6); and has taken over full responsibility for a farm managed for the past 4 years by VinPaz volunteers jointly with Zambian Vincentians (see Confeder@tioNews nb 5).

In Haiti, VinPaz has continued to support the National Council in training, project planning, and accountability. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The Society is active there with 67 Conferences aggregated and 800 members. For the past 4 years, a team of young volunteers from VinPaz has been working with the National Council of Haiti in the development of the Society there. This mission ended on 29th February 2008, so we asked them to talk about their experiences in the country... you will find their report on the next page.

In the Ukraine, VinPaz has continued its advisory role in a Vincentian Family project for street children (hot meals, medical assistance, day-care, etc.).

... and plans for 2008

In 2008, the VinPaz team will continue its work... the leadership training programme, so far run in Zimbabwe (2006) and Zambia (2007) will now be held in Nairobi for leaders from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

There are also hopes of organising a VinPaz mission in Cuba, as preparatory work has produced good results over the last few years, and the Executive Committee gave

its agreement to that in principle in November 2006; however, things move slowly and volunteers are working carefully, due to the delicate political situation in Cuba.

One eye on... VinPaz Mission in Haiti...

There were three Vin Paz Volunteers on the Haitian project – Denise Kelly (2003-2006); Catherine Behan (2004- 2008) and James Kelly (2006-2008), young Irish Vincentians, and recent graduates of the University of Limerick. Denise had been in Haiti working as a volunteer with the Order of Malta and joined the local Conferences in Milot.

She met Eduardo Gomez (ITVP) at a National Council meeting and accepted his invitation to become a Vin-Paz volunteer for a year (she stayed over 3 years!). Catherine and James participated in the annual visit to Haiti by members of their Conference. Having seen Haiti and the needs there, they were anxious to make a contribution. VinPaz – introduced to them by Larry Tuomey (Co-Ordinator) – provided the means.

How were you received by the Haitian Vincentians?

The vast majority of Haitian Vincentians were delighted with our presence when they understood the Mission of VinPaz was to help develop the Society in Haiti through formation and training and to help re-establish links with the international Society.

We travelled to many parts of the country and met members and leaders who showed us incredible hospitality and a warm welcome. There were obstacles and challenges as a result of the changes needed for the Society to progress, but overall we found members very supportive and we formed lasting friendships.

What were your main achievements?

We developed a training programme in Creole for Conference leaders which was well received and we delivered it in many parts of the country reaching about half the membership. We also worked on transparency and accountability for funds received through the Distribution system. Working with the National Council, we helped organise National Assemblies and facilitated communication between Regions and Conferences.

A Newsletter was provided and Society literature was translated into Creole. We supported Regions to encourage Conferences to consider developing their work for those in need through new “initiatives” (micro-projects). We helped start the process for a limited resumption of twinning with USA and Canada.

What were the main difficulties you faced?

The instability of the country, lack of good roads and reliable means of communication were all challenges we faced in common with the lead-



National Council of Haiti and its President – Elisme Lesley – were encouraging of our work. We appreciate the support we received throughout from Ed Gomez and Larry Tuomey.

With poverty in Haiti so pervasive it seemed at times that we were making no impact at all in the face of such vast problems. We had to remind ourselves that in spite of our weakness and insignificance the witness we gave, with God’s help, made some difference – however small – in the lives of the people we encountered in Haiti.

A big Vincentian Hug to these three exceptionnal young person.

Let’s not forget!

As you all know, and as previous issues of Confeder@tioNews and the activities of the Territorial Technical Commission confirm, the last months have been especially violent, in terms of natural disasters.

Recently, the cities of Buvaku and Kabara, in the South-Kivu Region, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, has been affected by a serious earthquake, that killed and injured many people, destroyed houses and infrastructures, and traumatized the population: weeks later, many of them were still living in the streets because of the fear of another tremor. It is all the more terrible that the region is also affected by a cruel and violent civil war, with thousands of victims and displaced people. The Society is



doing as much as it can; with the support of Council General, to distribute food, medicines, blankets or reconstruction material to the victims of the war, and now to the victims of the earthquake. But the need for further support is enormous.

Madagascar is not spared: after being hit by hurricane Fame in January, the Island was also struck by hurricane Yvan, in late February. International press agencies report more than 100 deaths, 200,000 homeless and 315,000 affected people. All regions of the huge island have been affected, and the needs are obvious. The Society of St Vincent de Paul is very active and efficient in Madagascar, and is ready to help thousands of victims, but cruelly short of financial resources. Please help us to help them!

Help us to support the Society

You can send your cheque to the National Council of Canada’s office in Ottawa, with the mention “International emergency help” (you may also specify the country you want to help).

ers of the Society. Cultural differences posed problems – sometimes quite serious ones. We found witnessing poverty and suffering on a daily basis very difficult and overwhelming at times. We tried to cope with these difficulties as many of the Haitians do – by putting their difficulties in God’s hands and asking that His will be done. Also being patient and adaptable with a good sense of humour helped us in difficult times.

In Conclusion...

It was a wonderful experience for us to spend time as Vin Paz volunteers in Haiti. We met many wonderful Vincentians who inspired us by their dedication in the midst of so many difficulties and we made many friends. Living conditions were austere by European standards but that had its own charm – at least for a while! The work we did – particularly in training and formation – seemed to be well received by members and helped them to a greater understanding of the Society and to improve their work for those in need. We had at times to assume a level of responsibility not normal for our age group that was challenging but fulfilling. The