

A. P. Ozanam

V E T E R A MONIMENTA

"A Newsletter for Vincentians, by Vincentians"

November, 2021 | A monthly newsletter of Tools, Resources and Activities for Vincentians in Contra Costa County

Calendar

Holiday Grant Requests Due
Monday, 11/1/21

Ozanam Orientation Part 2
Saturday, 11/6/21
8:45 AM - Noon on Zoom

Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, 11/16/21
9:30 AM - 11:00 AM on Zoom

Spirituality & Formation Meeting
Tuesday, 11/16/21
Noon - 1:00 PM on Zoom

SVdP Hosts Thanksgiving Dinner
Thursday, 11/25/21
11:00 AM - 1 PM at FRC

One Warm Coat Drive
Saturday, 11/27/21 All Day

Feast of the Miraculous Medal
Sunday, 11/27/21 All Day

Giving Tuesday
Tuesday, 11/30/21 All Day

Spiritual Day of Reflection & Renewal
Saturday, 12/4/22
9:00 AM - 11:30 AM on Zoom

All Links to Above Sessions on
Page 13

Bob Liles' Corner

Sharing Our Vincentian Newsletter

At today's meeting some officers brought up the fact that a lot of their members do not have email. One person suggested that Conferences can just print out one copy and set it out at their food pantry for the people that work the pantry to read rather than printing multiple copies out for everyone who does not have a computer.

I know my Conference has three people that don't have e-mail. I would always print a copy of our local newsletter and drop it off in their mailboxes. I went to an IHM meeting and they printed copies of it available for members that did not have email.

So, I know the problem is real. For the new year, we are working on a format that should facilitate printing and sharing of this newsletter.

Officer Training Videos Online

Click on this link to take you to our YouTube channel where you can view the recent Zoom officer training sessions:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMKjgpCZOYqdmXRF0kn0tUg>

While you are doing that why not put a shortcut to it on your desktop so that you can go there to view the past Tuesdays with Vincent presentations?



The Rule

by Bob Liles

When the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was founded, we created rules to govern our actions and confirm who we are. Today in the United States, these would be the Articles of Incorporation or the bylaws, but back then it was simply The Rule. The Society is different from other charitable organizations. The Rule is what makes us different. So it is essential to keep the Rule in our minds and hearts in all of our actions. It is only twelve pages long. Starting this month, sections of The Rule will be included in the monthly newsletter help it stay paramount in our minds.

1.2 The Vincentian Vocation

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.

1.3 Any form of personal help...

No work of charity is foreign to the Society. It includes any form of help that alleviates suffering or deprivation and promotes human dignity and personal integrity in all their dimensions.

1.4...to anyone in need

The Society serves those in need regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender, or political opinions.



The SVdP Food Pantry at St. Callistus, San Pablo, CA

Food Pantries

by Bob Liles

The Dropbox has a lot of information about best practices regarding food pantry operation. Here is a link to that section:

[Click Here to Access the Best Practices on Food Pantries](#)

Recently added to the DropBox were the Queen of All Saints Guidelines for operating their food pantry. Those Conferences that think they might need to better document how their food pantry is operated should find some useful information in it.

[Click Here to Access the Queen of All Saints Pantry Guidelines](#)

Just remember there are multiple ways to run a food pantry and there is no one right way. All that is important is that everyone in your Conference agrees on how to run yours.

SJA Vincentian Spirituality Gets a Boost Vincentian San Damiano Retreat October 13, 2021

by Stephen Krank

My having the privilege of joining in with our Vincentians from St. Joan of Arc for this Day of Retreat confirmed for me our need to rejoin together with a focus on two of the three pillars of our Vincentian charism; Spirituality, Friendship. Then renewed we can refocus on services.

There were so many wonderful opportunities to reflect, and share in the Eucharist. We were blessed to have Fr. Rusty Shaughnessy, OFM a “Franciscan Vincentian” who lives at the Retreat Center facilitate the day and host Mass for us. The event was terrific. After the sharing of the Eucharist we took advantage of the gathering to present incoming Conference President, Frank Wnuk, with the Articles of Aggregation for the St. Joan of Arc Conference from SVDP International in recognition of their work as Vincentians and the connection to the work that began in Paris in 1833. These retreats are special opportunities to connect with fellow Vincentians, and I highly recommend that all Conferences try to do them. The District Council is coordinating a day-long retreat for early 2022 at San Damiano in Danville.

Stephen Krank, Vincentian Support

Excerpt from Welcome Letter

by Frank Wnuk

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first St Joan of Arc Vincentian Spiritual Retreat. It has been a long time since we have been able to spend time together because of COVID restrictions. As hard as it has been on us it has even been more difficult for many of our neighbors in need.

We are a people blessed by prosperity and broken by poverty. Because we are blessed with our families, church, faith, sisters, and brothers, we see St Vincent de Paul Ministry as our calling

- How do we respond to the love that our God has shown us?
- What can we give in exchange for all that we have received?
- The answer to these questions and those unasked is, we can't.

We are a family, a parish, a Church, a body, just one.

That is what our Retreat today is about.

This day is a Thank you. You saw God when he was hungry and fed him, He came to you thirsty, and you gave him drink.

Today is a spiritual day of rest to help us recharge our batteries and continue our service with an even stronger Vincentian spirit.

Enjoy. Pray, Rest, and enjoy the Camaraderie.

Frank Wnuk

The San Damiano Spiritual Retreat was an opportunity for Vincentians at the St. Joan of Arc Conference to refresh their understanding of the Vincentian Mission, as well as refresh inspiration that allows Vincentians to live the mission.

These retreats also offer Vincentians an opportunity to grow in friendship and to relax and enjoy the bounties of God's grace together.

It has been a hard, stressful time for everyone, and retreats like the SJA retreat help to center and focus us on our mission.

Every Vincentian is Franciscan

by Renato Lima de Oliveira, XVI International President General SVdP

On October 4th, 2021 the Church celebrated the liturgical memory of St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), one of the most well-known Saints in the world, which deeply marked not only the life of the Church, but also the society of his time. Few Saints have exercised such a decisive influence on the civil and ecclesiastical history of their time as St. Francis, considered the “perfect servant of Lady Poverty.”

What qualities of Francis are closely linked to the Vincentian practice? We can identify several, among them the practice of unconditional charity, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and love for the poor. Everything in the life of Francis revolved around these attitudes, which marked the foundation of the Franciscan Order and characterize thousands of devotees (lay people, priests and religious) in the current times.

Francis was intelligent, jovial, gentle, affable, detached, cheerful and a lover of life, his biographers report. Even being young, he never let himself be carried away by the passions that dominate young people of any time and place. He decided, as a listener of the Gospel, to be generous with those who asked him for alms, especially those who ask “for the love of God,” even to give up part of his clothes, if he did not have money.

Despite preaching above all to the poor and identifying with them, Francis warn his disciples, exhorting them not to condemn and despise those who live in opulence and dress luxuriously. He said that they also have God as their Lord, and God can, at any time, call them, like others, and make them just and holy.

Click Here To Read More



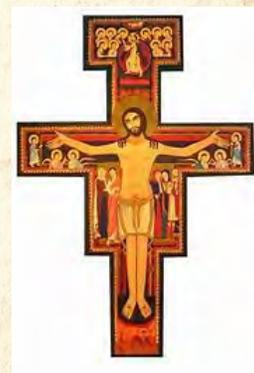
The San Damiano Retreat Center



Fr. Rusty Shaughnessy



St. Vincent de Paul



Franciscan Cross

What's Their Plan?

Mentorship is Helping Neighbors Develop THEIR Plan

By Stan Bochenek, Vincentian at the SVdP St. Isidore Conference



I've been asked to share our Conference's experience with budgeting and the Dave Ramsey method. This started when one of our Vincentians questioned our Christmas Adopt-a-Family practice. He asked what happens to these families after Christmas.

We, the Vincentians at St. Isidore, started a follow-up on Adopt-a-Family program which later became a joint venture with Catholic Charities, "The Family-to-Family Partnership" program. This later fit very well into SVdP's mission to induce systemic change.

In our selection process it was critical that the family be motivated to be self-sufficient.

Our fundamental questions we asked were, "Where are you now? Where do you want to be and how are you going to get there?" Initially as a team leader we used a generic budget form and taught how income and expenses had to balance at the end of each pay period.

During our 10 years with families in need at St. Isidore we looked at the many budgeting methods and I asked my sister in law, Deb, who had experience with various budgeting methods to help me find the best one. She recommended Dave Ramsey's course Financial Peace University (FPU). Her comment from families she has known that went through it was "It gave me HOPE. I can do this".

FPU (Financial Peace University) is a 9-week interactive course (in person or online) that teaches how to develop a self-sufficient plan using baby steps to eliminate debt and build wealth.

St Isidore's SVdP Conference has funded this course for a number of our client families with excellent feedback. FPU helps them develop a plan that shows them where they are now, shows them where they want to be and how they are going to get there.

It will give them HOPE and help them learn the steps needed to becoming self-sustaining.

Dave Ramsey's 7 Baby Steps | RamseySolutions.com
<https://www.ramseysolutions.com/dave-ramsey-7-baby-steps>

Editor's note: Dave Ramsey has a weekday radio talk show on 650 am KTSE from 3-6pm out of Sacramento and from 6-9pm on 560 am KSFO out of San Francisco.

The Value of National Assemblies

by Ron Costanzo, past SVdP Board President



Past SVdP Board President
Ron Costanzo

The National Assemblies hosted by the National Council of SVdP are an invaluable resource for Vincentians to learn new and effective ways of living the Vincentian mission.

The Conference Support Session had two areas of focus: how to identify the Conferences that are stuck and what to do to help them before they become non-Conferences. The panel of “experts” identified the items in “Requirements for Traditional Conferences” and included many ideas from their experiences with what most of the Council have opportunity to address.

Vincentians – Fr. Jaime Waters related our vocation of responding to our neighbors in need in the way that in so many Gospels show how Jesus was interrupted from his plan and allowed that interruption in order to demonstrate his love for them

Strategic Plan Refresh – Follows our mission statement, new actions identified for further progress in each area. It is a very strong team of volunteer Vincentians that has delivered on the prior plan and with a few members rotated, they will do it again.

Stores – Benchmarks and best practices were identified, while recognizing differing store sizes and markets, sharing experiences and challenges in consistent with continuous improvement. National expressed their commitment to the growth of existing and new stores.

Jobs – Programs around the country who are newer than ours have followed four or five practices that resulted in workforce development programs with consistent results. Connections to employers and engagement of mentors, consistent training, coordination between on the job, classroom, “case management” and mentoring were all discussed as ways to elevate an alright program into an excellent program.

Recruiting and fundraising – With an emphasis on story telling with examples and opportunity to develop your own stories, the national team demonstrated some very successful approaches that can be adopted by Conferences and Councils. The stories created when Vincentians interact with the neighbors they are assisting are our most valuable fundraising, recruitment, and advertising tool. Sometimes it can be hard to see what a wider audience may find impactful or moving in what seems a simple story of someone helping their neighbor, but you would be surprised.

If you have any neighbors willing to share their story with a wider audience, please email Steve Krank at s.krank@svdp-cc.org or Brian Boyle at b.boyle@svdp-cc.org, both are willing to meet with our neighbors to share their story in a respectful manner.

National Assembly Reflections

by Ruben Rodriguez



Left to Right: Sr. Norma Pinentel, Oliba Cardona,
and Ruben Rodriguez

I would like to share some thoughts about some of my experiences and the workshops at this year's National Assembly in Houston. The first thought I have is that "God Gives you Love." It is through this lens I will review some of the area's that were meaningful to me.

First the Hispanic Latino Task Force – Presented a draft mission statement and discussed the topics of Diversity, Equity, Justice & Inclusion. This topic is in response to concerns from our migrant community. National Council President Ralph Middlecamp spoke on the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's commitment to increasing Latino participation on national committees and to search for individuals to provide national presence. Dave Barringer, CEO of SVdP USA, and the National Formation Committee will be shepherding the search. President Middlecamp spoke about the parable of the Good Samaritan and added to his prayer, "All my love comes from the Lord."

The second set of topics I would like to speak to is: Amplifying Unheard Voices. Most of the conversation focused on the current pandemic and interactions with our neighbors in need that are transactional versus relational. Suggestions and ideas were made regarding how to reframe home visits to retain the relational aspect crucial to the Vincentian mission. I was struck by the opening prayer in this session and wanted to share it with you:

"A Franciscan Blessing"

May God bless you with discomfort

At easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships.

So that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger

At injustice, oppression and exploitation of people.

So that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears

To shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war.

So that you may reach out your hand to comfort them

And to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness

To believe that you can make a difference in this world

So that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

Amen.

[**Click Here To Read More Including Info on Sr. Norma's
Work at the Border**](#)

Tuesdays with Vincent

Bl. Frederic Ozanam

On December 7th at 6PM, Tuesdays with Vincent will focus on the topic “History and Works of the Ladies of Charity,” and how they helped form and define what it means to be a Vincentian.

Past Ladies of Charity USA President Suzanne Hoag Johnson will be our guest host to follow up on our study for the December 7th, Workshop from 6 PM - 8PM on the Ladies of Charity.

The link to attend is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87034403349?pwd=bjJjdHlMMSG44RFZ2L2s5bGtKNzZCdz09>

Meeting ID: 870 3440 3349 Passcode: Vincent

Presenter Bio:

Suzanne Hoag Johnson



Suzanne Hoag Johnson was born in St. Louis, Missouri. She was the eldest of ten children and spent her formative years in Plainview, New York and Kansas City, Missouri. She graduated with a B.S.B.A. in accounting from Rockhurst College (now Rockhurst University) in Kansas City, MO. Following a career in accounting and business, Suzanne returned to school and received her Juris Doctorate from the University of LaVerne College of Law in Ontario, California and passed the California bar exam in 2010.

Suzanne Hoag Johnson

Following her mother’s example, Suzanne joined the Ladies of Charity in Los Angeles, California in 1998. In addition to her volunteer work as a Lady of Charity, she is active in her local association – including three terms as President. She joined the national board of the Ladies of Charity (LCUSA) in 2011 where she served as President from 2017 – 2018. Suzanne is a member of the International Association of Charities (AIC), serving as Vice-President.



Related to our Tuesdays with Vincent Study of The Ladies of Charity

St. Vincent de Paul was a parish priest at Chatillon-les-Dombes in 1617, when, on a special Feast Day, a woman parishioner told him of a local family in dire need of help. The entire family was ill and none could care for the others. Vincent spoke of the family's needs during his sermon.

As a result of this sermon an outpouring of charity was so spontaneous and abundant that the family was overwhelmed with food and visitors. Viewing the abundance of provisions, Vincent said, "This poor family will have too many provisions at one time and some will be spoiled and wasted. In a short time, these persons will be reduced to their former state of need. Would it not be possible to induce these good women to give themselves to God to serve the poor permanently?"

A few days later, on August 23, Vincent called a meeting of the women of the area and suggested that they band together to carry out this good work. They agreed to form an association in which each would take her turn in serving the poor corporally and spiritually without judgment. Thus was the founding of the first of the Confraternities of Charity. The seeds that were planted at Chatillon-les-Dombes germinated and flourished in other districts.

To maintain the spirit of charity and unity among them, St. Vincent chose Louise de Marillac, his devoted cooperatrix to visit the Associations to see that they were properly organized and work was performed in the right communal spirit. On March 11, 1934, Pope Pius XI canonized Louise and proposed her as a model for the Ladies of Charity.



Ozanam Orientation Packets Available

In preparation for the Ozanam Orientations on 10/30/21 and 11/6/21, packets are available to pick up at the thrift stores in Pleasant Hill and Brentwood, the council office in Pittsburg. West County can call Larry Lynch at (510) 501-0807 to arrange pick up. If this is inconvenient, you can download the participant's packet from the council Dropbox with this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/itigbg926vm1dzj/2020%20Ozanam%20Orientation%20Participants%20Guide.pdf?dl=0>

Giving Tuesday, 2021

In 2012, the first Tuesday following Thanksgiving was recognized as a day of charitable giving by a small group of donors. The day quickly gained more and more international recognition, and now is recognized as a powerful day of generosity around the globe, "Giving Tuesday".

This year, Giving Tuesday falls on November 30th. You can get involved and help St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County raise funds to help our neighbors in need in 2022 in any number of ways. Simply spreading the word to your friends and family about Giving Tuesday and SVdP is a great way, as is hosting your own Facebook fundraiser! There are a number of different ways to participate, please visit givingtuesday.org for ideas and join the community of donors at SVdp-cc.org by clicking "Donate Now," and selecting Giving Tuesday from the drop-down menu.

The SVdP Board of Directors and select donors will be matching all Giving Tuesday donations up to \$1,000.



Conference Needs: St. Agnes Needs Interim Treasurer

In this newsletter, we will begin to feature a new segment about the needs of our Conferences across the county. If there is anything you feel your Conference needs, please reach out to s.krak@sudp-cc.org and we can include it in our newsletter.

This month, we would like to focus on the St. Agnes Conference. Due to illness, they are currently without a treasurer and need someone to help them carry the load until the situation improves. If you are able to serve as their Interim Treasurer, please email s.krak@sudp-cc.org.

Being Vincentians means that none of us are alone, and together we can weather any storm and overcome any obstacle.

On the Road Again Thanks to SVdP

by Brian Boyle



Sharon Patty receives her donated car through SVdP.

There is a tie between self-esteem and experiencing homelessness that is often overlooked. Simple things many of us may take for granted can have profound impacts on the lives of our neighbors, like driving a car for instance. This was the story from our Auto Donation Program at St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County. This program matches donated cars to people in need. For those who donate their unwanted cars, this program offers a tax deduction and extra garage space. For those who receive the donated vehicles, it means so much more. For Sharon Patty, her donated car means the world.

“It’s so surreal I still don’t believe it has actually happened,” Sharon said. “This car is going to change my life. If I was a bit younger, I would jump for joy.” A senior citizen, Sharon became homeless 2 years ago. She struggled depending on shelters, food pantries, like the SVdP food pantry at St. Mary’s Church in Walnut Creek, and others for transport to medical appointments.

Sharon said dealing with her disabilities while being dependent on public transportation or others was draining. Sharon said she is excited to drive again, and is overjoyed to have a car. She found SVdP after becoming homeless. She depended on the SVdP Food Pantry at St. Mary’s. Sharon is no longer on the street, after securing housing through the Trinity Center in Walnut Creek. Now that she has a car, Sharon is positive her life will continue to improve.

“I am just so grateful. Everyone that has helped me from SVdP has been so kind and so patient with me,” Sharon said. “I’m disabled and being without a car has been so hard. This is going to let me to take care of myself. It’s going to help me turn my life around.”

Do you have a working car parked that you don’t use? Can it pass smog? We have helped a number of our neighbors like Sharon receive cars donated by Vincentians like you. During the pandemic our list families hoping to be blessed with such an incredible, life changing gift continues to grow. Won’t you help them get on the road again. For questions about donating your working car or truck please call Bonnie Casey 925-635-3217 or b.casey@svdp-cc.org

Volunteers Needed at the District Council

Microsoft Sharepoint expert - Someone who can help us migrate from DropBox to Sharepoint.

Call Claudia Ramirez at (925)635-3219 or email her at: c.ramirez@svdp-cc.org.

Safety auditor - quarterly inspect the stores to make sure we are following safety guidelines. Call Bob at (925)437-9853 or email him at b.liles@svdp-cc.org.

Store volunteers - sorting, pricing, setting items out on the floor, etc. Call the office at (925)439-5060. Do you like Golf or special events? Join our team and help plan our next golf event by contacting Barb Hunt at b.hunt@svdp-cc.org

For a complete list of all volunteer opportunities with the DC click on this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/o3bqz44m2mqas5iuvr92v/Volunteer-Opportunities.docx?dl=0&rlkey=vf33gde9jc8jcdskdmk2cmh0t>



National Q&A

Every week in Frederic's E-Gazette, National SVDP's newsletter, they have a Q&A section.

The questions range from detailed interpretations of the by-laws to home visits to everything under the sun.

They have compiled them and created an index. Check it out at: [Q&A Index](#).

<https://files.constantcontact.com/fd89f49d001/bff8d394-d465-4db9-a3aa-95c4d2f1639d.pdf>

Another great place to find this information is on their website at:

<https://members.svdpusa.org/members/Documents/Council-Conference> .

Links

Tuesdays with Vincent

December 7th, 2021 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87034403349?pwd=bjJjdHlMMSG44RFZ2L2s5bGtKNzZCdz09>

Meeting ID: 870 3440 3349 Passcode: Vincent

Dropbox:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yfj70vzjy3bj5ky/AADDxY9E5ywnpl0DarZEVMrTa>

St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County:

<https://www.svdpc-cc.org>

National Site for Vincentians:

<https://members.svdpusa.org/members>

St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County YouTube Page:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMKjgpCZOYqdmXRF0kn0tUg>

Formation & Training Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9254395060?pwd=N3BxU0w4RjFiUnlQZ1BYWGVVcHIRUT09>

Meeting ID: 925 439 5060 Passcode: Ozanam

California Tenant and Landlord Housing Resources:

https://landlordtenant.dre.ca.gov/tenant/protection_guidelines.html

<https://landlordtenant.dre.ca.gov/landlord/resources.html>

Hope Conference Documents:

Applications in English and Spanish:

<https://www.svdpc-cc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/1.-SVdP-Hope-Application-PRINTABLE.pdf>

<https://www.svdpc-cc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/3.-SVdP-Hope-Application-SPANISH-PRINTABLE.pdf>

Important Tenant-Landlord Information Documents:

<https://www.svdpc-cc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Tenant-Landlord-Information.pdf>

<https://www.svdpc-cc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Tenant-Inability-to-Pay-Notice.pdf>