

A. P. Chanam

V E T E R A M O N I M E N T A

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

Calendar

1st Tuesdays with Vincentian Leaders

Tuesday 2/2/2021
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM on Zoom

Training – Ozanam Orientation Part II

Saturday 2/6/2021
9:00 AM – 12:00 NOON

Feast of Sr. Rosalie Rendu

Saturday, 2/7/2021

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday 2/16/2021
9:30 AM - 11:30 AM on Zoom

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, 2/17/2021

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, 3/16/2021
9:30 AM - 11:30 AM on Zoom

District Council Meeting

Saturday, 3/20/2021
9:30 AM - 11:30 AM on Zoom

Zoom links to trainings, meetings and orientations will be provided on the final page of this Newsletter.

Bob Liles' Corner

HOME VISITS:

Home visits are our primary focus, yet not all Conferences do them. When I joined SVdP 15 years ago, my Conference did not do home visits. My Conference did not understand the value of home visits.

The reality is that doing home visits is often hard work. I have been kicked out of homes and have been told off. But there is also a real and rewarding value in performing home visits. I was lucky enough to go on a home visit with Steve Krank, and met a man who was out of work due to an injury that made it difficult for him to even sit and stand without pain. He was doing his best to get by, but when his car broke down he needed to reach out, and I'm happy I was there and able to help him. It was truly a rewarding experience, I did not just help a neighbor, I made a friend.

I have met the most amazing people doing home visits. I have met people whose faith in God has truly left me humbled. That's why I urge everyone to consider doing at least one home visit. It might just change your life. Talk to neighboring Conferences and go along with them, and ask them to come with you for a home visit in your parish. One could also email Steve Krank to see if you can go along with him on a visit at s.krunk@svdp-cc.org

Grants are available for Conferences through the District Council to help fund home visits. I urge all Vincentians to give it a try!

At the end of the Newsletter will be links to documents on how to do home visits.



Volunteering by Monica Perez

Volunteers for St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa are needed now more than ever. Stories like the following from volunteer Monica Perez are very inspiring and relatable.

I do not recall a specific thing that led me to volunteer. My story is as much a story about my mother as it is about me.

Born and raised in La Paz, Bolivia I grew up in a "barrio" (neighborhood) that was the type of place where people help without asking for anything in return. It was a place where you offer to pick up groceries for the lady down the street and jump in with support and casseroles when a family is in crisis. My mother sought to foster this spirit in my brother, sisters, and me, knowing it would have long-term, positive impacts for all of us. The words "Monica will do that" or "I will send my son right over" were commonly heard in our household.

Her efforts to raise community-minded, caring children pushed us to volunteer. From an early age, I learned that helping others improved the way I felt about myself and the world. I also learned that when you are willing to put yourself out there to help those in need, you will find that other people are eager to help, too.

My service focus in high school and college changed from helping in a neighborly way to formal volunteering. I joined different organizations like CASA as an advocate assisting children in healing from trauma and access the services they need to thrive. Then, I volunteered through my former parish, Saint Matthews Catholic Church in San Mateo County, and joined the ministry of St. Vincent de Paul.

Today, as a Store Area Coordinator at SVdP in Contra Costa County, I strive to work with people looking for help in both formal and informal ways. One of my favorite definitions of volunteering remains "being aware of another's needs and doing something about it." Volunteering has allowed me to change people's lives, including my own. It has given me the satisfaction of playing a role in someone else's life, assisting those who may not be able to help themselves due to their circumstances.

However, amid the pandemic, the need for volunteers has never been greater. As many people struggle and need a helping hand to get through the rough times, WE NEED YOU! Our need for volunteers is constant, and as we navigate this health crisis, please rest assured that we are working tirelessly to help keep our community and our volunteers safe.

If you are interested in being a volunteer, please go to St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County (svdp-cc.org) and sign up. It's that easy to start making a difference in someone's life.



"It is our vocation to set people's hearts ablaze, to do what the Son of God did, who came to light a fire on earth in order to set it ablaze with His love."

- Blessed Frederic Ozanam

SVdP By-laws Need Updating by Bob Liles

Conference Presidents: In 2019 National revised the conference by-laws. They did this to bring them in line with changes in the law and as a general update. The previous guideline was that Conference should update their by-laws every five years, but this last revision was not an option. It is a mandatory update. To the best of my knowledge, only one Conference has updated their by-laws to the new template. It is straightforward. There are four places where a Conference needs to modify the national template, and the update can be done in minutes. Directions are in Dropbox > Council Documents > Resources > By-Laws Conference.

After your council updates its by-laws, please send them to Bob Liles at president@svdp-cc.org
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yfj70vzjy3bj5ky/AADDxY9E5ywnpl0DarZEVMrTa>

Reporting Tips by Bill Hurley

Easy Reports:

Please organize and reconcile the bank statement as soon as it is available. This allows us to easily transfer the information to a bank statement each month and post it to an excel spreadsheet or to a simple manual spreadsheet and make sure it adds up correctly. By doing this process every month it becomes simple to add together for quarterly and annual reports. It is as simple as that.

The Seattle System:

I recommend everyone look to the Seattle System. The Seattle System is a database reporting system aimed at making the reporting we do when we help our neighbors much easier. It makes the job of treasurer much easier by laying out necessary documents and procedures. The Seattle System is a **You do not have to be a trained accountant to do the Treasurer's job.** The New Seattle System would make it even easier for the Treasurer. Our Treasurer has given us over 30 years of service using his own system. His reporting has been perfect. When I showed him the New Seattle System, he was so impressed that he is using it. He said it was much less work now.

If you have questions about reporting, contact Bill Hurley at wchurley@icloud.com.

“I beg you not to think of the distance between us. Rather, think of us as strongly united, because separation is impossible in the close union created by holy charity.”

-St. Louise de Marillac



Volunteer Opportunities

There are many volunteer opportunities available to make a difference and help our mission at SVdP. We need your help at the Conferences (even those outside of your own parish), to provide Servant Leadership for the District Council, to help with housing and homelessness in the time of COVID-19 or to join the Board of the SVDP District Council in Contra Costa County. Just visit: <https://www.svdpc.org/volunteer> to learn more about these fulfilling opportunities.



Working Together By Bricks

United by our call as Vincentians, the Society allows Conferences to function in a variety of ways as long as we operate within The Rule, Bylaws and guidelines of the Society.

Our differences are often the source of conflict and misunderstandings between Conferences. It is easy to get stuck and believe that our way is the right way and that others are wrong or misguided.

Amidst our struggles to work together, it is important to remember that as Vincentians we are called to minister to and to accept one another even before we reach out to others. How can we find Christ in the faces of the poor if we cannot find Christ in our brother and sister Vincentians?

Establishing a protocol or procedures for collaboration could be very helpful. In order to establish a protocol, representatives from each Conference involved would have to meet with one another.

Each Conference should have the opportunity to present their operating procedures, how they deal with calls and other procedures. Difficulties in accessing resources should be talked about. By sharing and discussion we can work on improving communication between Conferences. **Continued below.**



“Fear not; calm will follow the storm, and perhaps soon.”

-St. Vincent de Paul

“What we have here, is a failure to communicate!”

These words can be heard regularly in organizations all over the world. No matter what language is used, the words don't sound any better. The consequences of this failure to communicate could be minor or extremely serious.

What does this have to do with us as Vincentians? Plenty! We are not really different from other organizations throughout the world, there are lots of failures to communicate. Here are some examples:

- A Conference Treasurer provides no report at the Conference meeting leaving the Conference members confused about how much money they have available.
- A Conference President doesn't read their mail regularly or doesn't pass on information to the rest of the Conference.
- No one from the Conference has been attending District Meetings for quite a long time and the Conference lost its vote in an important election.
- A Conference President was very slow in sending in the annual report and the Conference was dropped from the Diocesan Council Direct Aid to Conferences List thereby losing \$500 per month in funding from the Diocesan Council and potential loss of twinning from other Conferences.

There is no easy solution to this problem that is so wide-spread. Actually that's wrong. The solution is simple - make a concerted effort to communicate better.

Soliciting Our Neighbors' Stories

The neighbors in need you help, and their stories, are the most important resource St. Vincent de Paul has in raising funds from donors. These stories are the most powerful tool in making sure we can continue helping our neighbors in need. We need your help! Every neighbor you help is a potential story that could touch hearts across Contra Costa County.

Below you will find a simple script one can utilize when interacting with neighbors we help, and hopefully they will be willing to share their story with St. Vincent de Paul and the rest of the county.

YOUR STORY is an important part of supporting the mission of St. Vincent de Paul.

At St. Vincent de Paul, we are dedicated to helping our neighbors in Contra Costa County in times of crisis. We are working to end poverty one person, one family, one community at a time. To do so we rely on the compassion of our volunteers and donors.

By telling your story, you help us gain even more support! Our supporters care about the impact they have on our community, and want to see how we are helping our neighbors. By sharing your story, you can help us help even more of our neighbors across Contra Costa County.

Will you help us by sharing your story? Please contact Brian Boyle at b.boyle@svdp-cc.org or by calling 925-439-5060.

We need information including, (Information can be changed to protect anonymity):

- Name:
- Conference Name:
- Vincentian Contact info (name/phone/email):
- How client was assisted (Brief sentence overview):

Volunteer Recruitment at Parishes

Conference Presidents: Below you will see a sample of a volunteer recruitment message that was sent to the Our Lady Queen of the World parish for publication in their Sunday bulletin. If seeking volunteers from your local Sunday bulletin is something you would be interested in, please contact Barb Hunt at b.hunt@svdp-cc.org to discuss how we can personalize this message to your parish.

DO YOU HAVE A FEW HOURS PER MONTH TO HELP OUR MOST VULNERABLE NEIGHBORS?

St. Vincent de Paul's branch, "Conference" at Our Lady Queen of the World is seeking interested Volunteers.

Here at Our Lady Queen of the World, the SVdP branch helps neighbors in need who call our parish for help. We assist our neighbors by providing food, rental assistance, furniture, clothing, referral to other services and more. Some of the volunteer assistance can be provided to our neighbors in need virtually, such as returning calls for assistance and connecting people in need to resources. This is the most fulfilling volunteer work you will ever experience! Consider joining the SVdP team at Our Lady Queen of the World by contacting SVdP Conference President Esther Tilton, SVDPOLQW@gmail.com

“What God asks of us in particular is to have great care to serve the poor.”

First Tuesdays Schedule for 2021

All presentations at 6 PM

Who is St. Vincent de Paul?

Fr. John E Rybolt, C.M. - Vincentian Scholar
in Residence at DePaul University

Presentation: February, 2 2021

The Ladies of Charity

Sister Paule Freeburg, D.C.

Spiritual Advisor - Western Region

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

National Spirituality Committee - Ladies of Charity

Presentation: April, 6 2021

Congregation of the Mission

Fr. Thomas Mc Kenna, C.M.

Presentation: June, 1 2021

Upcoming Topics (In Order)

Daughters of Charity and St. Louise de Marillac

Blessed Rosalee Rendu

Blessed Frederic Ozanam

The Society Comes to America
(Founding Documents)

St. Elizabeth Ann Seaton



Ladies of Charity

of the United States of America

A Member of the International Association of Charities

To Serve Rather Than Be Served

Founded by St. Vincent de Paul, patron of all charity, the Ladies of Charity responded to the needs of the poor in 17th century France. Together with St. Louise de Marillac, they went quietly about their tasks, seeking no recognition, satisfied with the knowledge that they were serving Christ in the person of the poor.

The Ladies of Charity, since their origin, have possessed the charism of their founder, daily prayer and personal service to the poor. That same Vincentian spirit characterizes the Association today. It asks the personal gift of self, time, devotion, sacrifices, and perseverance in the effort to bring dignity to each person and to respond with compassion to every human misery.

Tuesdays with St. Vincent de Paul

The Birth of the Vincentian Family
The Origin of the Confraternities or the Associations of Charity

1st Tuesday in April (4/6/21) from 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Sr. Paule Freeburg, D.C., Spiritual Director for the Western Region, National Society of St. Vincent de Paul, will guide us in our exploration of the birth of the Vincentian Family - The Origin of the Confraternities or the Associations of Charity.

Sister Paule Freeburg, D.C.

Presenter Bio

Sister Paule Freeburg has an extensive background with the religious education of both children and adults. Though not raised Catholic, she became one during her undergraduate years.

A few years later, she took her new faith one step further by becoming a nun, joining the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. She was inspired while watching a community of sisters in Santa Barbara work with developmentally disabled children. "I saw in them a profound respect for the dignity of human beings," she said. She took her vows in 1971 and then went to Gonzaga University to earn a master's in theology.



On the first Tuesday, April 6th 2021 from 6:00PM – 8:00PM Sr. Paule Freeburg D.C. will introduce us to the oldest Women's Catholic Charity on the planet, The Ladies of Charity. This first arm of the Vincentian Family was the catalyst for the formation of the Rule by St. Vincent de Paul.

A Vincentian Prayer

Blessed are you, Lord, God, for through the inspiration and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit you allowed Vincent de Paul to form this Association in which Louise de Marillac would become a collaborator.

Through the participation of countless men and women who during the past four hundred years have served as volunteers in this Association, the physical and spiritual needs of the poor and the needy have been provided for.

Do not forsake us Lord but accompany us on our journey, enlighten our path and give us the strength to not lose heart, even during the most difficult moments of our apostolate. Amen.

The Ladies of Charity: A History

In August 1617, Vincent de Paul, at the age of 37, began a movement that has continued to the present day.

On August 1st, 1617, Vincent de Paul was appointed as pastor in Châtillon-les-Dombes (known today as Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne)... a town with about 2,000 inhabitants.

A short time before, Châtillon had been an area that experienced much violence as a result of war... many of its buildings had been destroyed and many people had converted to Protestantism.

As pastor, Vincent faithfully served the people of that area. His primary sermon revolved around the theme of charity. As a result of this new method of instructing and inviting people to practice charity, Vincent was able to touch the most hardened hearts.

A short time after his arrival in Châtillon (August 20th), some parishioners approached him about the needs of a family whose members were infirm. This event sparked a change not only in Vincent's life but also in the lives of the people who surrounded him.



“While I was living in a small town near Lyons, where Providence had called me to be the Pastor, I was vesting to celebrate Holy Mass one Sunday when I was told that in an isolated house a quarter of a league away everyone was ill. None of them was able to help the others, they were all in great need.

That touched my heart. During the sermon, I made sure to commend them zealously to my flock, and God, touching the hearts of those who heard me, moved them with compassion for those poor afflicted people.”

- St. Vincent de Paul

The Ladies of Charity, cont'd

In the evening St. Vincent de Paul visited this family and met many people on the road who were coming and going from the same house and each person brought some food for the family.

Since it was a warm day, many people sat on the side of the road to rest and to refresh themselves. It appeared as though St. Vincent de Paul was participating in a pilgrimage.

St. Vincent de Paul arrived at the home of the family and saw with his own eyes the extreme need of those people. He administered the sacraments to the more seriously ill and seeing the large amount of food that the parishioners had brought there St. Vincent de Paul reflected: this undoubtedly shows that these people have great charity, but is it effective?

It became clear that there was a need to organize this charitable activity.

That same evening St. Vincent de Paul put his plan into motion: three days later, on Wednesday, August 23rd, he organized the first group of pious women who were touched by compassion.

He encouraged them to create an association that would care for the infirm in their homes. Among these women were: Mlle. De la Chassaigne, Mlle. De Brie, Mme. Philiberte and Mme. Denise Beynier (CCD:XIIIb:3-4).

These were the first Ladies of Charity.



“The poor sick family will be overwhelmed with so much in such a short time, most of which will spoil. Afterward they will be no better off than before.”

-St. Vincent de Paul

St. Vincent de Paul, the Ladies of Charity, and The Rule

Vincent provided these women with a provisional Rule (cf. CCD:XIIIb:3-5) that he had written and in which he defined their objective in the following manner: to assist the sick poor corporally and spiritually.

Vincent then highlighted the reason for this: charity toward the neighbor is an infallible sign of the true children of God (CCD:XIIIb:8). The women committed themselves to begin this work following day and to do so in accord with the manner in which their names were listed.

The provisional Rule highlighted three essential elements:

1. The organization of the service that they were to accomplish;
2. The help (both physical and spiritual) that was to be provided to the infirm in their homes;
3. The gospel spirituality and professional competency that was to be developed through their caring and tender service.

This first Confraternity of Charity came into existence as a result of people being touched by the spirit of compassion: a pious woman, the pastor, faithful parishioners.

The fact that this occurred during the celebration of the Eucharist reveals the fact that the Eucharist is the source of charity and we can affirm the fact that the International Association of Charities was born during the celebration of the Eucharist ... it was the Eucharist that made it possible to organize the charity that in turn enabled countless men and women to serve the poor.

When Vincent distributed the official Rule (longer than the provisional Rule) to the members of the Confraternity in Châtillon, the Archbishop of Lyon officially recognized the Confraternity (November 24, 1617 and decreed such on December 8, 1617).



“Doing good isn’t everything; we have to do it well, after the example of Our Lord.”

-St. Vincent de Paul

Zoom Links

Topic: Ozanam Orientation 2021 Part II Zoom Meeting

Time: Feb 6, 2021, 09:30 AM Pacific Time (the US and Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82722626300>

Tuesday's with St. Vincent de Paul - 1st Tuesday Zoom Kick-Off

Interchange and Presentation with Guest Fr. John E. Rybolt, C.M.

Time: Feb 2, 2021 06:00 PM - 8:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83688971890>

Drop Box:

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