

# The Vincentimes



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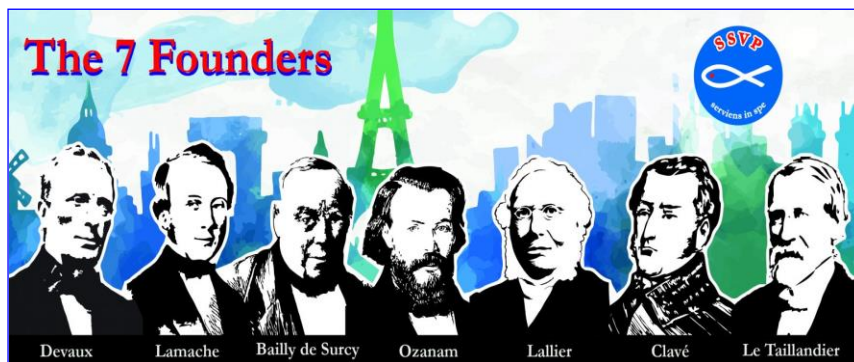
## ***“Inspirations from our Founders and Patrons”***

### **Society of Saint Vincent de Paul** ***Honours its Seven Founders on its 190<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

On the evening of April 23, 1833, Frédéric Ozanam and five other students met in the office of Mr. Bailly and the “Conference of Charity” was born. Thus, these seven, through their devotion to help the poor, became the spiritual fathers of this Conference and dedicated it to St. Vincent de Paul and today is known as “Society of Saint Vincent de Paul” as we celebrate our 190<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The number 7 has always held a special meaning in the lives of individuals. The Number 7 is the number of

perfections, security, safety and rest. The bible tells us that God created the world in seven days. There are seven colours in the rainbow. In Jewish traditions, the number 7 has been spiritually associated with inner peace or a sign that you are on a spiritual path. The early church chose 7 men of good reputation, men of service, to serve the poor and widows in the early Christian community. Today this has



grown into the deacon community, men ordained to serve the poor. On February 17 each year, the Church celebrates the formation of the Order of the Servants of Mary, which was founded by seven young men who gave up luxury to live a holy life based on prayer, penance, self-denial and devotion to the Holy Mother of God. Dedicating their devotion to the Mother of Jesus, they adopted Mary's virtues of hospitality and compassion as the order's central focus. Founded in 1233 by a group of seven cloth merchants of Florence, these men were known as the Seven Holy Founders. Did Frederic Ozanam and his friends know about this group and their charitable works? We are not sure. The similarities of purpose between the two groups are worth noting. The seven founders of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul were equally holy men who dedicated their lives to family, to charity, to the Church and to the creation of a more equal and fraternal world. They were Bailly de Surcy, Ozanam, Lallier, Devaux, Le Taillandier, Clavé and Lamache. These founders were friends who had known each other for little more than a year. Their non-student mentor, Emmanuel Bailly, had already established himself in the city for several years. The young founders had much in common. Five of them were studying law. Four of them had fathers who were medical doctors. For the most part they came from families who were part of the professional middle class that arose after the French Revolution. When we look at our SSVP past, our SSVP ancestors, we see where we came from. We should take time to see if we are striving to meet the same goals. Our founders set the direction, but looking at the world of today and tomorrow is really what these seven men want us to do. This is how we keep their legacies alive. Who would have thought that a handful of men, 7 men, who lived in the mid 1800's, would still be influencing the world to help the poor. May the Lord continue to bless our Society so that we may continue to grow and serve the poor in our world.

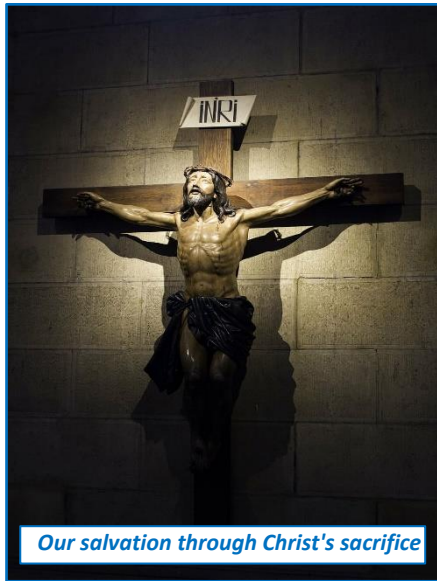
***Deacon John Girolami, ONRC Spiritual Advisor***

## **"From the President's Corner"**

### **President's Message**

Greetings Sister and Brother Vincentians,

My husband and I enjoyed our pancakes (with bananas and chocolate chips) on Shrove Tuesday, a tradition we have kept since we were married over 30 years ago. While prepping our pancake dinner, I thought about Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent. When I was a kid growing up in Winnipeg my usual dilemma while enjoying pancakes with my parents and siblings was "what will I give up this year



that I actually think I can make it through Lent without surrendering to my sweet tooth?". My consideration now is not what to give up but rather what can I do to accompany Jesus on his way to the cross? In the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops "Living Lent" publication, ten suggestions are made for living a meaningful Lenten season. Among them: ***doing good works, giving alms, fasting, making time for meditative reading.*** I am guessing most Vincentians do one or more of these activities during Lent and all year round. The idea that struck me the most though was: ***"Carry out duties in life: Serve God by living out your vocation in love each day. God is calling each of us to be a living sacrifice. Offer your daily life through Christ!"***. The challenge is fulfilling our Vincentian vocation with love. I have had a few difficult visits and conversations with neighbours in need. I have to remind myself of what it took for that person to call and ask for help. Perhaps they ask for groceries or clothing but most likely what they are seeking is a good listener, compassion and love.

Our primary duty as Vincentians is to bring hope, kindness and love. What better way to put meaning and sacrifice into Lent. Have you ever wondered, "what is Shrove Tuesday?" The Archdiocese of Toronto website explains its meaning. Shrove is the past tense of the word "to shrive" which means to hear penance and give absolution. And the pancakes? Pancakes were an easy way for Christians to use up their sugar, milk and eggs before beginning 40 days of fasting. Lent involved adopting a simpler diet without indulging in "fattening" foods. The crucifix reminds us that we obtain our salvation through Christ's sacrifice.

On another note, I have some great news to share with all Ontario Vincentians and that is we are holding our "in person" Annual General Assembly in Kitchener on the weekend of April 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. The "meet and greet" starts on Friday at 6:30 p.m. Workshops and our AGM will be held on Saturday. All of our Vincentians, voting and non-voting, are welcome to attend. Please visit the website, [www.ssvp.on.ca](http://www.ssvp.on.ca) for registration and hotel info. There is also info on the website for items on annual reports, sharing of excess funds with higher councils and the important upcoming election for President of the National Council of Canada.

Blessings to you and your families as you work through your Lenten resolutions ending with the celebration of the Risen Lord at Easter. Have a Happy Easter.

***Ann Massel, President, Ontario Regional Council***

***"All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle". – Saint Francis of Assisi***

## **"Milestones in our History" (Individual)**

### **An Interview with Lorraine McGinnis, one of our PPC longest serving members. By Guido Kelly**

**1. How long have you been a Vincentian? and how much have you enjoyed this aspect of Vincentian work?** – About 23 years ago, I attended a volunteer fair that was held at our Church, here in Peterborough, at which time I saw a number of Vincentians standing together and there seemed to be a light calling me towards them. I felt that I was meant to be part of these great people. On my first home visit I was afraid and nervous of what this would be like. But the minute the interaction started I knew this was what I should be doing.

**2. Since being a Vincentian is a vocation, who or what motivated you to join the Society?** - At that volunteer fair, as I was looking around, this light seemed to light up around the SSVP display and I truly believe it was the Holy Spirit that called me that day to take on this mission. It was a calm warm feeling that came over me and has not left me since.



*Lorraine McGinnis*

**3. As Vincentians, we serve with "Love, Respect, Justice and Joy". Which of these motivates you the most? Why?** - It is not just one or two of these, it is the whole saying. We must treat others as you would want your family, your friends, or yourself to be treated. All of this comes from my grandfather who always treated people with no judgement. He was the one who taught us to love thy neighbour. He always spoke of this and displayed this action each day of his life.

**4. What leadership positions have you held with your Conference or Council? Of which are you most proud? Why?** I have done everything without a title. I helped organize our food bank, love making home visits, being present at every conference meeting. I am now the coordinator at the food pantry. Organized, purchased and made Christmas bags for our prisoners in our halfway houses. I offer my years of experience at every meeting. I mentor new members and encourage new volunteers.

**5. Drawing from your vast experiences over the years, what aspect continues to motivate you in your Vincentian work?** - As a Vincentian, I thrive on what I gain from each face to face meeting with our friends in need. If I feel like I have helped someone, even just a little bit, is what motivates me to continue. The time with other Vincentians and hearing of what they are doing, encourages me. I feel the need to help our neighbours.

**6. What advice do you wish to share with "new" as well as "not so new" Vincentians as they respond to the wide-ranging calls for their service?** –I would encourage all Vincentians to continue to develop their ability to listen. To listen to the trials and tribulations of those we serve and allow yourselves to be the person to which our friends can unload their problems, the person who will intently be in the moment with them. I would encourage new Vincentians to open their hearts and be determined to make that big difference in someone's life as they reach out to those in need.

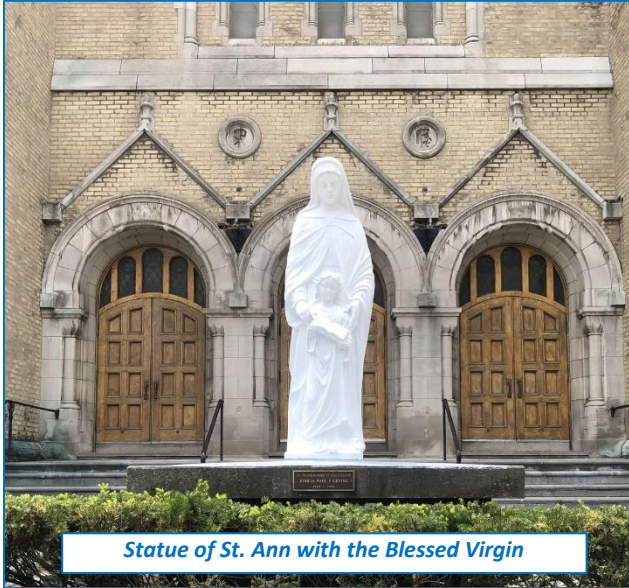


## St. Ann's Conference, Hamilton

### Celebrates

## 115 years of Continuous Service

The first Conference in the Diocese of Hamilton was founded in 1865 in the downtown area at what was then St. Mary's Cathedral. However, over the years this Conference folded. As the City of Hamilton grew and due to the huge influx of



*Statue of St. Ann with the Blessed Virgin*

workers from Poland, Italy and Ireland, St. Ann's Church was established as their spiritual home in 1906 and located just east of downtown. In 1907, the parishioners looked into how they could start helping the less fortunate and a SSVP Conference was started in 1908. As the original church was becoming too small for the parishioners, our present church was rebuilt in 2023. Our Conference just kept going in helping those in need. Even today, our Conference continues to take care of the needy, offering them both material assistance and spiritual encouragement. Over the years since 1908, we have helped countless families with the dependable assistance that they need in times of crisis in their lives. Our members continue to go out on Home Visits, a tradition that we maintain even though we cut these back during the Covid period. Our Conference still plays a vital spiritual and temporal role in the life of our parish. One highlight of the life in our Parish, is the annual 9 day Novena to St. Ann which runs from July 18<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>. Our church was given a first class relic of

St. Ann in 1907 and a large number of devotees have received special blessings from attending this novena. Our members assist with this event each year. Over the years, we have helped up to 1000 people in a year. Over the last 5 years, we have helped an average of 450 people per year. We give out Christmas hampers to over 100 families each year. One of our biggest fund-raisers is from parking fees during the Hamilton Tiger-Cats home games as



*Frances March  
with 25 year award*

the stadium is only a few blocks from our church parking lot. Members enjoy the exchange with our customers as many are very generous with tips. Personally, I have been a Vincentian for almost 30 years and get great satisfaction from helping those in need. We look ahead to celebrating our 115<sup>th</sup> anniversary this summer as our Conference marks a milestone as the oldest continuous serving Conference in Hamilton. We have reason to be proud of our accomplishments as our Conference takes pride in not only helping the less fortunate today but the thousands of men and women that we have helped over the span of 115 years. We continue to "Serve in Hope" as we put our Faith into Action while tending His flock and walking in His shoes. We pray that our Conference continues to serve those in need for a longtime.



*View of the altar at St. Ann's church*

*Frances March, President, St. Ann's Conference, Hamilton*

## St. Peter-in-Chains Conference, Peterborough

### Celebrates

### 137 years of its Aggregation

The first Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Conference established in the Peterborough area and Diocese was at the St. Peter-in-Chains Parish Church. The St. Peter-in-Chains conference was then aggregated on March 22, 1886. This became the first Conference in the Peterborough area and diocese. The dream of building St. Peter-In-Chains began in August of 1825/1826, nearly 200 years ago, when Peter Robinson brought a group of poor Catholic immigrants from Ireland to the promised land of Canada. Forcing their way through seemingly impenetrable virgin forests, the people claimed their 100 acres of free land in “Peterborough” to realize the dream of a new life. In 1882, the first Bishop of the new Diocese of Peterborough, Jean-Francois Jamot, named St. Peter-In-Chains to be his Cathedral, the Mother Church of the Catholic faithful in the Diocese of Peterborough. At this same point the Society was also, started by a group of members who followed these words: *“Help honours when, to the bread that nourishes, it adds the visit that consoles, the advice that enlightens, the friendly shake of the hand that lifts up sinking courage when it treats the poor man with respect, not only as an equal but as a superior, since he is suffering that which we would perhaps not be able to bear ourselves; since he is among us as the messenger of God, sent to put our justice and charity to the test, and to save us by our works.”*



*St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral, Peterborough*

*(Frédéric Ozanam, from an article in L'Ère nouvelle, October 21, 1848.)*

There was one person in this conference that set forth the road we depend on heavily, even to this day. Without the determination of this person, we would not have been able to hand out free clothing. She had the determination to open our first thrift store. Lola Cain fought hard against the conference to get a small thrift store opened. She talked about the men of the conference not believing in this and fighting her every step of the way. She did most of the work by herself. She suffered many frustrations along her journey of opening the first SSVP store in Peterborough. Lola is and was a pioneer and we are forever grateful for her tenacity and perseverance while always thinking of the greater good. Thanks to this ground-breaking lady, Peterborough now has three (3) Vinnies Feel Good Shopping stores. These stores help with many different aspects of our mission. We ran a mattress program to make sure every head had a bed. This would not have been possible without the stubborn determination of this Vincentian.

The St. Peter-in-Chains Conference has thrived since its inception and continues to contribute to the Particular Council of Peterborough. Our members look forward to our 150 year celebration.

*Frank Drumm, President, St. Peter-in-Chains Conference*



*Looking at the main altar and backdrop at St. Peter*



## **St John Chrysostom/St Elizabeth Seton Conference** **Newmarket**

Our SSVP Conference is an amalgamation of two parishes consisting of St. John Chrysostom and St. Elizabeth Seton Parishes that service the Newmarket (pop. 88,000) and East Gwillimbury (pop. 36,000) areas. We aim to respond where possible to the numerous requests for assistance that come to us from the families and individuals in need that reside within both parishes. We supply these friends with “Grocery Food Cards” (Food Basics/Metro), which allows them to obtain items that they require. In 2022, we distributed food cards with a total value of \$58,430 to 288 different families and people in need. We also distribute a “Good Food Box” from the York Region Food Network: a monthly package of fresh vegetables and fruit valued at \$15. In 2022, we sponsored 884 of these Good Food Boxes. Families and/or individuals are monitored and may only request help once every 3 months - \$20 per family member plus \$60 for the household. These amounts are what we have calculated and allow us to run this program and stay within our resources. As with a lot of fellow SSVP Conferences due to Covid-19, at Christmas 2022, we were all grateful to return to our tradition of selecting stars from the “Giving Tree” and bringing gifts to seniors and the home-bound in need. This is a joint venture involving volunteers from our two parishes and our SSVP Conference. Also, due to the great response from our congregations, our SSVP Christmas Program enabled us to donate to families in need to buy food for a festive meal at Christmas. We were able to hand out gifts to 284 children. The total cash value donated to the Christmas program was \$38,553, and this enabled us to provide Christmas cheer for approximately 800 people: seniors, people who are home-bound, and families, including families in shelters. We also budget for what we refer to as our “Special Needs” category. When families find themselves in a “crunch” and need a leg up or a helping hand to keep their



*Altar Cross at St. John Chrysostom*

home (for example) or to have a decent bed for a senior with a health condition. We have a budget of \$500 per month to help one or two such families or individuals at a time. In 2021, we got involved with the “North of 60” program. This is an initiative to collect basic food stuff for the people of Sanirajak, an Arctic community in Nunavut. With the monies collected, we buy in bulk to fill a container, that is then shipped from Montreal direct to Sanirajak on the shores of the Northwestern Passages, between Baffin Bay and Hudson Bay. In 2022, we collected \$22,201 towards this program. Overall, our Vincentians, all volunteers, who see their work as a ministry to the Body of Christ, spent just shy of 3,500 hours ensuring that the donations made by our congregations went to the people who needed assistance, especially food assistance. Combined, our congregations donated \$113,035 toward the work of our parishes’ SSVP Conference in 2022. We wish to say a huge THANK YOU to the parishioners of the parishes of St John Chrysostom and St Elizabeth Seton for your continued encouragement and financial support.



*St. Elizabeth Seton statue  
by Timothy Schmalz in church foyer*

***Terry McCann, President, St. John Chrysostom/St. Elizabeth Seton Conference***



## **ONRC Rejuvenation Team**

### **– Refreshing our Conferences**

Active recruitment is necessary to ensure Conferences and Councils thrive. Is your Conference and/or Council an energetic, passionate and vibrant group that people will be drawn to and want to join? By nature and as humans, we gravitate toward teams and groups where we achieve the most gratification in working together for a common goal. As Vincentians, our common goal is by going forth to help the less fortunate as they struggle to make ends meet. As we motor along this path, which can be long, winding and even arduous, we must refuel and refresh ourselves to attain our goal. You may ask, "how do we refuel and refresh our Conference and its members?"



Our Ontario Regional Council (ONRC) has a Rejuvenation Team within our ranks that has been devoted to providing the support to Conferences and Councils who need some refreshing as well as in recruiting new members. Rejuvenation requires a framework to build and maintain strong teams and welcome new members. Have you heard the term "Recruit, engage, train, retain"? Recruitment involves these 4 key points. Our ONRC Rejuvenation Team has supplied the insight on ways to recruit and engage new members, as well as what is involved with

training and retaining your members. Our motto is "ABR – Always be recruiting!" Learn how to create the multiplier effect where each member is active in inviting and welcoming in new members, who in turn will welcome in more new members. By renewing and rejuvenating Conferences and Councils, we will have attractive and active Conferences and Councils. It is important to be the energy you want to attract. Our ONRC Rejuvenation Team recently presented a Rejuvenation and Recruitment Workshop in Niagara Falls with 20 attendees from St. Catharines, Welland and Niagara Falls. We received great feedback on the presentation, and they will now create a Cross Conference Rejuvenation Team with members from their Conferences who will carry out actions to achieve vibrant and strong Conferences and teams. They will continue to receive support from our ONRC Rejuvenation Team as they take their next steps forward.

Our COMMITMENT is to help you to create the PASSION which will be used to generate the ways and means for your RECRUITMENT program followed by the ENGAGEMENT of those you recruit to join with ACTIVE SERVICE in becoming gratified Vincentians.

Please reach out to Dan Lohin, Chair of our ONRC Rejuvenation Team, at [danyl@ssvp.on.ca](mailto:danyl@ssvp.on.ca) should your Conference or Council be interested in

hearing more about how we can support you with rejuvenation and recruitment. Feel free to share this article with your Vincentian friends who would benefit from receiving support from our ONRC Rejuvenation Team.



*Dan Lohin,  
Chair, ONRC Rejuvenation Team*

***"Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you  
without leaving happier". - St. Teresa of Calcutta***

## **"Clothing the Naked" (Store related activities)**

### **London Councils support two (2) Stores.**

In London, we run two (2) St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Stores. It has been an honour and privilege to join this Thrift Store system when I was hired as the Stores Manager six years ago. Through the dedication of our



*Volunteer Cathy sorting at the Elias Street Store.*

staff and volunteers, we have grown in all areas of sales, the number of clients, the volume of merchandise that we handle and the projects which help us to keep a satisfied clientele. Our volunteers and staff are committed to serving our community and fulfilling our Mission *"to live the Gospel message and see Christ in anyone who suffers"*. It is due to this dedication and the assistance that they display that we have experienced our success. We have received many compliments as well as notes and thoughts of gratitude for our staff and volunteers alike. In addition to handling the numerous requests from Conferences who continuously reach out in helping those in need, we also work closely with the City of London supplying new beds to their clients. This is an expense paid for by the City of London, however, they are extremely pleased that we are able to offer and deliver these beds directly to their clients at a very reasonable price. Assisting the community in these areas of need expresses pride for all involved in making lives a little better. The efforts put forth by our many dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers, who give of their time and talents, have made a huge difference and we could not manage



*"Cover me with Love"- choosing warm clothing.*

without their commitment and expertise. Our youth volunteers from the schools also lend their talents and enthusiasm when needed. We work with the team "Cover Me with Love" and they dedicate their time offering warm clothing to those in need. Another group, "519 Pursuit" is new and works with our team sorting needed clothing and blankets to distribute to those who need to keep warm, and many are without homes. This is a great initiative that we are proud to help sponsor. We also belong to the "Living Wage" organization being sure we offer a decent wage and a good place of

employment for all. We now have a great online presence, with 2266 followers on Facebook and 674 on Instagram. One of our staff, Lori, is responsible for this area. She has watched these media platforms grow and our customers know that they can purchase all items using e-transfers. Both of our stores are very busy, and I take pride in supplying the encouragement required to keep the motivation running. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul "Thrift Store" system is a great place to work. The volunteers, staff and I work together to ensure that our Stores make a difference in the community.



*Furniture priced for sale at the York Street Store.*

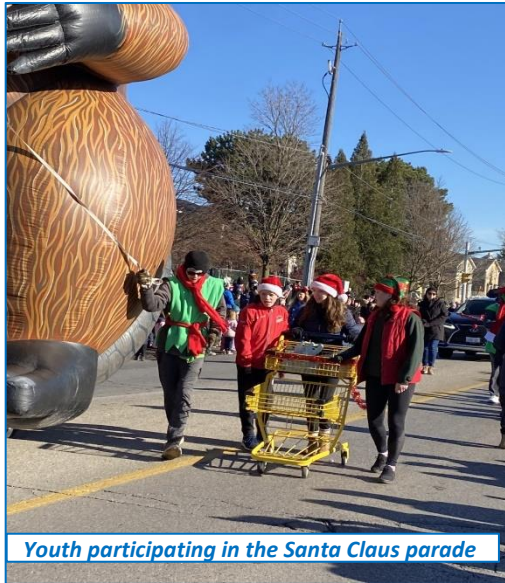
***Judy Mepsted, Manager, London SSVP Thrift Stores***



## **SSVP – Celebrating our Youth**

### **Saint Louise de Marillac Youth Conference – Fall Activities**

Our Saint Louise de Marillac Youth Conference based in London has been very busy during the months of August to December 2022. Our Executive team met at the end of August for a Team building day. This created a comfort level for our new Executive members to "get-to-know" each other. We shared Social



**Youth participating in the Santa Claus parade**

Justice issues throughout the entire day and got lots of ideas and opinions in setting goals for the year. One hope is to hold a SSVP Youth Retreat this spring and cover Social Justice topic in a round table format. Topics as Bee sustainability, clean water and other Indigenous Issues...etc. The youth along with the adult advisers made lunch together...Great feed and team building! Followed by creating/forming Bee Bombs for our Social Justice issue of Bee sustainability. We will be selling these Bee bombs this early spring to fund our Bee Pollination Garden project. We shared dinner and then did a Paint Night event outside, and finally we had a bon fire to end our Team Build Day. We welcomed the start of the new school year of 2022-2023. This usually entails the training of new members and in late September, we welcomed 16 new young people to our team. In November we had the cleaning of the "Last Post" (Impoverished Veterans' graves before Remembrance Day), joined in the Hyde Park Lion's Santa Claus parade and

we held our "On the Street Event" (handed out foodstuffs to our friends in need) and did some Christmas Caroling at the SSVP Thrift Store on York Street, London. During our Caroling event, we handed out Christmas Stockings (filled with goodies) to 75 of our friends. We are hoping to increase the handouts next Christmas as this was our first Caroling event ever. We visited St. Joe's Soup Kitchen and handed out 200 bagged lunches that we made. We also held a Winter Socks and Gloves collection for our brothers and sisters at our home parish of Holy Family.

***On another note, Our Youth Conference is seeking your help!*** We are planning on sending 4 youth and 2 adult advisers to World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal from August 1-6, 2023 with the FAMVIN group. We intend to host a fundraiser to help with the costs so that our Youth may experience interacting with the youth from other countries. If any conference or council wishes to donate funds to our cause, our team would be truly grateful! Please pray for our Youth Team's success in raising the funds for this very worthy cause.



**Youth members and friends at "Street Event"**

***Lil Mulder, Adviser, Saint Louise de Marillac Youth Conference***

***Praise and bless my Lord, give thanks and serve him with great humility.***

**– St. Francis of Assisi**

## **"The Gains from North of Sixty"**

**Chesterfield Inlet:** Hello Spring! I am truly excited to be reaching out to you. Last fall, I took a trip North of 60 to visit our friends at Chesterfield Inlet, especially Sr. Dorica. Overall, North of 60 has returned to its pre-Covid self .... Plus 1 !! What does that mean? you may ask. It means that we are now embracing eleven (11) communities in Summer 2022. A huge increase from the 4 communities of 2021. This past



**At Chesterfield Inlet unloading Seacan**

summer, for some communities it was *continued support*, for others, it is *renewed support*, and the new addition was Sanirajak ( Halls Beach) which has been adopted by the St. John Chrysostom /St Elizabeth Seton Conference of the Newmarket and East Gwillimbury areas. All government assistance received across Nunavut from the pandemic came to an abrupt stop. Our renewed connection through the gift of food is deeply needed. This fall I visited 3 communities spending most of my time in Chesterfield Inlet with Sister Dorica. (She is the second from the right in the photo to the left). I felt like I was on a road show being welcomed at the grocery store, community centre, a speaker at the school, the

radio station, their government offices and family meals - such immense gratitude. And that love was poured out to me in Rankin Inlet and Naujaat as well. Summer 2023 will soon be upon us. A number of Conferences/Councils are busily planning their adventure of gathering food items, building skids, and getting ready to load a sea container. This also entails the procuring of sea containers, timing deliveries, and booking the marine passages to all our northern families. For Summer 2023, we have an **urgent** request from the community of Baker Lake. They reached out to me during my visit in the fall. They have a population of just over 2,000 and the average age is 22. They are seeking our help knowing they are not adopted. Baker Lake is hoping to receive at least one seacan of food purchased through *donations* shared by you and sent to North of 60 Project. There is much to do, and I will keep you informed as we proceed along our journey. Below please see a comparison chart for our coming year.

Here is a list of the communities that we now support and their sponsors: Whale Cove by St. Raphael Conference; Rankin Inlet by Ottawa PC; Naujaat by St. Catharines C.C.; Chesterfield Inlet by Kitchener PC; Coral Harbour by Halton P C; Sanirajak by St John Chrysostom/St. Elizabeth Seton Conf.; Gjoa Haven by Windsor Essex P.C.; Kugaaruk by Peel PC; Taloyak by St. Patrick's Conference; Arviat by Peterborough PC and Baker Lake by Ontario Vincentians. May Our Lord continue to Bless you and keep you well, Our thanks to all donators and packers of the Containers that were shipped in Summer 2022. GREAT JOB!!!!



**View of Chesterfield Bay from the Mission House**

**Pegg Leroux, Chair, ONRC North of Sixty Committee**

# **Feeding the Hungry in Bowmanville**

## **at our "Food Pantry"**

### **by St. Joseph's Conference**

Our pantry in Bowmanville has been at St. Joseph's Church for 37 years. It started by using an 8 x 8 room and just a few clients each month. As we continued to grow, St. Joseph's Church has given us more space



which includes the workshop and back basement area. Our pantry now serves over 110 families each month and we now use the Church Hall to serve our clients. We were able to stay open during the Covid period. We serve anyone who lives in Bowmanville, and the person does not have to be a member of our parish to receive help. Our food bank is open Wednesday mornings and Thursday evenings. In some cases, we also offer delivery to those who need it. We offer family and/or single sized baskets along with client's choice of other staples such as tea or coffee, and cold or hot cereal. We allow our clients to pack what they want out of this basket so

as to make sure they are bringing home food they will eat. When in stock, we offer toiletry and hygiene items as well as frozen foods and produce along with grocery vouchers. During Covid, a grant allowed us to purchase two new freezers to add to our own industrial fridge. This gave us a larger capacity to store milk, eggs and bread. We are blessed with a generous Bowmanville community which supports us each month with food and financial donations. Donations come from the local schools, individuals, and businesses as well as Church groups to name a few. Through these financial donations, our food bank is able to offer special programs such as assistance with eyeglasses, utility costs, gas cards, clothing and furniture vouchers as well as prescription assistance to name a few. In 2022, we handed out 150 Christmas Hampers consisting of two boxes of food along with a turkey and other goodies needed for a Christmas dinner. Clients come in to shop for toys for their children and what makes our Hamper program special is that each adult can also pick out a gift, for many single adults this may be the only gift they receive at Christmas. In 2022, we had 1377 visits and served 1902 adults and 1364 children. As the volunteer Manager of St. Joseph's Food Bank for over ten years, I feel blessed to be with over 50 volunteers who help to keep our food bank open; not all are Vincentians, but everyone gives of themselves to help others as we all continue to serve our Neighbors in Need in the Bowmanville community. We are on Facebook. Website is: [ssvppantry.wixsite.com/my-site](https://ssvppantry.wixsite.com/my-site)



***Christine Boyd, Food Bank Manager, St. Joseph's Conference, Bowmanville***



**“Social Justice Gains” (Highlighting one of these areas)**



**PUBLIC POLICY DIALOGUE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**CHARITY & JUSTICE FOR ALL**

Based on the quick reactions via social media outlets to the many injustices and the outcry for change, we find ourselves now turning towards what could be termed a New Social Justice model, one which emphasizes the inseparable relationship between Charity & Justice. This new model, which is likely an old one, goes back to Frederic Ozanam in the early beginnings of our Society. Moving from a Transactional approach to one that is Relational and relies on our Personal engagement with our neighbours in need. Ozanam displayed this Relational and very Personal format from the early days of the Society in Paris. While we now have several ways we engage with our neighbours in need, there remains the opportunity to make these engagements more meaningful to both the Vincentian and the person(s) we encounter and interact with each other during our visits.

I have been involved in social justice efforts for over 20 years now at the SSVP Ontario Regional, SSVP National and North American Vincentian family levels and feel that we must embrace this new model. While we have a great and very dedicated number of members who act as social justice reps at various levels, there remains a struggle to make this topic more relevant to our grass roots conference membership. In addition, social justice has been mainly a top-down model which often fails to allow for your comments and suggestions. Finally, SSVP has often failed in our commitment to giving the voiceless a voice.

Another key element of a New Social Justice model includes Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) in our own organization as well as those we serve. We must find ways to encourage the many faces, cultures and customs in our society to feel accepted as members of the SSVP. By so doing, we can then really relate to the faces of those we serve and have them trust us so that we in turn may fully understand poverty and injustice from their perspective. I would encourage all levels of our organization to develop ways to address DEI. Our Public Policy Dialogue & Development Committee and our Multi-Cultural Diversity Committee(MCDC) can both help. Finally, let us not forget the Indigenous Peoples of our region, whether living on a First Nations community or in an urban centre. The SSVP must continue to advocate and press for systemic changes that can improve the lives of our Indigenous sisters and brothers.

***Jim Paddon, Chair,  
Public Policy Dialogue & Development Committee  
ONRC Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP)***

***Contemplation is nothing else but a secret, peaceful and loving infusion of God which, if admitted, will set the soul on fire with the spirit of love - St. John of the Cross***

## **“Sharing our Wealth” (TWINNING)**

### **St. Justin Martyr Conference in Markham, ON. is twinned with St. Lucy Conference, St. Lucia**

We have twelve dedicated members that volunteer in our Conference and are in the process of recruiting more. The generosity of our parishioners brings hope to our neighbours in need. We were able to distribute gift cards to these families to assist them in purchasing school supplies. At Christmas time, we distribute gift cards to the families, so that they may experience the joy of the season. Twice a year, we conduct bundle up weekends, where we collect gently used clothing. The collection is popular and a successful activity at our parish. We were able to fill the container both times. By far, our greatest elation comes from the true pleasure and joy that we experience whenever we receive correspondence from St. Lucia. We love supporting our twin, St. Lucy Conference, St. Lucia. Here are some of their accomplishments associated with the funds that we send them.

**The St. Lucy Conference report:** We organize an annual Senior Citizenship Retreat, where there are usually well over 100 people in attendance. We also held a “Single Mothers” Workshop, which was well attended, under the theme, “How to cope with these uncertain times”. This event turned out to be a tremendous success. The awareness brought about by three esteemed and charismatic facilitators to the single mothers were very relatable, practical and easy to follow as there was great interaction between the facilitators and the young single Moms as they applied the Spiritual, Financial and Social lessons taught in their everyday lives. The feedback received from the participants reflects that this initiative was quite timely, insightful and informative and we received many requests for continued efforts towards conducting similar ventures in the future.



*Members of St. Lucy Conference with their Pastor*

contributions and support from our twin in Canada, the St. Justin Martyr Conference in Markham, ON. These funds continuously help with a number of other projects. One of these projects was our ability to provide various school supplies to forty (40) students of different school levels in Pre-Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary (High) School. The items supplied were all school and grade appropriate and was accomplished in time for their new academic year. In addition, twenty-five (25) of the forty (40) students that were being helped, were privileged to also receive school bags. The appreciation that was shown by these students, who could not afford to purchase these supplies, was worth the effort that our group made in arranging these “gifts” as these students were starting their school year.

In collaboration with Massey Stores (St. Lucia) Ltd., we were able to supply 100 individuals with “full” Christmas hampers. Christmas treats that were distributed to these poor in the community consisted of food, drinks, ice-cream and cake.



*Members of the SSVP St. Lucy Conference*

***Yvonne Hoogeveen, President, St. Justin Martyr Conference, Markham, ON***

***Those whose hearts are pure are temples of the Holy Spirit - St. Lucy***

## *“NOT to be FORGOTTEN” and “Wrap-up”*



**Lest we forget our brothers and sisters who served His people, please keep them in your prayers....**

**Terry Cassidy, St. James Minor Conference, Belleville. January 15, 2023**

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### **UPCOMING DATES TO CIRCLE ON YOUR CALENDAR**

**April 21/22, 2023** – ONRC AGA in Kitchener. ALL members are welcome to attend. “Meet and Greet” on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> (6:30p.m. – 9:00 p.m.) with the Workshops (9:15 a.m. start) and AGA to follow on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>. Go to our website: [www.ssvp.on.ca](http://www.ssvp.on.ca) for more info and the Registration Form.

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### **ONRC – SEEKING YOUR HELP**

Our Regional Council is seeking your help/assistance. **The position of ONRC Treasurer needs to be filled.** And looking for a **“webmaster-in-training”**. Webmaster John will train you before he retires.(E-mail is below)

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**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE:** This Committee has revised the format of the ***Vincentimes***. The object is to be more inclusive in reporting the many SSVp happenings across our Region. The stories in this edition originated from Bowmanville, Chesterfield Inlet (Nunavut), Hamilton, Markham/St. Lucia, W.I., London, Newmarket and Peterborough as we attempt to bring our Vincentians together as a family, which is one of our VALUES. HAPPY READING as we share in each other’s accomplishments. Feedback is welcome.

PLEASE crank up the enthusiasm and get your Conference included by putting your pen to paper. You may submit your stories for inclusion in our ***Vincentimes*** to Shelley at [shelleyssvp@gmail.com](mailto:shelleyssvp@gmail.com)

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## **SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**MISSION:** The 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 our Society 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.

**VISIT our website:** [www.ssvp.on.ca](http://www.ssvp.on.ca)

**Email us at:** [info@ssvp.on.ca](mailto:info@ssvp.on.ca)

