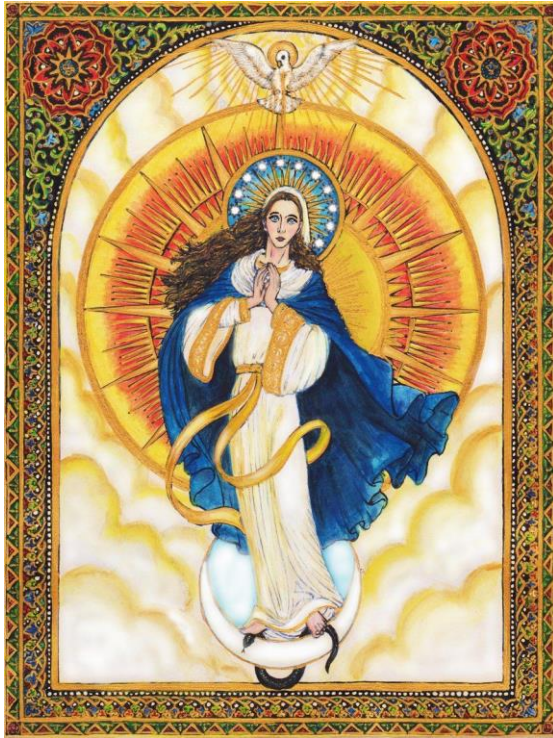




“Inspirations from our Founders and Patrons”

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul *Honors the Virgin Mary who cares for us daily*

One of the titles of the Blessed Virgin Mary is “The Immaculate Conception”. This comes from the Church teaching that Mary was born without the stain of original sin. In this way God prepared Mary to be the perfect



woman to bear Jesus our Redeemer. Through her “yes” and the action of the Holy Spirit, she became the Mother of God. Through Christ’s words from the cross she also became our mother. The Mother of God devoted her whole life to our Lord. She is constantly in His presence and wants us to share her love and dedication for her Son. As our mother, she wants the same for us and helps us each day to grow closer to Him. Mary teaches us about inner silence. She is silent and humble, bound to God alone and committed to fulfilling His will. Mary intercedes on our behalf. As we recite our rosaries we constantly repeat: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.” This humble prayer makes us desire salvation and gradually opens our hearts to the light of the Holy Spirit. Mary is our shield, and she turns us to Jesus. Mary is a Mother in many ways. Saint Therese said, “it is true that Our Lady is Queen of Heaven and earth, but at the same time she is more Mother than Queen”. As Mother, she cares for us in so many ways: She gives life and prays for us so that we will attain grace beginning with our Baptism. She prays for us and nurtures our Spiritual Life. Mary prays for us that we will always be clothed with the garment of grace. She has her careful, attentive, and watchful

eye gazing upon us with love, and she warns us, through grace and inspirations, of the dangers that encroach upon us. As Our Lady of Fatima, she teaches us about how to arrive at what is most important - our eternal salvation. Mary heals us when we are wounded. She listens to us and responds to our problems and our needs. We should get in the habit of talking to Mary as often as our heart desires. Mary, as Mother, encourages us to intensify our prayer life, to be willing to live a more sacrificial life, and to strive to live a life of greater purity. As Our Lady of Consolation, when we are faced with trials, tribulations and afflictions, she ardently desires to comfort us. With Mother Mary, the love of her most pure and Immaculate Heart never wanes, diminishes, or grows cold. It is a constant, intense, and faithful love. We are to hope and pray that, starting now, we will experience the extraordinary power of the presence of Mary in our lives, irrespective of where we are, what we have done and what we have failed to do. When we wander as sheep from the fold, Mary, as Mother of the Good Shepherd and aware of dangers we face, will guide us back to the fold. In the midst of the sorrows and failures of life, Mary is always there giving us hope. She loves us intensely and desires that one day we will be with her forever in heaven. *Deacon John Girolami, ONRC Spiritual Advisor*

“From the President’s Corner”

President’s Message

Greetings Sister and Brother Vincentians,

Finally, after a lengthy hiatus due to numerous restrictions on large gatherings due to the Covid-19 outbreak, with the help of the Kitchener-Waterloo Particular Council and a number of its Conferences which hosted, we were able to enjoy a most successful 2023 ONRC AGA at St. Michael’s Church Hall in Waterloo. A number of the ONRC Committees held meetings with their members on Friday April 21. This was followed by a meet and greet session which was attended by approx. 40 members from across our Region. The session was a noisy one as some long overdue chatter, laughter, and hugs filled the room. The hosts, St Michael’s Conference offered charcuterie boards, fruits, several cheeses, beverages and even a crockpot of pulled pork that was all made by fellow K-W Vincentians for their sisters and brothers, who devoured every “last” morsel. My thanks to the hosts for their exuberance and hard work



with their presentation. The session on Saturday morning began at 8:30 with registrations and I had the opportunity to welcome the 55 Vincentians that were present before they were off to attend the workshops that were offered: “Rejuvenation & Recruitment”, “Food Waste”, “Basic Income”, “Governance”, “Diversity & Inclusion” as well as “Seeds of Hope”. Vincentians were able to attend any two (2) of their choice. My thanks to all the workshop presenters for their hard work in keeping all the attendees informed on their subject. Once the workshops ended, they were followed by lunch with the customary chatter and laughter with another delicious serving of foodstuffs provided by the hosts. The afternoon session started with Deacon John Girolami presenting the keynote address. After another short “stretch your legs” break, we got down to the business part of the meeting being the Annual General Assembly which was live streamed and included several participants in a “Zoom” session which led to a lot of lively discussions. All participants, both “in person” and on

“Zoom”, contributed to the success of this business part of the event. The “Joy” that was displayed by all attendees was one of the highlights of the event. This “FACE-to-FACE” session showed that the enthusiasm when Vincentians get together is second to none. Again, my thanks to the Kitchener-Waterloo Particular Council and especially Pegg Leroux for an outstanding job of hosting the event. We are aiming to hold other “Face-to Face” sessions in the fall and spring. We will notify you of further developments about these sessions as they unfold. My special thanks to all who attended in person as this did go a long way in contributing to the success of the event.

As we welcome our Saviour at this time of year, allow me to wish you, one and all, a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2024

Ann Massel
President, Ontario Regional Council

“ Do not fear what may happen tomorrow. The same loving Father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and every day”.

– St. Francis de Sales

"Milestones in our History" (Individual)

An Interview with Jim Paddon, one of our 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?** – I first joined in 1970 when I resided in Chatham. I have enjoyed being a Vincentian as it allows me the opportunity to gain a sense of what living in poverty is about as well as understanding the human element of those less fortunate than myself as they struggle to make ends meet.
- 2. Since being a Vincentian is a vocation, who or what motivated you to join the Society?** – I did not become a Catholic until I was an adult. However, once I was baptized into the faith, I began looking for a way to live my faith. I knew a couple members of the SSVP Conference at the church I attended, and they asked whether I would like to join the Conference. I accepted and the rest is history.
- 3. As Vincentians, we serve with "Love, Respect, Justice and Joy". Which of these motivates you the most? Why?** "Respect", as in the terms of our respecting those we serve means the world to me. Also, "Justice" as it is important for us to always seek to find justice for anyone experiencing the barriers that they may face due to lack of education, health, gender or racial bias.
- 4. What leadership positions have you held with your Conference or Council? Of which are you most proud? Why?** I have held the positions of Conference President, ONRC Vice-President, ONRC President and ONRC Past President. I have also been the Chair for Social Justice at both the National and ONRC levels. I am equally proud of each position because of the many great members who have supported my efforts. In particular it would be our social justice efforts because we have the opportunity to address unjust structures and beliefs that tend to keep many people living in poverty.
- 5. Drawing from your vast experiences over the years, what aspect continues to motivate you in your Vincentian work?** - Social justice with an emphasis on systemic racism and Indigenous reconciliation. There is strong evidence of the direct relationship that systemic racism has on people of colour and poverty. In addition, many organizations and corporations have recognized the need to become more diverse in their leadership positions and membership as a means to demonstrate their support for an end to systemic racism. SSVP is no different and in fact, may have an even greater obligation to address the issue of diversity internally and externally. How can we begin to look more like those we serve? Canada struggles with Indigenous reconciliation. SSVP, as a Catholic organization, should be a leading voice for reconciliation.



Jim Paddon

- 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?** – Please remember being a Vincentian must include both charity and justice. They are our two inseparable characteristics. Be open to change, always respect our fellow members and their views and learn from our neighbours in need by finding ways to engage with them, listen and learn from their stories.

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

St. Matthew Conference, Oakville

Celebrates its 20th Anniversary

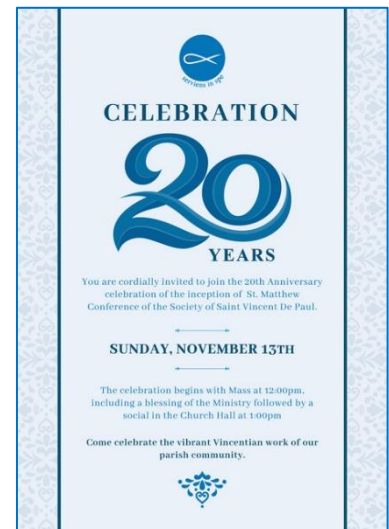
St Matthew Conference began its work back in 2002 and was aggregated in 2007. Our team has grown to 56 members strong who share their time and talents in a myriad of ways. While we enjoyed our 20th anniversary last year, over the period since our Conference started, word of our outreach continues to be passed from neighbour to neighbour. At present, we serve over 181 families comprised of single moms and their children, seniors, persons with precarious health and limited mobility, newcomers to Canada, and low-income working families. While our neighbourhood is most famously known as the home of the historic Glen Abbey Golf Course and suburban life in our parish boundaries appears to speak of wealth and economic privilege. What is less well understood about our community is the poverty, hidden



from view. Built in the 1980's, our area included purpose-built affordable housing as part of the development plan. Most of the neighbours that we serve reside in apartment units, townhouse complexes, some buildings operate as co-operatives and most units are rent-geared-to-income. We also serve larger families in rental homes who pay market rent. The fact is that the poverty rate in Oakville is the highest in all of Halton Region (Community Development Halton Income Equality and Poverty Report 2023). We see that statistic play out over and over again when we talk with our neighbours. Our Parish was founded in 1988 and celebrates 35 years this year. Support for our families begins with the home visit and we also reciprocate by inviting our neighbours to our home, the church, to collect fresh fruit and

vegetables each month. Those with limited mobility receive a home delivery. This event creates a wonderful opportunity to enhance our respectful, compassionate relationships, share vital community resources, offer a healthy snack, have a chat, a laugh, and sometimes even a cry. In the summer months, with other local faith groups, members of our team cohost a weekly neighbourhood BBQ at one of the apartment complexes, serving over 200 people. The families are incredibly appreciative of this chance to enjoy a meal outdoors, to socialize with their neighbours and to let their children play together. Other initiatives include supplying refurbished laptops for high school students, the purchases of new mattresses and baby gear, covering of some emergency dental and medical fees and distributing Christmas assistance. We have fostered deep relationships with our neighbours; we have helped them seek justice through our connections with community legal clinics and by advocating with government agencies when needed. Our conference informs parents about the Canada Learning Bond and Healthy Smiles Ontario so that their children will benefit from these government initiatives. We keep a close eye on our vulnerable seniors to ensure they do not fall through the cracks of the social assistance network. Our Conference is especially fortunate to be reinforced by parishioners who truly believe in the mission of SSVP; their generous donations ensure that we can help our neighbours in these diverse ways. The Catholic schools in our parish strongly support SSVP through fundraisers, toiletry drives and the creations of beautiful artwork that we share with neighbours. Collaboration with our Oakville outreach partners ensures that we are working together without replicating services. Our outreach also involves twinning as we are twinned with Our Lady of Fatima Conference in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. Our call to service is a daily gift. We feel blessed to share with our neighbours in so many ways.

Jennifer Monte, President, St. Matthew Conference, Oakville



Corpus Christi Conference, Thunder Bay

Celebrates

35 years of its Formation

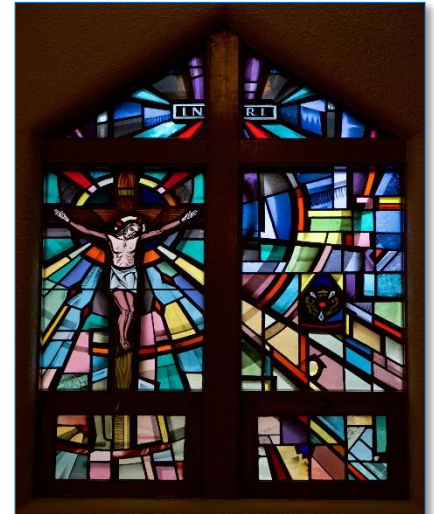
Corpus Christi Church and Rectory were built in 1951 to help solve a growing congestion problem at the beautiful St. Andrew's Church. The first pastor was Reverend Regis St. James, the Dean for the Catholic community of Thunder Bay, at a time when this city was structured under the Diocese of Sault Ste.



Corpus Christi Church

Marie. This affiliation lasted until 1952, when the Diocese of Fort William (now Thunder Bay) was established. With their “reachout” of, ***“if you are seeking a church home, we gladly welcome you to join our faith family of Corpus Christi. Taking our name from the Eucharist, we are a vibrant community which seeks to become what we receive, the Body of Christ in our corner of the world”***, they continue to invite and welcome new members. Their SSVP Conference was established in 1987 and first operated a food bank from the narthex of the Church. However, in 2017, the Conference had a change in focus and committed to offering monetary assistance to needy Catholic Schools in the North Ward of the city to provide food for students who would otherwise be coming to school

hungry. Expansion to needy schools in the South Ward of the city began in the fall 2021. Assistance has also been provided to local organizations that support the needy. Our volunteers participated in the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Breakfast at St. Margaret School, and we subsequently volunteered for two pasta lunches, a parfait treat of yogurt and granola as well as a chicken finger, veggie and fruit lunch and finally a grilled cheese, veggie and fruit lunch. The students and staff were very grateful for our participation, and we look forward to working with them again at the end of November for the next lunch. Operating funds are



Stained Glass at the Church

received from special collections at Corpus Christi Church (envelopes and via E transfer), personal donations and bequeaths. We are currently supporting seven local elementary and intermediate Catholic schools on the North and South Sides of Thunder Bay and thus are serving approximately 1,000 students in the city. SSVP pays a defined allocation per school to the supplier of their food products. In the past, we participated in an E Card program with the local Correctional Centre. We provided 67 Christmas Books that inmates were to read to their children. The Centre recorded the readings and submitted them to the families on a memory stick. We have donated to other charities in the city whose mandate meets our guidelines such as the Underground Gym which keeps youth off the streets. We strive to increase our visibility in the community through social media and in church bulletins through other parishes in the city. We provide an annual bursary to a successful applicant graduating from high school who is pursuing a course of study in social welfare.



MJ Kurm preparing boxes

Karen St Pierre/Mary Jane Kurm – Co-Chairs, Corpus Christi Conference

Saint Mary Immaculate Conference

Richmond Hill

The original Church of Saint Mary Immaculate (SMI) goes back to 1857. The new Church, located at 10295 Yonge Street in Richmond Hill, Ontario, was constructed over a two-year period between 1966 and 1968. It was built to accommodate the growing congregation. At the time, there were between 300 and 400 families. Today, it serves over 7,000 families. Since the installation of SMI Conference of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul at our Parish in 2007, we have evolved both locally and globally throughout our community engagements that allow us to flourish to our greatest capacity to live the Gospel message of serving Christ in the Poor with love, respect, justice, and joy. Our Conference networks with

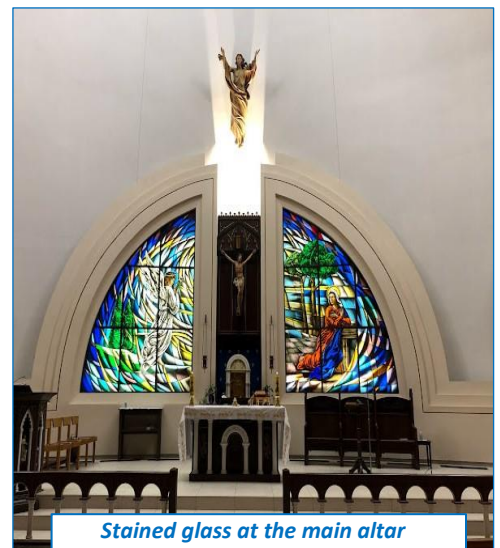


Saint Mary Immaculate Church

other organizations that share a similar vision, such as the Ontario Disability Support Program, York Region on A Limited Budget, The Salvation Army and Out of the Cold in which we were able to collaborate to hold special events, namely our Walk Against Poverty. The Holy Spirit is always present to guide us when we assist our Friends in Need throughout the year. Our Annual Christmas Luncheon and Gift Distribution for approximately 250 people, Winter Coat Drives, Summer Camp Registrations, Bundle Up Weekends, Special Collections, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinners, Barbeque, participation in the Pencil Case Project, Social Justice/North of 60 Initiatives, Lenten Soup Fridays where we take turns with other groups at our Church in preparing soup for a donation which goes to the poor. Our Soup Fridays are well attended and are held before the celebration of Mass and the Stations of the Cross. Our parishioners sit in and enjoy a bowl of soup and bread/crackers. Globally, our Conference is twinned with the Saint Mary's Conference in Mucurapo, Trinidad & Tobago. The funds that we send are used by them towards the funding of their Annual Motivational Workshops, Children's Christmas Party, Celebration of Feast Days, and the like. The following correspondence is testimony to the reciprocal

sanctification that our vocation provides. This note is addressed to Ms. Ballan, our twinning rep and sent by their rep: *Hello Ms. Ballan: Happy Easter to you and your Conference. I hope the blessings from God continue to shine on you and your members. During our Lenten Season we collected nonperishable food items and did hamper distribution. Your funds were used to subsidize the short fall in any items, therefore during the Season we were able to distribute over 200 hampers to families and assist one Elderly Home and one Children's Home. We wish you, your Conference and your families all God's blessings. Yours in Christ, Angela Gonzales, President, St. Mary's Conference, Mucurapo.* Locally, our Christmas Outreach project was started to help with the isolation and loneliness of our Neighbours during the Christmas Season. In addition to providing Christmas baskets, it was decided that we would invite our Neighbours for a traditional Christmas turkey dinner and celebration. This tradition is now extremely popular, and we all look forward to it each year. Families come together, mothers are happy to have a day out, and single people enjoy the feeling of community. The parish, business and Catholic school communities are a big part of this Outreach.

There have been amazing donations and contributions over the years. Teachers use this project as a way of teaching about charity and sharing. This year we expect about 200 people to attend from about 125 households. Our Winter Coat Project has also grown and now includes the 10 Conferences in York South Particular Council and the local Salvation Army. *Theresa Riccardi, Saint Mary Immaculate Conference.*



Stained glass at the main altar



ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL - GOVERNANCE

Review of not-for-profit Act; 2023 ONRC AGM approvals

On October 19, 2021, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010 (Ontario) (ONCA) was proclaimed into law and replaced the Ontario Corporations Act (OCA) as the regulatory act governing Ontario's not-for-profit corporations. Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) Conferences and Councils which are incorporated under (OCA) in Ontario are impacted and need to address potential changes to their governing documents to be compliant with this law. The purpose here is to inform those Councils/Conferences, that are now incorporated, of the changes that take effect as of October 2024. At that time, your bylaws that were not updated to comply with the ONCA will become invalid. And those bylaws will be automatically replaced by what the ONCA says. Waiting does not appear to be a wise option. The advice is to use the time now to make whatever changes are needed and desired, so you have (a) certainty; (b) no deadline pressure; and (c) avoid the last-minute rush when lawyers and government systems are stretched. The need to comply with the newly implemented ONCA rules does provide an excellent opportunity to ensure your documents are not only up to date but working for you. Your governance documents (the Letters Patent, now called Articles of Incorporation, and By-laws taken together) serve, effectively, as a Board Governance Operations Manual, setting out how the organization is supposed to be run. The reason a charity becomes incorporated is by establishing a legal persona that represents an organization and that is recognized, in law, as being separate from the individual members of that organization. By creating a body that stands between its members and the world outside, the corporation then affords protection to the individual members from liability, provides for continuity of the organization – and ownership of its assets, like its bank account – in the face of an otherwise changing membership. Most conferences/councils are not incorporated. The reasons for incorporation are because a conference/council is engaging in “special works” that require paid staff (stores, shelters, food banks, housing etc.), acquiring or leasing property, vehicles or other assets of significant value and liability. Conferences and Councils need to clarify their status relative to being incorporated as well as being a registered charity. After you have determined your organizational and charitable status, here are useful guides available to help you in reviewing your Letters Patent and By-laws in the light of ONCA and you should refer to them. These guidelines may be found at the following links, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-not-profit-corporations-act-2010>, and <https://www.ontario.ca/page/not-profit-corporations-act-2010-standard-organizational-law>.

2023 Ontario Regional Council Annual General Meeting: Ontario Regional Council held its Annual General Meeting on Saturday, April 22, 2023 as the final activity of the Annual General Assembly held in St. Michael's Parish Hall, Waterloo Ontario. It was a hybrid meeting (virtual/Live) with 32 registered voting members attending virtually and 9 voting members attending live at the meeting. The business meeting reviewed the activities of the ONRC Corporation. The following approvals were passed by the voting members:-

1. The minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting held on April 30, 2022.
2. The audited Financial Statements for the fiscal period ending December 31, 2022.
3. The appointment of the audit firm of Kriens - LaRose, LLP, Chartered Professional Accountants to audit the accounts of the corporation for the fiscal period ending December 31, 2023 with the remuneration being fixed by the Board of Directors.
4. The revised Articles of Incorporation and By-law #4 for the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Ontario Regional Council which was approved by the Board of Directors on February 13, 2023.
5. The received 2022 committee reports.
6. The adjournment of 2022 Annual General Meeting

Rob Greenway, Chair, Governance, ONRC

"Clothing the Naked" (Store related activities)

Chatham celebrates Joseph Johns, the founder of its stores.

The man behind the creation of the Chatham SSVP store was Joseph Johns. His passion to serve those in need combined with his determination to open a SSVP store led to the lot purchase, the design work and the building of a store on King Street East. Joseph joined the Society in the late 1950's at St. Ursula's Parish in Chatham. As a child, he was exposed to charitable works by his parents who practiced by giving



Our King Street Store

to and helping the less fortunate. It bothered Joseph that in a city and county of over 100,000 people, there was a weak effort to serve our fellow people as God requested us to do. This inspired him to set his sights on developing a program to serve the needy in the community by opening a store that would serve all the peoples of the county. Even though he saw obtaining the necessary funds to purchase a lot, design and erect a building for his "dream" store, he did not allow any obstacles to kill his vision. He was a successful businessman who had paid off all his business and

university education debts while praising God for his accomplishments. He visited the USA stores programs in St. Louis and New Orleans, and this helped him refine his plan for the opening and operating of an SSVP store in Chatham. He presented his plan to his Particular Council in 1957 and obtained the approval to proceed with his plans for a store. With his approach and with help from community members who helped in various ways, our King Street East store became a reality. A program to receive donated clothing and furniture grew fast. A few clerks were hired and in conjunction with numerous volunteers, our store "took off".

Drop Boxes to support the store and which generated large quantities of clothing were placed at churches in Kent County. Since the store's opening, we have had to add a new parking lot surface, a fence around the parking lot, a new furnace, new roof, and new-to-us truck, which we use for pickups and deliveries. We still have the same values and vision as Joseph and we assist other charities by handing out sleeping bags, blankets, boots, coats, and when approached by persons who just cannot afford to purchase items from the store, we just simply donate those items to them. We support church conferences by acknowledging vouchers for goods. We presently have 23 loyal volunteers as well as two full-time employees. We also have a bookkeeper who is on contract. Our store manager, Maria O'Brien, ensures that the store operation is successful. We get a lot of compliments from our clientele and from out-of-town visitors to our store as they see it as clean and welcoming. We love to have fellow Vincentians visit us and chat with them. We welcome anyone who comes to Chatham to drop by and visit us.

Connie Badour, Thrifty Vincent Store, Kent Deanery



Our new truck

SSVP – Celebrating our Youth

Mary Mother of God Youth Conference – Oakville

The Young Vincentian Ministry at Mary Mother of God was launched in May 2022, under the guidance of 2 Vincentians with school aged youth. It has been a long-held dream of our conference and church community to invite the youth into active service and to place the mission of the SSVP Ministry on the hearts of the youth, with hopes that this involvement can foster a lifelong calling into service. We are



Christmas 2022 Caroling at Long Term Care

focused on the 3 Vincentian pillars of spirituality, friendship and service. To date with the prayers and support of the congregation, this beautiful new Ministry has grown to 40 youth in grades 7 to 12. The 3rd Sunday of each month is now Young Vincentian Sunday where the youth, wearing their SSVP t-shirts, bring up the offertory gifts, assist as ushers and help with the SSVP monthly collection after the 11:00 mass. They meet afterwards to organize their activities and to continue to grow their bonds of friendship. Each month, the youth and their families feel more an active part of our church community. The youth helped at the summer barbeques at the rent geared to income

housing community, playing games with the children, making balloon animals, and face painting. They made sandwiches for an outreach group that serves the homeless in our community and made uplifting cards that go into the food distribution kits for the neighbours in need. At Thanksgiving they had the congregation fill out cards capturing what they are thankful for, made a collage of thanksgiving that they brought to the altar during mass. For All Souls Day, they helped to clean the graveyards at our local cemetery and recited the rosary together. They assisted with our back to school and Christmas programs. They organized a bake sale raising over \$1700. Part of the proceeds were used to organize and serve a community dinner at a local outreach organization with 2 more community dinner scheduled in 2024. This Christmas season they will go to 3 long-term care homes to sing Christmas carols with the residents. We are very excited to witness how this new Young Vincentian Ministry will continue to grow and flourish!



Preparing sandwiches for the homeless, LTC

Linda Alexander, Vice-President, Mary Mother of God Conference

A good heart, as well as a soul inflamed with charity, can do nothing but good and holy works. – St. Angela Merici

“The Gains from North of Sixty”

Sailing... Sailingall the way up NORTH

Hello Sisters and Brothers - North of 60 is in full throttle. We are very busy gathering the food items for our 11 different communities in Nunavut. There is much excitement being generated by all the groups that have committed to sending sea containers to each of the communities to which we reach out.



Christmas 2022 town party Naujaat, Nunavut

Several sea containers have been delivered to conferences who are already busy gathering food for the second marine crossing in July. These communities have only one opportunity to receive a shipment in the summer. The remaining communities will receive their containers with the final crossing in October. I have been in touch with some of the northern communities and their leaders are equally excited with the anticipation of a full sea container arriving at their locations. More than ever, we are communicating directly with the elders and leaders in those communities. We are truly getting to know our families, to listen and learn about their hardships, and to be personal

with them, in spite of the huge distances that physically separate us. I would like to extend a “Special Thank You” to Saint Vincent de Paul members in Collingwood who worked very hard to gather funds on behalf of Baker Lake. This enabled the community to receive 5 skids of food – a community that has been in hope of receiving our help for over 2 years now. God Bless you all. Sanirajak is a NEW community to our adopted growing families. Newmarket has been earnestly gathering since last year in preparation of filling a container with food and other goodies. They routinely exchange thoughts, plans, ensuring both happiness and success.

Containers are also being sent to the following locations (sponsor in brackets).....Whale Cove (Burlington), Rankin Inlet (Ottawa), Chesterfield Inlet (Kitchener-Waterloo), Naujaat (St Catherines), Coral Harbour (Stoney Creek), Taloyoak (Newmarket), Gjoa Haven (Windsor), and Kugaaruk (Peel). Please consider becoming a sponsor to one of the northern communities.....your Conference may gather food for shipment or consider financially assisting North of 60 with the heavy costs to transport to the port in Montreal for the voyage to the North. We can all support this project in different ways. The ultimate support would be to adopt a community – Igloolik is hoping one day to receive our help.



Sacred Heart, Newmarket students painted their C-can

Pegg Leroux, Chair, ONRC North of Sixty Committee

It is better to be the child of God than king of the whole world. - St. Martin of Tours

Feeding the Hungry in London

by the St. John the Divine Conference

St John the Divine Catholic Church in London, Ontario opened its doors in 1965. Just one year later three parishioners formed the St John the Divine Conference of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul with the mission to: “live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy.”

Now, at St. John the Divine, we are fortunate to have fifty-one active members committed to carrying



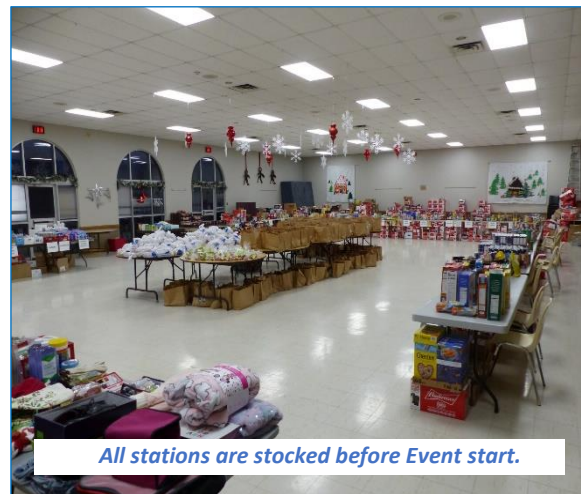
Volunteers awaiting the start of Hamper Event

out the mission of the Society. In the past year and over the Christmas 2022 period, our SSVF Conference has served 431 families comprising 821 adults and 554 children. We do make home visits to all new families in need of assistance to determine how we can best help them and to steer them to the other agencies in the city that can also provide services for them. Each month, we open our food cupboard to the families in need and together, our members work with each family in preparing a bountiful food hamper of non-perishable food plus gift cards to one of the local supermarkets. Those in need of clothing or furniture, which is usually the case with new arrivals to the country, will receive a

voucher to be used at our SSVF Thrift Stores. The need for emergency assistance has increased dramatically in recent years and again in 2023 we will set a record for the number of families helped in a year. At St John the Divine, our Hamper Program is an event, a joyous event. This year, 70 SSVF

members, their families plus many parishioners will welcome 150 families to the St John the Divine SSVF Market and Toy Store! The St John the Divine Hall is set up as a market with 40 stations. Each family is assigned a Personal Shopper that accompanies them on a visit to each station, to fill their grocery cart with a huge selection of canned and packaged grocery items, fresh fruits, vegetables, sundry items and even some clothing items. For families with children, the parents are invited to the Toy Store to select a new toy for each child plus a selection of craft supplies, puzzles and games. The Toy Store is made possible through the generous donations by the patrons of local businesses plus the dozens of gifts that our parishioners left under our giving tree. Our hamper event is a day of blessing filled with laughter, smiles, and tears of joy. These tears of joy are not just shed by the families we serve but by the volunteers at their service. This work is only possible through the generosity of our parishioners, our school communities and neighbouring merchants. This year we have been blessed as we have received almost \$20,000 in cash donations. All of the money donated to the SSVF goes directly to the poor. Members are blessed by the support but also blessed by spending time getting to know those that we serve.

Rick Vandekieft, Member, St. John the Divine Conference



All stations are stocked before Event start.

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



PUBLIC POLICY DIALOGUE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Injustice of Systemic Racism

One question often heard regarding the social justice efforts of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is why we are involved in social justice and why should we be part of topics such as systemic racism and Indigenous reconciliation. Our Canadian Rule and Statutes' Article 7.1 states "The Society is concerned not only with alleviating need but also with identifying the unjust structures that cause it. It is, therefore, committed to identifying the root causes of poverty and to contributing to their elimination. In all its charitable actions there should be a search for justice. Therefore, in its struggle for justice, the Society must keep in mind the demands of charity. In our Rule Book, Article 7.1 supports Frederic Ozanam's words that, "*Charity and Justice are inseparable characteristics of the Society*". They are the Two Feet of Love which we need to embrace and live. This search for justice is not limited to poverty issues but must include our advocacy and actions wherever we find injustice. Sadly, today's world is still seeing many instances of systemic racism, gender-based hatred and the lack of diversity, equity and inclusion in our organizations. There is also statistical evidence of higher levels of poverty, unemployment, health issues, low education levels and inadequate housing amongst black, indigenous or people of colour. Our Society can make a difference regarding systemic racism, but we must start internally by implementing actions that make us look more like the neighbours in need that we serve every day. Thus, our Society needs this internal systemic and structural change if we are going to be able to effectively demonstrate to our members and our communities the level of commitment and determination that we have as Vincentians, one that opposes all forms of hatred and bias towards people of colour, gender-based biases and cultural suppression. However, changing structures is not enough! Each of us needs to be honest in examining our own personal biases, then decide what changes may be required as we go forward and make those changes by our own actions. In other words, it is not enough to say we are against systemic racism yet stand by and take no action in combating this injustice that exists in many forms within our Society. To be a champion, the logo, "actions speak louder than words" stands tall. We need to not only voice our support but to take the required action in dealing with the hurt caused by systemic racism. Please be open to more education on the injustices of systemic racism and maintain positive actions related to all forms of injustices.

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

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

- St. Francis of Assisi

"Sharing our Wealth" (TWINNING)

St. Joseph Conference in Stratford, ON. is twinned with Eastern Particular Council, Grenada, W.I.

The dedicated members that volunteer in our St. Joseph Conference, Stratford, were elated when we were advised that we were being twinned with the Eastern Particular Council, Grenada, W.I. in the southern Caribbean. Our twinning relationship started five (5) years ago and over this period we have had continuous contact with their President, Margaret Wilson. This contact is via e-mails, which I consider to be "wonderful" as they are usually very informative of the events that they are involved with at their end. Margaret advised that there are twelve (12) Conferences that fall under their Particular Council umbrella. After several exchanges of e-mails, my husband, Doug, and I decided to go to



Lori Stewart with various Vincentians in Grenada

Grenada for a vacation and travelled to the island in January 2023. We set about sourcing a number of gifts and packing four (4) suitcases full of items to be taken along and distributed among those in need there. The day after we arrived, the National President, Mary Charles, picked us up at our hotel, along with the four (4) over-filled suitcases with the various items to share with them. As we sat with the large group that came out to welcome us, Doug and I felt very privileged to be among so many fellow Vincentians in another country. We were elated to have the various presenters from the many Conferences share with us all their accomplishments as they carry out their Vincentian work in helping those in need in their parish boundaries. After listening to their reports, it was then our turn to review the

different work/events that we carry out at our home Conference of St. Joseph. We were overwhelmed listening to their reports on their work. They were equally impressed with the work that we do in Stratford. Their Sr. Paula advised that she was impressed with our continuing support to help educate people, giving a hand up and not a handout. She also liked the idea of our meal kits. We also met Fr. Anthony and visited St. Andrew's Church, where our meeting was held at the school beside the Church. We shared a delicious lunch that they provided. Some of the items we took down included 500 rosaries as well as Canada, Ontario and Stratford pins. School supplies such as crayons, pencils, books and First Aid kits. Toiletries such as toothpaste, toothbrushes and even baby clothing. The trip would not have been possible without the generosity and support of our own Vincentians in helping with the purchase of most items. We truly appreciated everyone's efforts and extend our "Thanks" to our own Vincentians is supporting this rewarding experience by "helping Vincentians in emerging countries to carry out their mission of Charity and Social Justice".



The altar at St. Andrew's Church, St. Georges

Lori Stewart, President, St. Joseph Conference, Stratford, ON

"Pray for sinners". – Our Lady of Lourdes

"NOT to be FORGOTTEN" and "Wrap-up"



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

Ruth Heffernan, St. Peter's Conference, Peterborough. March 9, 2023

Beatrice Knowles, St. Mary's Conference, Lindsay. June 4, 2023

UPCOMING DATES TO CIRCLE ON YOUR CALENDAR

December 8, 2023 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

December 25, 2023 – Christmas Day. May the Joy of Christmas surround you as we welcome our Saviour. **"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"**

January 1, 2024 – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. May we all enjoy a Healthy and Prosperous New Year

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)

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 Chatham, Grenada, W.I., London, Oakville, Richmond Hill, Stratford, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Waterloo 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.

This edition is a late publication of the May issue due to a couple of delays. 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

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

Email us at: info@ssvp.on.ca