



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul  
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## WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

The Fifth World Day of the Poor (WDP) will be observed on 14 November 2021. This year's theme "*Open the Doors of My Heart*" is a summons to the responsibility and commitment as men and women who are part of our one human family.

The national action campaign on *Safe, secure and affordable housing is a human right* launched on February 7, 2021, the feast day of Blessed Rosalie Rendue, is aligned with Pope Francis' message, that everyone deserves to have safe and adequate housing for their families. This fourth WPD national campaign is an opportunity to collectively raise the visibility of the SSVP in Canada, and to appeal to potential benefactors, to let them share the gift of assisting persons in need.

The tools for members are available at

<https://www.ssvp.ca/world-day-poor-tools-members>

*Richard Pommainville, Executive Director  
National Council*



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Do Not Be Afraid

I sit here staring at a blank page on the feast day of St. Cornelius, Pope and St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, both martyred circa 258 A.D. for refusing to offer sacrifices to Roman gods. "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28)

Today, in the Divine Office, we are told that the Church in Rome at that time consisted of 46 priests, seven deacons, seven subdeacons, and approximately 50,000 Christians. The Christian population at the turn of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. is estimated to be somewhere between 150,000 to 350,000 souls. The world population at that time is estimated to be 202 million. The Christians embodied only 0.07% to 0.17% of the world's population. Those Christians heroically stood firm in the face of martyrdom against the largest and most powerful government and military of the day. How did they manage to change the face of society within such a short time? The change occurred by living the gospel message of love, "clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience". (Colossians 3:12)

I look around and notice a great similarity in the world, as we know it, to those times past. There is a great swell of ideologies everywhere seemingly bent on redefining and reshaping the world. Mind you, I do agree that some changes are for the better. However, there is also a rebellion afoot against any and all perceived restraints to one's personal freedom and impulses to do and act as one desires, regardless of any moral or legal limitations or restrictions upheld by any religious or government institutions.

Today, there are approximately 2.5 billion Christians, of which the largest group, 1.2 billion, resides in the Roman Catholic Church. The estimated world population in 2020 was 7.8 billion. Today, Christians make up 32.05% of the world's population. What great change we could instill by simply living the Gospel of love with prayer, thanksgiving and joy.

We, as Vincentians, already adhere to the Gospel of love by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy. Vincentians do not hide with fear in response to current events but we go out to share Christ's love with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience with anyone who suffers. Our life should mirror the faith and vocation we adhere to. How does my life reflect my faith and Vincentian vocation?

JMJ

Serviens in spe

*Claude Bédard, President  
National Council*

Let the world be in upheaval. I hold to his promise and read his message; that is my protecting wall and garrison. What message? "Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world"! (Matthew 28:20) - Saint John Chrysostom, bishop  
Saint Joseph... Pray for us



## EMMANUEL BAILLY SCHOLARSHIP

I am so humbled to be this year's recipient of the Emmanuel Bailly Scholarship. I am from London, Ontario, and I have been a member of the Saint Louise de Marillac youth conference since September 2013. My favourite part of being involved with this organization is the diverse opportunities to serve our brothers and sisters in need, and to see their needs through the lenses of both charity and social justice. As we continue to face the uncertainties of COVID-19 and the global pandemic, it has been a privilege to witness and work alongside an adaptable and resilient community that continues to put the needs of the most vulnerable at the forefront of their ministry.



After completing my first degree in Catholic studies for teachers and family studies at Western University, I am now on to my next adventure at Cardiff Metropolitan University in Cardiff, Wales, where I will be pursuing my dream of becoming a secondary religion teacher. As a future educator, I look forward to fostering the growth and potential of the next generation of learners and advocating for their voices to be heard. I hope that my experiences abroad will serve as an opportunity to spark new and creative ideas to bring back home to Canada. I look forward to working with youth and the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul for many years to come.

Thank you again for selecting me for this wonderful recognition.

*Victoria Goldsack, member  
Saint Louise de Marillac Youth Conference*

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Victoria has been volunteering with the SSVP Youth Conference for seven years now and presently holds one of our Executive team positions. Her involvement goes beyond the SSVP; she makes a difference no matter where she is or who she is volunteering for. She has outstanding leadership skills and practices them every time we go out to our events throughout the school year. Our team can always count on Victoria to recruit volunteers from her friends in University for our events. Victoria shows a maturity not found in a good percentage of young people. She displays so much respect for everyone.

Victoria had great energy at all the sites and it is contagious and wonderful to see how everyone reacts to it. She lives out our SSVP mission, ministering with love, respect, justice and joy to those she makes a connection with. She is very generous with her time and gifts that God has given her. We are blessed to have her share her time with us. It has been a great honour to be able to witness how a wonderful young person gives of herself to others.

She has been a delight to journey with through faith and service and I am truly blessed to have her in my life. She is an outstanding human being with so much to offer to our community and the world. She is a strong person, very goal-oriented, and she will always rise to any challenge presented to her. I believe there is nothing she is incapable of doing and she will do it with grace, mercy and love.

Congratulations, Victoria, on receiving this well-deserved scholarship.

*Lillian Mulder, Youth Advisor  
Youth Conference, London ON*

## EMMANUEL BAILLY SCHOLARSHIP

The Emmanuel Bailly Scholarship is an initiative of the National Council of Canada of the SSVP. It was created to reward young Vincentians who are combining studies and volunteer work. In addition to attending school and often working part time, young Vincentians find time and energy to help the less privileged of their community. The National Council of Canada wishes to reward them for their exceptional contribution, by offering a bursary of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) in Canadian currency and a merit certificate.

The scholarship is awarded to a Vincentian student who clearly stood out during the year. The bursary is to help the recipient pursue his/her studies and fulfill professional ambitions.

For information and application, please download the PDF document: [APPLICATION](#)



## HOW TO SECURE A LEGACY GIFT FROM YOUR MAJOR SSVV DONORS

Canadians are living longer and healthier. However, Canada is getting older. Today, nearly one out of every five Canadians is over the age of 65.<sup>1</sup> This trend we see across Canada is also one we see in the pews of Catholic parishes across the country. It's a trend that will soon lead to what some commentators have called "the greatest wealth transfer in history", as billions of dollars are transferred from the baby boomer generation to their children and grandchildren via inheritance.

It is hard to talk about death but it is a reality we will all individually face. Why are we bringing this to your attention? Because, for the sake of those we serve and the future of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, we have to pay attention to the growing importance of charitable donations through wills. They are an opportunity for our most passionate supporters to continue assisting persons in need beyond their own lifetime. That's why it is important we raise awareness among our leading donors of the opportunity to designate the Society as a charitable donation recipient as part of their wills.

Many Canadians do not realize the extraordinary opportunity their wills provide for offering a generous gift to their favourite charities. We call these donations through wills "legacy gifts", as they can leave a powerful legacy of making the world better even after we are gone. Consider that designating just 5% of an \$845,000 estate—the current Canadian average—would result in a whopping \$42,000 gift, vastly more than most Canadians would ever give in their lifetimes! That's an incredible opportunity to make an impact. That impact also includes tax-savings opportunities right now, so Canadians can preserve a larger part of their wealth for their children, grandchildren, and other loved ones.

Put simply: Wills are going to be an increasingly large portion of total charitable giving in Canada in coming years, with many advantages for those who include charities as part of their Wills. It's critical for the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul to proactively seek out opportunities for legacy gifts from long-standing supporters, sharing with them these beneficial opportunities.

To that end, I'm excited to share that the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has joined the **Will Power** campaign. Will Power is a national public education effort designed to inspire more Canadians to make a significant impact on the causes they care about, with a gift in their will to charity. The aim of the campaign is for at least 8.5% of all Canadians designating a charity as part of their Will, which would represent \$40 billion for important causes across the country. Please refer to the Will Power National Portal as a reference <https://www.willpower.ca/charities/society-of-saint-vincent-de-paul/>

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<sup>1</sup> [Statistics Canada](#)

We've created simple tools to empower you as a Vincentian leader to encourage your leading supporters to consider designating the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul as part of their wills. In this **email** you will find:

1. A draft, template letter you can send to your most loyal donors, asking them to designate the Society in their wills. This letter can also be sent via email;
  - *We recommend sending this letter to any donors who have donated to the Society consistently for several years, and who give a significant amount. That said, even modest donors might consider giving a sizeable legacy gift. Think about who your most passionate and consistent donors are—these are most likely to be supporters who would be most interested in offering a gift to the Society through their wills!*
2. A template message you can insert as a postscript or short paragraph in another regular communication with your donors—for instance, a thank-you letter accompanying their tax receipt, or a letter as part of an annual appeal.
  - *We have written two messages for you—one asking them to consider a legacy gift, the other specifically highlighting the tax benefits of a legacy gift. Think about which might be most attractive for a donor.*

These templates are meant to make the process of seeking legacy gifts easier for you. They are not meant to be a comprehensive suite of tools for seeking legacy gifts. Consider what approach might work best for your conference or council. For instance, if you have deep, personal relationships with your most loyal donors, you might want to set up a phone call or meeting over coffee to discuss a legacy gift. You might also consider discussing legacy giving with your fellow Vincentians at a conference or council meeting. Whatever approaches work best for you, our hope is to make the process as easy as possible—and to help you secure the incomparable benefits of legacy gifts for the future of your conference and council.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me by sending me an email. As well, I would be more than happy to connect with you, your conference, or your council and offer a more detailed presentation on the importance and potential impact of legacy giving through wills.

Thank you for participating. I'm so excited to work with you to secure the financial future of our Society across the country, and together, support our work for Canada's most vulnerable people for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Richard Pommainville  
Executive Director  
[exdir-dirgen@ssvp.ca](mailto:exdir-dirgen@ssvp.ca)



[Template letter/email to major donors](#)



[Template postscript \(P.S.\) and/or short paragraph message for inclusion as part of another donor communication](#)

## Template letter/email to major donors

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Dear [NAME],

You have been one of our most loyal supporters of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul at [CONFERENCE OR COUNCIL LOCATION] these past years. You have been a passionate supporter of our Mission to serve the poorest and most vulnerable members of our community. We would like you to continue making an impact on this mission for many, many years to come. To that end, I'm writing to ask if you would be willing to make a legacy gift to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Making a legacy gift is incredibly easy, and there are a couple of simple ways you can do so:

1. Contact your estate planner or lawyer about adding a charitable gift to the Society as part of your will. All you will need to share is our charitable number, which is [INSERT YOUR CONFERENCE'S CHARITABLE NUMBER OR THE CHARITABLE NUMBER OF THE SSVN NATIONAL COUNCIL: 132410671 RR0001]. If you haven't yet taken the time to write a will, you can visit [www.willpower.ca/profession/lawyer](http://www.willpower.ca/profession/lawyer). There you will find a list of lawyers in your community/province who can help you. Alternatively, you can find an online will service by visiting <https://www.willpower.ca/will-writers/>.
2. Naming the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul as a partial beneficiary of your life insurance policy. As above, you can contact your life insurance provider directly and share our charitable number.

Why consider doing this? Your generous gifts to the Society have helped us make life better for those struggling in our community today. A legacy gift will empower us to make life better for those struggling years from now. By helping us secure the future of our services, you are ensuring that the Society's volunteers can uplift persons in need, wherever they are—in their homes, on the street, in shelters, in hospitals, or in prison—for decades to come.

As well, many Canadians aren't aware of the [incredible tax savings made possible by legacy gifts](#). Inheritance taxes in Canada can be enormous, leaving less for your children and loved ones. Strategically giving a portion of your estate to a charity—creating a sizeable charitable tax receipt—and then replenishing your estate through a life insurance policy is just one example of how legacy giving can be used to your advantage for tax planning purposes. Ask your estate planner or lawyer for further details about this. You can also visit [www.willpower.ca](http://www.willpower.ca) to learn more.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us "You will always have the poor with you." Through your legacy gift, you will help ensure that the poor will always have the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

God bless you and thank you for your consideration, [NAME]. If you have any questions, please give us a call at [PHONE NUMBER]. Whether or not you choose to make a legacy gift, we are so grateful for your gift and your ongoing participation in our mission. We couldn't do this work without people like you.

Sincerely,



**Template postscript (P.S.) and/or short paragraph message for inclusion as part of another donor communication (i.e. a thank-you letter accompanying a tax receipt)**

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[CONFERENCE/COUNCIL PRESIDENT]  
[CONFERENCE/COUNCIL]

*General message:*

P.S. Have you considered giving a legacy gift to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul? It's as easy as contacting your estate planner or lawyer and asking them to add the Society as a beneficiary in your will. Simply share our charitable number [INSERT YOUR CONFERENCE'S CHARITABLE NUMBER OR THE CHARITABLE NUMBER OF THE SSVP NATIONAL COUNCIL: 132410671 RR0001] with them or visit [www.willpower.ca](http://www.willpower.ca) to learn more about the benefits of giving to charity through your will. As a generous donor to the Society, you have made possible our mission to serve the poorest and most struggling members of our community today. A legacy gift to the Society will help us serve them for years to come. Please reach out to us if you have any questions!

*Message specifically discussing tax benefits of a legacy gift:*

P.S. Have you considered giving a legacy gift to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul? It's as easy as contacting your estate planner or your estate planner or lawyer and asking them to add the Society as a beneficiary in your will. Simply share our charitable number [INSERT YOUR CONFERENCE'S CHARITABLE NUMBER OR THE CHARITABLE NUMBER OF THE SSVP NATIONAL COUNCIL: 132410671 RR0001] with them. Legacy giving can offer enormous tax savings benefits, allowing you to leave more for your children and loved ones, while supporting your favourite charities. Learn more by visiting: <https://www.willpower.ca/tax-benefits-of-charitable-gifts-in-wills/>.



## CALL FOR WEBINARS

Webinars sponsored by the National Formation Committee are designed to be a knowledge transfer opportunity, providing a source of resources for Vincentians across Canada. All members of the Society are encouraged to participate and share their expertise and their ideas.

Topics can cover a broad range of information but generally they need to fall under the four pillars that have been defined by National as encompassing the current direction of the Society. The four pillars are:

***Vincentian Life, Leadership, Spirituality, and Special Works.***

Examples of topics:

- Innovative ways of serving persons in need in our communities
- Evolving the Society in Canada
- Social Justice, equity, diversity

A webinar is targeted to not exceed 75 minutes in length. The delivery of the prepared presentation is approximately 40/50 minutes with a Q&A component of about 20 minutes.

Please be assured that the members of the National Formation Committee will provide support and guidance throughout the process. You will be assigned a liaison to support you and your presentation develops.

We look forward to hearing from you. We have a wealth of gifts and talents in Canada to share with each other and we encourage you to be part of our national team.

Click here for [Online submission form](#).

*Deborah Joyce, Chair  
National Formation Committee*



## RECOVERING THE “OIKOS” OF GOD

Recently, I met with someone whose relationship had just broken up, for a meal together at a restaurant. When I asked where he was living now, he shared that actually he was “keeping house” for someone whose work takes him away for long stretches of time. With pain evident in his voice and eyes, he mentioned he was “in transition.” That meant, while he was not strictly homeless, he was without a home, a place he could call his own. I tried to share his pain by imagining what that would be like – and felt some of his loss and sorrow.

That experience brings to mind the countless others, our brothers and sisters, who for many, many complex reasons, also do not have a place to call their own – immigrants, refugees, the truly homeless in our cities. At the same time, we at the Star of the North where I serve as chaplain and spiritual director, had just put on our last ritual introducing the Aurora Living process that brings together five points of light: Word of God, Care for creation, Community, Contemplative living, and Justice as right relationships (a follow-up to the TRC Calls to Action).

Sr. Mariángel Marco Teja, who created all our rituals, crafted this one around the Book of Revelation, *Laudato si’* and the Season of Creation, with content that includes a focus on having a home for all. She reminded us that the Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration of prayer and action for our common home. Together, the ecumenical family around the world unites to pray and protect God’s creation.

The Season started September 1<sup>st</sup>, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends October 4<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations.

This year the theme is “A Home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God”. Oikos is the Greek word for “home”, or “household”. By rooting the theme in the concept of oikos, we celebrate the integral web of relationship that sustains the well-being of the Earth. This year’s symbol, Abraham’s tent, signifies our commitment to safeguard a place for all who share our common home, just as Abraham did in the Book of Genesis.

The Book of Revelation, or the Apocalypse, is a book of new creation, opening up a horizon of hope. God makes everything new. In the end, what this book makes us intuit on the horizon is the resurrection. God is able to bring life out of death. Rev 21:6 states, “*I am the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.*”

However, the signs of death are evident all around us, a very obvious one being the plight of the homeless and those lacking adequate housing and drinking water. Pope Francis in *Laudato Si’* #2 reminds us that “*The earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor.*” In #21, he continues, “*The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.*”

We are facing complex global challenges, such as the climate emergency, growing inequalities, job insecurity, systematic violation of the rights of migrants, the violence and structural inequality suffered by women, homelessness and inadequate housing among many others. Yet Revelation 21:1 proclaims, *"I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth.'"*

What do we mean when we say heaven? The theologian José Arregi writes: "Heaven is a way of saying the transcendence of our immanence. Transcendence means two things: that the earth and all its beings come from beyond us..., and that we are an open reality, capable of being more than what we are."

That hopeful statement by Arregi, "We are capable of being more than we are" is a clarion call to us to get involved, to take a stand, to muster our resources and to channel our energy into solving the problem of homelessness and inadequate housing.

The tent symbolizes "a home for all". Abraham and Sarah opened their tent as a home for the three strangers, who turned out to be God's angels (Genesis 18). By creating a home for all, their act of radical hospitality became a source of great blessing.

Abraham's tent is a symbol of our ecumenical call to practice creation care as an act of radical hospitality, safeguarding a place for all creatures, common home, the household (Oikos) of God.

Abraham's tent would have likely been open on multiple sides, so anyone passing by would feel welcome. The tent is often an emblem of dialogue. The tent represents a place of shelter or refuge. It links with all the homeless, refugees, all who are on the move and displaced by the effects of climate change.

LS #25 makes that link: *"Changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters, points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded."*

The symbol of the tent can remind us of how Jesus came to dwell among us as a sign of God's love. John 1:14 proclaims, *"The Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us."* Revelation 21:3b adds, *"God's dwelling place is now among the people, and God will dwell with them. They will be God's people, and God will be with them and be their God."* Love is the root of our faith, which compels us to love our neighbours by tilling and keeping our common home, and by doing what we can to assure everyone has a tent of their own, and for their family.

The tent is also a sign of simplicity. Particularly among young people, the tent and the backpack symbolize what is essential, sufficiency, living within our means, and travelling lightly upon the Earth.

Like nomadic and semi-nomadic people today, Abraham and Sarah knew what it meant to be vulnerable, depending upon the goodness of the land, respecting its rhythms, and living in trust. The tent is a sign of the grateful pilgrim who knows that as we pass through this life, our footprint must be light upon the Earth.

"There will be no bliss on earth as long as human beings do not learn to be happy by decreasing and sharing," says José Arregi. Another saying applies here: "All we need is less." LS #114 extends this invitation: *"We need to slow down and look at reality in a different way."*

That different way is expressed in LS #222: *"Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack."* LS #193 adds, *"The time has come to accept decreased growth in some parts of the world, in order to provide resources for other places to experience healthy growth."*

Leonardo Boff reminds us: "God-creator is acting in the whole universe and in every being, the Creator Spirit is taking evolution to higher levels and the cosmic Christ guarantees a good end for creation, because with his resurrection, he anticipated and made possible a new heaven and a new earth. By embracing the world, we are embracing God." That is our task as Vincentians - to participate in this vision of building a new heaven and a new earth, by embracing the challenge and doing all we can to assure safe and secure housing as a basic human right for all.

LS #245 provides us with a hopeful closing thought: *"God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him!"*

*Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie OMI  
National Spiritual Advisor*



## SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL FEAST DAY MASS BROADCAST

September 27 is Saint Vincent de Paul Feast Day. This year, the Holy Redeemer Conference in Ottawa is hosting the national broadcast of the Feast Day Mass. It will be recorded on Saturday September 25, in conjunction with the Holy Redeemer Parish's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the SSVP conference 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

For this celebration, the celebrant will be Msgr Peter Schonenbach. Msgr Schonenbach was the founder of the Holy Redeemer Conference and has had a great impact on the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Ottawa, including as well being Spiritual Advisor for the National Council of Canada for many years.

Livestream on Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 11:00 am (Eastern).

**Watch via livestream on Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/holyredeemerkanata>

**Watch through the parish website:** <http://www.holyredeemer.ca/index.cfm>

[click on Our Parish and from the drop-down list click on - Click here to watch mass.]

**Event coordinator is Bernie Hartlin:** [bernie-on-ca-ssvp@rogers.com](mailto:bernie-on-ca-ssvp@rogers.com)



## SEPTEMBER 30th - NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Dear Fellow Vincentians:

September 30, 2021 is the first annual day for Truth and Reconciliation for all Canadians. This was introduced with Bill C-5, which received Royal Assent on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

*An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation)*

<https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?billId=10870098&Language=E>

This National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a designated paid holiday allowing federally-regulated employers, including public and private sector employers who are subject to the Canada Labour Code to observe and participate.

Let us pray and work together with our Indigenous sisters and brothers to begin a new chapter in our understanding of Indigenous history, culture and faith traditions. Please see the three articles from BC/Yukon regional members as well as one from Archbishop Sylvain Lavoie.

As part of our social justice committee's efforts, we shall be hosting a Zoom call on September 29<sup>th</sup> that will include members of the Society and Indigenous leaders as we begin to look at ways and actions we might take towards Truth and Reconciliation.

*Jim Paddon, Chair  
National Social Justice Committee*



## TAKING THE MORAL HIGH ROAD

Trust Jim Paddon to come up with a new challenge to get us reflecting, pondering and more deeply involved in today's world – how have the recent developments around the former Indian residential schools and the issue of unmarked graves impacted us?

After sorting out my initial feelings of shock, shame, anger, sadness, guilt and fear, a way of responding emerged from somewhere deeper within me – take the moral high road and do what Jesus did.

Of course, that needs to be spelled out. A first facet of this response would be to be **energized** rather than discouraged. That was the response of Justice Murray Sinclair when asked a similar question about the lack of action following the TRC Calls to Action. Frustration and discouragement are a negative response – he prefers to be motivated to take even greater positive action to address that lack, and I concur.

One such action we are planning at the Star of the North retreat center is to host *Together We Heal* dialogue sessions, bringing together Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants to learn from each other and explore ways of moving forward together.

Another action is to explore the historical facts around these issues and gather the relevant information. What was the context of the times? Can we avoid judging past events by the standards of today? What really did happen? A key question for me is why were these deaths not recorded by clergy and religious who were known to keep meticulous records? My hope is that going through the archival records and the “Codex Historicus” of various congregations will provide some answers and clarity.

Ultimately, I find we are invited to do what Jesus did when unjustly arrested, tried, humiliated and crucified – he accepted his cross, carried it patiently, suffered in silence, and forgave those who were crucifying him.

There is little we can do or say in our defence, and so are called to practice a ministry of listening from the heart, to the cries of those who are most deeply wounded by these discoveries. I have already contacted numerous Indigenous leaders offering to come to any community-based healing circles, just to be present, listen, soak up the pain, and share the stories, if possible, with the delegation planning to meet with Pope Francis in December.

I also find myself called to be more contemplative, as the less I do, the more God can do. And finally, I need to trust in divine Providence – that God is in charge, and may be using these events to wake up the Church, purify us and make us humbler, and more attentive to the cries of the poor.

*Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie OMI*  
*National Spiritual Advisor*





## STEAK AND JUSTICE FOR LUNCH

Back around 1999, I had a contract to perform a land survey for construction layout for an industrial park on an Indian Reserve in Kamloops, the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. One of the terms of the contract was that the band would provide a survey assistant for the project. My manager had explained this to me and asked my opinions about working with Aboriginal people. As I told him, it was not an issue in the least and I had done it lots when I had worked in the Arctic. I did note that we might wind up paying for two survey assistants – the one on the contract and another one who did the work.

The young man the band had set me up with was all I could have asked for in a survey assistant. He had done the work before, so knew what to do. He was prompt, had lots of energy, even a friendly demeanor – a true pleasure to work with. Rather than drop him off for lunch and pick him up again, I thought it made more sense for him to stay with me and I would just pay for his lunch at the restaurant where I had lunch, a truck stop just off the reserve on the highway. I told him this and he gave me a concerned look and said, “I’m not allowed to go there.” For a moment, I was confused, then it dawned on me what he meant. I told him to join me as my guest or we could go elsewhere.

Much to my surprise, the waitress did not want to serve him at first, but after some discussion with her and her manager (and her recollection of me being a good tipper), we had our lunch. Every day for two weeks we went there for lunch and he may have enjoyed his daily restaurant lunch more than his pay. Three days of steak before he checked out the menu. “You’re sure lucky to get to eat in restaurant all the time!” he said once with a big smile. “Yeah ... lucky,” I said. We even took his grandmother to lunch with us one day. It was a bit stilted as she did not speak English, but she was quite pleased to be there. Through her grandson, she ordered pea soup and I told her that that was what my mom in Newfoundland would have ordered.

I may have been naive, but I honestly did not know that getting served in a restaurant anywhere in Canada could be an issue until then.

*John Carey, President  
National Spiritual Committee*



## ST. JOSEPH'S MISSION RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

The SSVF Sacred Heart Isolated Conference in Williams Lake is making efforts to learn more about the Indigenous history in our community, which we are finding interesting and enlightening.

In our region, St. Joseph's Mission Residential School was operated by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate from 1872 to 1981. The school was operated by the Roman Catholic Church from July 1891 to March 31, 1969 and was then managed and operated by the federal government until it closed.

Williams Lake is surrounded by a number of First Nation bands and is situated on the unceded traditional territory of the Williams Lake First Nation of the Secwepemc Nation. Included under the Secwepemc group are Xat'sull (Deep Creek), T'exelcenc (Williams Lake First Nation) and Stswecem'c Xgat'tem (Dog Creek/Canoe Creek). West of the Fraser River is the Tsilhqot'in Nation which includes Xeni Gwet'in (Nemah), Tsideldel (Redstone/Alexis Creek), Tl'etinqox (Anaham), Tl'esqox (Toosey), and Yunesit'in (Stone). North of Williams Lake is the Dalkelh (Carrier) Nation, which includes Fort Alexandria. Another group, Esketenc (Alkali Lake), is independent.

Many of the people we serve or their relatives attended the St. Joseph's Mission. Recently, an investigation of the existing graveyard and grounds at the former mission site has begun. As a conference, we will acknowledge the land that we meet on and have contacted the Williams Lake First Nation to have them provide us with the proper wording. We are also committed to learning more about the local history of the Indigenous people by including a short information/education session at each meeting. Currently, one of our members is researching the longstanding history by referencing local authors and sharing histories and stories about the local area. Our hope is to be more compassionate about the history that our First Nations families have experienced and to be part of the reconciliation and healing that we all seek. We have prepared a small notice for those individuals who have been negatively impacted by the discoveries of unmarked graves, ensuring they have a number to call for support. We are happy to report that none of the individuals that come for Sunday lunch or Monday food bags have projected anger toward SSVF volunteers. People we have talked to that attended the residential school are hurting and appear grateful for our services.

*Lynn Paterson, President  
Sacred Heart Isolated Conference, Williams Lake B.C.*



## RESPONSE TO THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS TRAGEDY

### Okanagan Valley Particular Council

We, the Okanagan Valley Particular Council members, were deeply saddened by the discovery of the 215 unmarked graves. Many Vincentians have friends who are survivors and we saw the impact on their lives immediately. Many of us attended National Aboriginal Day celebrations, feeling sad and yet good to be together. One conference member found out about a STAR BLANKET project. 215 blankets were being donated, one for each family. The conference purchased two and the tags read, "From your Vincentian friends in Kelowna".

We are learning that we need to be educated on the impacts of colonialism. We are planning a fall retreat and our desire is to hold it at the meeting hall of one of our Indian Bands, either West Bank First Nation or Penticton. The retreat will be all day, starting with a traditional elder opening and then we will do the Kairos Blanket Exercise lead by an Inuit friend of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. We will share our feelings and possibly have a panel of survivors.

Lunch is to be determined but may be traditional foods of the Okanagan Syilx people. This area is rich in natural and traditional grains, fruits, etc.

We will reconvene and have a speaker who participated in the Truth and Reconciliation hearings in Edmonton. She will share her story and how this has impacted her life. We will break into small groups and read the 94 Calls to Action as written by the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners. Very few of them have been achieved, so we will devise some plans on how we can advocate for the Calls to Action to be acted upon.

There is much more to learn and understand. The next subject will likely be Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, a grave tragedy that continues to unfold.

Please pray for us as we walk gently with our brothers and sisters and PLEASE READ THE CALLS TO ACTIONS AND THEN ACT.

*Elaine McMurray*  
*Kelowna, British Columbia*



## KAMLOOPS SSVF ATTEMPTING TO DEAL WITH RESIDENTIAL ISSUES AS WELL AS WILDFIRES

We are holding our aching hearts and scratching our heads as to a response to the latest announcement of graves found at the Kamloops Indian Residential School, which operated from 1890 to 1977. Our spiritual advisor Fr. Andresz Wasylinko and I attended the very moving "Walking our Spirits Home" event on June 11. This involved speeches, smudging, prayers offered at the river, and then a walk from the park across the river to the residential school for more speeches. Then some people proceeded to walk along the river to Chase – about 60 km – over three days to "bring the spirits of those children home who died who were from the neighbouring community of Chase". It was very well done and well attended by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents.

Then on the following Sunday, June 20, I walked with the local Band within the area of the reserve for about two hours. We prayed in front of various elders' homes and also, at 2:15 pm, I had a very long and meaningful conversation along the way with a Band member, a woman, who had been raised by her sister in a nearby community because her parents and grandparents were unable to raise her. She thanked me for coming – I was one of only three non-Indigenous people there. (It was not really advertised.) At the end, there was a speech and we were all given gifts of sage or sweetgrass.

After that, the wildfires started; we have been picking up bread from a local bakery twice a week and delivering it to the residential school, where they are preparing meals for any evacuees and Indigenous firefighters. The pow-wow grounds are right beside it where they serve the meals. Several of the reserves in the Kamloops Fire Zone were evacuated, with people staying in motels but coming to the pow-wow grounds for meals. Some people camped there, but it was very difficult because of the extreme heat. We had a solid week of 40 degrees (i.e. 104 Fahrenheit) and most of the time it is 32 to 37 degrees. We prepared one meal a week, plus we had a baking bee. August 26 was the last day we offered meals because most evacuees had gone home. This has been a wonderful opportunity to show our solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

We have now contacted the Band to ask them to give us a presentation on the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

*Theresa Lidster, Social Justice Rep  
SSVP Kamloops Conference*



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q: Thrift Store personnel believe they are separate and not controlled by the Council; is this true?**

**A:** Within the Society, no Thrift Store or Special Works can be standalone; they fall within the authority of the SSVP entity that created them. Thrift Stores are not and cannot be separate from the authority of the council (or conference) that formed them. Store employees may report to a specific manager and in some cases a “Store Board of Directors” but that manager and the Board are still under the authority of the formation conference or council.

**Q: Can I submit material to Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) electronically?**

**A:** For the past few years, CRA has been offering the My Business Account (MyBA) for charities. There are a number of transactions that can be completed electronically via the CRA MyBA account; it is often quicker to do them online than by mail. The most important is filing your T3010 Registered Charity Information Return. CRA has information available at My business account for charities.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/operating-a-registered-charity/toolbox-directors-officers-volunteers/business-account.html>

To assist, National has set up a two-step process for someone to become a representative on behalf of the conference or council; it is available in the Operations Manual, under 9.7.2 (Access to the CRA NETFILE for a conference or council representative).

[https://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/9.7.2\\_access\\_to\\_the\\_cra\\_netfile\\_for\\_a\\_conference\\_or\\_council\\_representative\\_2020-11\\_form\\_p.pdf](https://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/9.7.2_access_to_the_cra_netfile_for_a_conference_or_council_representative_2020-11_form_p.pdf)