



Vincenpaul-Canada

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CANADA - VOLUME 36 NO. 5 - SUMMER 2010

5 LOAVES + 2 FISH + VINCENT = ?



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By the hand of iconographer
 Donna R. Rathert, based on image at St.
 Peter's church, Phibsboro, Dublin.

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Penny's Piece

Dear brother and sister Vincentians,

It will be my pleasure to once again welcome you to the National Council General Assembly in June 2010 in Toronto. Both the Ontario Regional Council and the Toronto Central Council have been very busy with planning to ensure you receive a warm welcome both to Toronto and Ryerson University. Our sincerest thanks to all of them.

Undoubtedly events have taken place over the past few months that have tugged at the hearts of many across the world. The earthquakes in Chile and Haiti have brought much sadness and pain to many. However, these events have also brought many hearts and hands to these areas as never before.

I was very touched by the outpouring of both concern and financial support. It was very hard for all of us to be here so far away in Canada and not be able to lend a hand with search and rescue, tending to the sick and injured, feeding and clothing, building structures etc. The main question coming through emails and calls was “what are we doing about Haiti?”. It seemed so complacent to answer we have to wait and see what is required. We are not a search and rescue organization, but when all of that is completed we will be there for the long haul of rebuilding, feeding and clothing.

By the time of the AGA in Toronto, Kathy Weswick, our National Twinning Chairperson and I will have gone to Haiti to visit our brothers and sisters there. We will bring back pictures and a great deal of information. We are also looking at the long term needs of our families in Haiti and where we can best focus our attention. For sure pictures will speak a thousand words. It will be great to see things first hand, give them all a big hug from Canada and start moving forward with concrete assistance on a regular basis.

Clermont Fortin, Chair of the National Emergency Relief Committee (NERC), has been in constant contact



with the national president and the treasurer in Port au Prince. Clermont speaks to them at least once a week and they certainly appreciate the contacts. I am sure Clermont will say more in his report. I thank both Kathy and Clermont for their diligence and patience throughout this trying time, a great team indeed!

On a brighter note, at the assembly, we will also have pictures to show what has been accomplished with our new head office in Ottawa. The Open House and Blessing will have taken place on May 8, 2010, with Bishop Prendergast presiding. We do have so much to be thankful for!!

Again, I look forward to welcoming all of you to Toronto and to the gathering of our Vincentian Family at the Annual General Assembly!

“..all one in truth and charity!”

Penny Craig, President

Vincentian Life

CHARITY AND EVANGELIZATION

Vincentians often wonder how to touch the soul through charity service. Vincentian charisma is expressed by acting as servants to the poor, offering them time and resources without asking anything in return, and showing them the image of a compassionate Jesus Christ. “When we change lives and improve living conditions of people through our actions, evangelization emerges, because they wonder: Why do you do that?” (Daughters of Charity, Kenya). Divine life lives in everyone. It is nurtured because we serve beings, always, physically and spiritually. It is true that the assistance relationship is more material than spiritual, the latter remaining imperceptible. Conscience should be touched at every contact, Vincentians symbolically dressing up as missionaries every time they meet the poor. It is through their attitude, and their gentle and generous approach that Vincentians reveal and transmit their charisma, whether or not the person has faith. Evangelization starts at the door, by explaining who we are and why we exist (Mission) in an honest and respectful manner. The people we serve must experience in their conscience our solidarity with them, and feel that hope is around the corner, that dreaming is allowed, and that (Catholic) faith feels good, in spite of everything we hear and say. And let us not try to find the appropriate (comforting) words, or the right thing to do in the presence of the poor. We must let the Lord act within us. We will know, on every occasion. The poor will know that our actions are inspired more by faith than by plain kindness.

Do we not leave, always, more than material goods when we leave the house of the poor?

Clermont Fortin, 1st Vice-President
National Council

COME AND VISIT OUR WEB SITE:

WWW.SSVP.CA

It has been rejuvenated!

The Site now sports
the colours of our logo.

We have also added a blog.
Subjects for discussion will be posted
regularly and we will welcome
your comments.

NATIONAL WEB SITE - NEW LINK

A new link was added to the web site,
at the end of March, to allow any person in need to
seek help from the Society.

A link “Need Help” was added on the Home page
of the site, which leads to an E-mail address,
Help@ssvp.ca. The person is invited to state
his/her need(s), and to leave a telephone number
and address. The Administrative Assistant at the
National Council receives the E-mail message and
forwards it to the nominated Vincentian in each of
the 5 Regional Councils for appropriate action.

With the addition of this link, the Society is
providing another tool to reach and serve the poor.

SSVP AND FORMATION

Erich Schmitz, Secretary General

From the very outset, SVP Conferences did not limit themselves to providing formation for the «many poor wretches » (1850) but also received formation themselves, using the words and correspondence of Saint Vincent and other Catholic writers.

After 176 years this intention remains the same. « It is vital for the Society to continue to encourage formation of its members and office-holders. (...) It therefore gives its members the opportunity to deepen their own formation, so that they are better equipped to assist in the cultural and social growth of those whom they serve and who request this help ». (2003)

Many member countries of the Confederation have developed formation programmes for their members, sometimes using the latest technology, sometimes through the work of professional fellow members. Ob-



E. Schmitz (left)

serving the benefits of these formation methods on the work of our members, and its effect on the poor, the Council General of the Confederation decided to establish the Bailly Lallier foundation, with the task of providing formation.

Some brief information about the Foundation is given in this issue of *Confeder@tioNews*.



José-Ramón Díaz Torremocha,
XIV Président Général

THE BAILLY & LALLIER FOUNDATION

I become ever more convinced that everyone, Christians and others, and in particular Vincentians, as we serve the poor, needs to dream.

Nothing can be done without first dreaming of giving better service, or creating new ways to overcome suffering. Creative human beings who want to improve their service to those who suffer, are always dreamers. The Bailly & Lallier foundation is the fruit of a dream to improve the on-going formation process that all of us Vincentians have to live. I am following my dream of seeing a formal process of formation reach all our members throughout the world, not just those in the wealthier countries, who already receive some kind of formation.

The poor, after all, are not just those whom we help, physically, spiritually and morally. There is a multitude of poorer Vincentian members who do not receive the on-going formation that we all need in order to provide a better service to the suffering. The Foundation is well and truly the inspired response to this need, since it will cross borders and serve all Vincentians in the same way.

They will receive excellent formation, in rich or poor countries, to help those who are suffering.

I know this is an arduous task. But any significant task, any enterprise requires effort. Taking formation to the four corners of the Vincentian world will be a great undertaking, no doubt about it. But we will succeed! We will succeed because we don't stop at the dreaming stage, we have already started the work, as you will read here, in the words of our brothers and sisters involved in the Foundation.

We will succeed because our Founders and our patron Saint Vincent de Paul will obtain Mary's help for us in overcoming this new challenge faced for the sake of the poor. As our Mother, she will intercede with her Son who will make the path smooth for us on our way to a successful outcome.

You can be sure of my own prayers, and my affection for you all.



Emmanuel Bailly
(1794-1861)



François Lallier
(1814-1886)

They are particularly significant figures in the history of the Society of St Vincent de Paul. They were among the group of seven founders of the Society in the spring of 1833 in Paris. Like Ozanam and their friends, Lallier was a young law student, from the provinces. Bailly, the older man, kept a boarding house for students. He was also a printer and a journalist. He passed on to them his experience in works of charity and his love of Vincent de Paul (one of his brothers was a Lazarist priest).

At the time when the small charitable group became formalised and transformed into a Society (consisting of four conferences at the outset), Bailly became the first president general, and Lallier his first secretary

general. Bailly wrote the foreword for the Rule, in which he expresses the spirit of the work; Lallier, the lawyer, wrote the articles. This rule, modified for the first time only in the 1960s, is still today a continuing source of inspiration for all the members.

The Bailly & Lallier foundation combines these two names to honour them and to recall the deeply mutual dimensions of the Foundation, just like the work of the conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul.

BUT... WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION?

*by Matthieu Bréjon de Lavergnée,
Secretary General of the Foundation
Jean Cherville, Deputy
Vice-President General for Formation*

The aim of the Bailly & Lallier Foundation is both simple and ambitious: to develop a shared culture among the 750,000 Vincentians working in almost 150 countries around the world.

Although the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul does collaborate here and there with other charitable organisations, our way of helping our neighbour is particular to ourselves. It is at once human, and therefore shared by all people of good will, Catholic, and therefore shared with our Christian brothers and sisters, and Vincentian, which is ours alone.

The Foundation also tries to consider new forms of poverty, and find ways to fight them.

It tries to encourage the laity, especially in works of charity which are one of the three essential missions of the Church, alongside the sacraments and the proclaiming of the Word, as Pope Benedict XVII reminds us in his encyclical *Deus caritas est*.

The Foundation's statutes are being drawn up at the moment. A comparative study has already been carried out among French, Spanish and Italian law, to find the most favourable framework to use. The search for funding is also on the agenda.

In specific terms, the Bailly & Lallier Foundation plans

to set up formation programmes first of all for its new members (basic formation) and those with responsibility in the Society (higher formation). It is thus meeting a need which has been long felt in the SSVP. This formation could then be used in full in countries that do not have any, and would supplement formation programmes in countries that already provide it.

There are five cycles: Cycle A (Basic Vincentian formation); B (Specific formation for members with responsibility in the Society); C (Formation on the role of the laity in the Church), D (Discussions and workshops on the laity in the Church) and E (Research into the SSVP and its history).

There are two levels to Cycle A: AB («Basic formation» which all Vincentians must do) and AS («Higher formation », a more in-depth formation for Vincentians with responsibility or for long-standing members).

Volunteers have been contacted to produce around 25 courses for the first cycle A. The Foundation currently has a small team of « teachers », which does need some more members.

WILLING HELPERS ARE WELCOME!

The level AB courses are practically ready. A few of the AS courses are ready as well, especially those which relate to spirituality, the Society's social action and systemic change.

The most important thing is to ensure that this project, essential to the Society's work and its future, should be prepared quickly so that this formation can be given to all Vincentian members.

We are working hard to achieve this aim.



Matthieu
Bréjon de Lavergnée



Jean Cherville

THE FOUNDATION IS "RECRUITING"

You are members of the SSVP.

You are interested in formation.

You are ready to contribute to the preparation of courses, or to carry out translations, or to help us set up the resources for formation (internet blog, video-conferencing, DVDs, etc.):

COME AND JOIN IN!

Please contact the Secretary General of the Foundation,
Matthieu Brejon de Lavergnée bdelavergnee@hotmail.com
Or the Vice-President General responsible for international formation:
Jean Cherville jean.cherville@wanadoo.fr

International - Concordat (conclusion)

Global Financial Crisis

It is recognised fully that the world financial situation has changed radically since June 2008. The world's worst financial crisis in over 70 years is having a huge impact on the appeals to the Society for help by the poor in all countries.

The countries which will suffer the most are the poorest of poor emerging countries
The IGC will be in the forefront of making every effort to help the poorest of the poor.
The poor in the 16 Concordat countries are making major demands on the resources of the Society in those 16 countries

However, the 16 countries are asked to maintain their commitments to the IGC in this time of world financial crisis

The grounds for that request are :
The contribution of 0,3% of their income will have no discernable impact on the funds needed by the 16 countries to help the poor in their own countries.
The Society in the poorest countries will need greater and more frequent support from IGC.

The way forward

IGC is the heart and driving force of the Society world wide
To enable IGC to fulfil properly its Role and Responsibilities, as the peak body of possibly the largest community based charitable organisation in the world, IGC needs to be properly resourced.

The formation of the Concord of the 16 nations is the basis for ensuring IGC is provided with the minimum financial resources it requires for the Mission of the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

IGC Financial Position

For many years the operational funding for the IGC has been seriously deficient for it to perform properly as the peak body of possibly the largest community based charitable organisation in the world.

The member countries of the International Confederation are effectively the sole source of funds for the work of the IGC Service Structure. Funds raised from outside sources, such as the EU in Brussels, are dedicated exclusively by IGC to support the work of the Society in emerging countries.

IGC Operating Results

The average per year for the 4 years 2005 - 2008 of IGC normal activities operating results were:

Revenue	
Contributions from Member Countries	€493 000 per year
Other income	€108 000 “ “
Total Income	€601 000 “ “
Expenditure	€(835 000) “ “
Deficit	€(234 000) “ “

All IGC Reserves were effectively extinguished in 2008

IGC 2005 to 2008 Operating Results

Main operating expenditure items were:

Personnel	355 000 € (43 % of Total Expenses)
Travel & Meetings	221 000 € (26 % of Total Expenses)
General Office Costs	157 000 € (19 % of Total Expenses)
Other Costs	102 000 € (12 % of Total Expenses)
Total Costs	835 000 €

(IGC paid 10 staff in 2008. Ave salary + costs per employee: € 35,500)

2008 Contributions to IGC

Only 16 of the 144 countries have the financial resources to contribute more than € 5,000 per annum to IGC

IGC

For many years the 16 countries have contributed around 93% of total contributions to IGC

In 2008 the 16 contributed € 658,500
The € 658,500 represented just 0.014% of 1 cent of the € 473 million income of the 16 countries

In 2008 other countries contributed € 30,500
The future financial security of IGC depends on the 16 countries contributing € 1.4 million per annum to IGC

IGC Operational Funding

Concordat 16 countries total commitments for 2009: € 840,000

Australia 300 000 €	Belgium 20 000 €
Brazil 55 000 €	Canada 40 000 €
China (Hong Kong) 10 000 €	England/Wales 25 000 €
Ireland 120 000 €	Italy 53 000 €
India 16 000 €	Monaco 16 000 €
New-Zealand 7 000 €	Scotland 25 000 €
Singapour 13 000 €	Spain 40 000 €
United States 100 000 €	France (AC)

IGC Financial Position Jan - April 2009

	Revenue
Contributions from Member Countries	239,869 €
Other income	1,757 €
	241,626 €
Operating Expenditure	(213,707 €)
Surplus	27,919 €

Concordat Countries contribute 97% of total contributions

International

ZAFEN

'It's Our Business'

Welcome to the Internet Pathway for Haitian Economic Development.

A joint project of the worldwide Vincentian Family, Fonkoze, DePaul University, and the Haitian Home-town Association Resource Group initiated on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the deaths of St. Louise de Marillac and St. Vincent de Paul.

As we previously announced, the Vincentian Family will be commemorating the 350th anniversary of the deaths of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac by launching Zafen.org. This joint project will enable people throughout the world to contribute to sustainable economic development in Haiti. The official launch for this exciting venture is April 1, 2010!

We are enthusiastic about the myriad ways in which members of the Vincentian Family can become active in Zafen.org. The website will offer you the following ways to get involved:

- Make micro-loans or donations as individuals
- Make micro-loans or donations as groups (as a community or parish, choir group, a class in a school, or any other organization).
- Give micro-credit as a gift (to a niece or nephew for their birthday, graduation, or other occasion).
- Offer a year-long scholarship for a child's education (a donation of \$50 will not only cover the full year but will also be matched by the Vincentian Family and thus send two children through school for a year!).

- Help Haiti toward re-forestation

- Purchase Zafèn items (T-shirts, buttons, coffee mugs, and more!)

We look forward to your participation in this meaningful opportunity to celebrate the lives of St. Louise de Marillac and St. Vincent de Paul, and to make a lasting difference in the lives of those in need.

ZAFEN "IT'S OUR BUSINESS"

Sincerely,

The Members of the Vincentian Family Board for the Pilot Micro-Credit Project in Haiti:

Mr. Eduardo Almeida, Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Ms. Yasmine Cajuste, Vincentian Marian Youth

Ms. Jacqueline Casseus,

International Association of Charities

Sr. Rosa María Sanchez, Daughters of Charity

Fr. Joseph Foley, Congregation of the Mission

Prof. Laura Hartman, DePaul University

Fr. Robert Maloney, Congregation of the Mission

GENEROSITY IS NOT OPTIONAL

In the 1930's, the French Catholic Boy Scouts adopted as their prayer one attributed to St Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits.

The prayer is as follows:

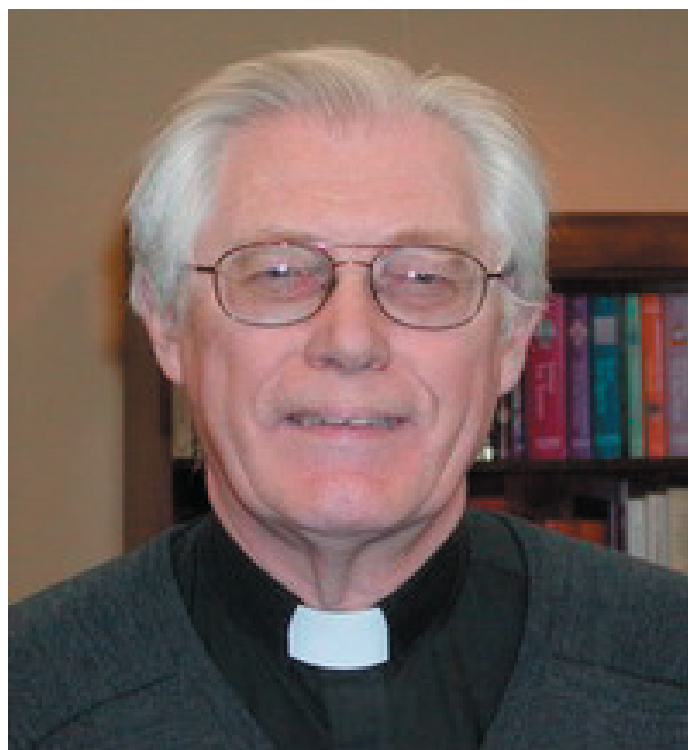
*Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous;
teach me to serve You as You deserve;
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not heed the wounds,
to toil and not seek rest,
to labour and not ask for reward
save that of knowing I am doing Your will.*

It is significant the St Ignatius asks as the first gift, to be generous. Indeed, generosity, for a disciple of Jesus Christ, is not optional. Psalm 94 (95), which opens on a daily basis the Prayer of the Church (more commonly known as the Breviary) states:

**If only you would listen to Him today.
Do not harden your hearts.**

The hard heart is the absolute negation of generosity. The hardhearted one is focused on his own little world, closed to what is beyond. Hard hearted are the priest and the Levite who pass by the wounded man who is subsequently looked after by the Samaritan, he whose heart was softened by the sight of the suffering neighbour. Generosity opens our being to God and to the other.

Yes one can understand generosity as being involved in material giving. Supporting one's parish in a proper manner denotes generosity, but this is but one understanding of the word. The Ignatian prayer quoted above helps one understand the rich definition of generosity. Is truly generous one who provides plenty of room and time in his or her life for prayer and for supporting and helping those in need.



Msgr. Peter Schonenbach

Generosity is what a Vincentian needs above all else so as to do Vincentian work, that requires by definition, openness to God and the readiness to invest time and resources in bringing Christ's tangible love to the world. Let us keep this in mind when dealing with difficult and conniving individuals, as well as when colleagues tax our patience with incompetent work.

The Lord puts the bar high in what He expects of us since His grace is there to help us achieve what He has in mind. Vincentian work is not coldly efficient social work, but rather making, through our efforts, Christ real to those in want and in suffering.

Advocacy - Housing

December 1st, 2009

Honourable Diane Finley
Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development
MP Haldimand-Norfolk (Ontario)
House of Commons
Ottawa, (Ontario)

Re: Bill C-304, An Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians.

Madam,

Bill C-304 has now passed Second Reading and is being reviewed by the Committee on Human Resources Skills Development, Social Development and Status of Persons with Disabilities. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul believes that Canada needs a national housing strategy, therefore supports this private member's bill and encourages the Government to ensure it becomes law.

Adequate housing is a fundamental human right as declared by the United Nations. A national housing strategy is long overdue and would go a long way in correcting a deficient housing situation in this country. The Government of Canada has primary responsibility in this field. The Society, serving the poor on a daily basis, supports a public policy that would allow all Canadian families, regardless of income and personal challenges, physical and/or mental, to have access to and live in accommodations meeting Canadian standards. All persons, particularly children, are entitled to live with dignity and security in decent housing.

Home visitation is a fundamental activity of the Society. During the past year Vincentians have conducted close to five hundred thousand (500,000) home visits to those in need². The home visit is the best way to develop a personal relation with the needy, listen to them without judging, and learn about their challenges and suffering. Food is provided most often to the underprivileged of our communities. However, it is with sadness that Vincentians realize that, in many cases, the savings on food allow families to have enough money to pay the rent at the end of the month. For most of the people served, rent and utility costs are simply too high for their revenues, even when the accommodation is sub-standard. This is the harsh reality faced by tens of thousands of individuals and families. Living with the fear of losing their housing, whether they are the working poor or on social benefits, is a reality for too many. There is an urgency to address this national systemic crisis.

Studies have demonstrated the socio-economic cost of the current housing crunch in Canada, which leads, among other things, to homelessness and health problems. In the end, governments at all levels pay more in social, judiciary and health support services when housing and housing support programs are deficient. The Society's position on this issue is also being voiced by other important organizations³.

Bill C-304 would establish the foundation of a concerted national policy and programs to address the housing issue. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul encourages this government to facilitate the adoption of this Bill, as soon as possible, for the common good.

On behalf of all those at risk of homelessness, forced to live in poorly maintained apartments or with friends and relatives in overcrowded premises or, reduced to street living,

Seeking Justice in Charity,

Clermont Fortin
1st Vice President
National Council of Canada
Society of saint-Vincent de Paul
Chair, voice of Poor Committee
Tel. : 613 824-9984
E-Mail: clermont.fortin2@sympatico.ca



CC: Hon. Michael Ignatieff, Leader, Liberal Party of Canada, and Leader of the Opposition, House of Commons
Hon. Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic Party
Hon. Gilles Duceppe, Président du Bloc Québécois
Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party of Canada

¹ The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization whose mission is to serve the poor in any possible way. The Society tries not only to meet the needs of the poor, but also to correct situations that cause poverty. Established in Canada in 1846, the Society has over 9,000 volunteer members active in all provinces, the North West Territories and Nunavut. For more information, visit our web site: www.ssvp.ca

² The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul – National Council of Canada Annual Report 2008/2009, page 22.

³e.g. Hunger Count 2009 Report by Food Banks of Canada.

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada
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Advocacy - Haiti

January 17, 2010

Honourable Lawrence Cannon
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Monsieur,

Object: Remission of Haiti's Foreign Debt

Sir,

Haiti was recently struck by another natural disaster, while still laboriously recovering from the hurricanes and tropical storms that ravaged the country in 2008. Material damages and loss of lives caused by the January 12 earthquake affected the entire country, and particularly the capital, Port-au-Prince, the heart of Haiti's political and economic activity. According to the latest reports, everything must be reconstructed, and a long journey of reorganization and reconstruction is starting. Governments and citizens of several countries, among them Canada, have shown extraordinary generosity and compassion towards the Haitian people.

The Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul has been involved in Haiti for several years through its twinning program. A large number of conferences (basic unit) in Canada, especially in Quebec, are twinning with Vincentian conferences and councils in Haiti. Thousands of dollars are thus sent to our Haitian colleagues every year, to support them in serving the poor. The National Council of Canada has launched a fund-raising campaign among its members, on behalf of the works of the Society in Haiti, following the earthquake.

In the wake of international assistance intended to help the people and the country getting through the ordeal and give them back some hope, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Canada believes that Canada could do more in a particular sphere, based on its reputation at the international level and its history of humanitarian and economic help in Haiti. Canada should seek the support of foreign Governments to clear Haiti's foreign debt. Considering the country's precarious economic situation, and the political and social instability resulting from this recent disaster, such a measure is essential; it would complement all other gestures of solidarity made in the last days. The Canadian Government must show leadership in that field.

The Government has good arguments. Besides its reputation and various engagements in Haiti over the years, Canada has cleared, in 2009, 2.3 million dollars debt owed by Haiti; furthermore, the Government has contributed over 14 million dollars in emergency assistance to Haiti since 2001, from a sum of 555 million dollars allocated for the period 2001 and 2015. Canada's assistance to the poorest among Caribbean countries comes second, after its engagement in Afghanistan. Finally, we must realize that the Haiti Government's capacity to manage its financial obligations is rather weak.



As you know, last year, the World Bank has concluded an agreement that led to a 1.2 billion dollars reduction of Haiti's foreign debt, leaving the country with a debt burden of approximately 890 million dollars. The main creditors are the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Inter-American Bank, and approximately 27 countries.

We ask that the Canadian Government approach the international community to clear entirely Haiti's foreign debt. This would be another way to show our solidarity with that people, who is suffering and trying to regain hope.

Sincerely,

Clermont Fortin
1st Vice-President
National Council of Canada
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
Tel. 613 824-9984
E-mail: clermont.fortin2@sympatico.ca

CC : *Hon. Peter Kent, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas)*
Hon. Beverley J. ODA, Minister of International Cooperation
Hon. Michael Ignatieff, President of the Liberal Party of Canada and Leader of the Opposition, House of Commons
Hon. Jack Layton, President of the New Democratic Party
Hon. Gilles Duceppe, President of Bloc québécois

¹ The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization whose mission is to serve the poor in all possible ways. The Society attempts not only to meet the needs of the poor, but also seeks to remedy situations leading to poverty. Established in Canada since 1846, the Society has more than 9,000 volunteer members, active in all provinces, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.

² Ottawa Citizen, September 15, 2009. Article by Laura Payton.

Twinning

WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR TWINNING FUNDS?

Members often ask about the process of sending twinning funds.

Following are excerpts from the upcoming National Twinning Manual, yet to be approved:

3G TRANSMITTAL OF FUNDS

The Donating Conference/Council sends funds, in the form of a cheque, and also the External Transmittal Form (included in the twinning package, which is sent with the external twin application, or available on the National Council website/twinning) to the National Council office. The cheque is payable to: Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, National Council of Canada. The cheque and Transmittal Form are to be sent to: Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, National Council of Canada, Twinning, 2463 Innes Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1B 3K3. The Donating Conference/Council sends funds to National Council in quarterly contributions or once a year. The National Council Secretary must receive these funds by the 30/31st of the month previous to February, May, August, and November. The National Council will use part of these funds for fees required to cover other costs. After receiving the cheque and Transmittal Form, the National Council Secretary sends notification to the sending Donating Conference/Council, either by email or mail. The secretary then sends a bank transfer to the National Council of the recipient twin and emails a list of the recipient Conferences/Councils. The Receiving National Council, in turn, passes the funds to the Receiving Conference/Council. The Canadian National Council Secretary will send confirmation to the Donating Twinning Contact Person that funds (including the amount) have been sent to the National Council of the recipient twin on your behalf.

(From National Twinning Policy 002 and Twinning Guidelines)

3H TIMELINE FOR TRANSMITTAL OF FUNDS

The transmittal of funds should be processed and sent to the recipient's National Council and confirmation of transmitted funds sent to the Donating Twinning Contact Person, within 6 weeks of the quarterly transmittal-of-funds date (i.e. the 30/31st of the month preceding February, May, August, and November). The time it takes for the Recipient's National Council to pass funds to the Receiving Conference/Council varies according to their operational capacity and is largely unknown and unpredictable. Upon receiving funds, the receiving twin can inform the Donating Conference/Council through correspondence when funds were received. The

Donating Conference/Councils can then infer how long it takes for funds to be sent.

(Adapted from Twinning Guidelines)

31 TROUBLESHOOTING

ISSUE: The Donating Conference/Council has not received correspondence from the Receiving Conference/Council to indicate that funds have been received.

SOLUTION: Receiving Conference/Councils may not send confirmation that funds have been received each time funds are received, although it should be encouraged to. If you have not heard from your twin for a year, send a transmittal of funds as usual through National Council. Also send a separate letter to the twin notifying them that funds are coming, but that you need to hear from them before you can send any more funds. Remember them in your prayers. Continue to send other and frequent correspondence for another six months. If you still do not hear from them after 6 months, send an inquiry to the National Twinning Chairperson who will follow up with the Recipient's National Council. Wait until you receive a reply from your twin that funds have been received before sending further funds. (Adapted from Twinning Guidelines – original and revised 2007 version)

ISSUE: A Donating Conference/Council has additional funds to send to their twin (over the \$500.00 quarterly or \$2000.00 yearly limit).

SOLUTION: The Donating Conference/Council may consider submitting an application for a Twinning Project, or applying for an additional twin.

Kathy Weswick
Canadian Twinning Chairperson
twinning-chair@ssvp.ca



Council in action

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CAMP

St. Vincent De Paul Camp is owned and operated by the Society of Saint Vincent De Paul Particular Council Kent Deanery. The camp opened in 1974 on a site 4 miles east of Thamesville on hwy #2, consisting of 69 acres with about 25 acres cleared and the remainder bush. The camp has provided children from all walks of life with a safe, exhilarating and memorable camping experience, regardless of their financial circumstances.

The camp is located in one of Canada's significant areas called Bothwell Forest/Skunk's Misery. It is one of a few large forested tracts in southwestern Ontario and one of the most significant woodlands in Chatham-Kent for size, diversity, forest cover and rare species. The district Ecologist has identified 244 different species of plants.

There are a wide variety of activities with themes incorporated into each week. Experienced, creative and caring staff guides campers through these activities and strives to encourage, educate and challenge each camper. The Society is committed to giving all children regardless of denomination or financial circumstances a "SUMMER OF MEMORIES".

The camp is a member of the Ontario Camps Association. Each resident camper calls one of ten cabins their home for a week; each cabin accommodates ten campers and two staff counsellors. Thanks in part to the financial support of many SSVP Councils and Conferences, community service clubs, organizations and businesses; our on-going upgrading and expansion program has allowed us to accommodate 700 plus campers during the summer. We need to continue upgrading our facilities if we are to offer meaningful summer camping experiences.

Some of the up-grades that we have been able to do over the years are;

2003- We were able to build 8 new larger cabins from Estate money that had been left to the camp.

2004- We upgraded the water filtration system at a cost of \$25,000.

2006- Built a new 30' X 70' craft hall and storage building from Estate money.



We obtained grants to install new windows in the Rec hall/ Director House and Dining hall. We also upgraded the washrooms.

2008 - We added new playground equipment

We thank all the SSVP Councils and Conferences for sponsoring children to attend St Vincent De Paul Camp and also for your continued financial support. Please visit our web site www.svdpcamp.com for more information.

**THE INVESTMENT
WE MAKE IN OUR YOUTH
WILL PAY BIG DIVIDENDS**

Brenda Kormendy, President



History - George Muir



“Mr. George Muir... a model Catholic eminently worthy of taking his place alongside Ozanam” (H.-R. Casgrain, historian, 1896).

History - George Muir

GEORGE MANLY MUIR, A MAN OF VINCENTIAN COMPASSION

by Anita L. Charpentier, S.C.I.M.

Among the pioneers of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Canada stand the figures of Dr. Joseph-Louis Painchaud, founder of the first Canadian Conference, and Lawyer George Manly Muir, founder of the first Conference in English-speaking Canada. Both men were inspired by the Society's original founder in Paris, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, and both men practiced his boundless charity for persons in need.

Joseph-Louis Painchaud met Ozanam while doing medical studies in Paris and witnessed the amazing impact of his group of university friends among the poorest classes in France during its social upheavals of the 1800s. Known at first as the Conference of Charity, the group sought a patron saint universally recognized for his charity, and adopted the name Society of St. Vincent de Paul. On returning to Canada, young Dr. Painchaud wasted no time meeting with the local pastor and gathering friends to set up the first Canadian Conference of that new Society, in Quebec City on November 12, 1846.

George Manly Muir joined the Society in Montreal in early 1849, following some friends who were civil servant colleagues. This was barely a year after the founding of the Society's first Montreal Conference on March 19, 1848, by Bishop Ignace Bourget. When Mr. Muir's official duties took him to Quebec City, he became a member of the Notre-Dame Conference on November 16, 1849. But when another government move took him to Toronto, he hastened to found a Conference with new friends in this city, on November 10, 1850, in St. Michael's Cathedral sacristy. It was the first Conference in English Canada. Afterwards, Mr. Muir long pursued his Vincentian activities in Quebec City.

The short life and missionary aspirations of Dr. Joseph-Louis Painchaud (1819-1855) are well known among the many Canadian Conferences today. The time has come to recognize and honor George Manly Muir, the 2nd official National President of the Society and the 1st Clerk of the Quebec Legislative Assembly..., despite his efforts to remain in the shadow of his many remarkable achievements.

Who was this Vincentian apostle of compassionate vision, this competent civil servant significant in Canadian and Quebec history? It is interesting, first of all, to consider the main factors that marked his youth and forged his character and spirituality, just as it would be to trace the determining influences in our own lives.

YOUTHFUL PREPARATION

George Manly Muir was born April 16, 1807 in the village of Sandwich, near the military post of Amherstburg, Upper Canada (now Ontario), and was baptized in St. John Anglican church. His father, Adam Charles Muir (c.1766-1829), a Scots Presbyterian, had joined the British 41st Regiment of Foot; he served brilliantly in Canada during the War of 1812 and was promoted Brevet Major. George's mother, Marie Elizabeth Benoît-Bender (1785-?), was a fervent Catholic from Montreal. The Christian faith of his parents was therefore the first and fundamental factor in George's life.

Their family backgrounds and opposite characters were the second important influence on their son. Married respectively at ages 31 and 15, Adam and Eliza differed sharply in temperament. Adam's military sternness was

offset by his young wife's liveliness and spontaneous humor, her deep faith, and her fortitude in trials. His Scottish origins and her German and French Canadian roots gave George a rich bilingual and multicultural upbringing. This would open many doors for him in social encounters, in his government career, and in his charitable endeavors, especially as a Vincentian member.

The third basic factor was undoubtedly the paralysis George suffered at age 12, which left him with a permanent limp. His father, disappointed not to make a serviceman of him, turned away and left him to his mother's care. The double shock of living with a handicap and losing his father's attention deeply hurt the boy but would later open his eyes to the pain and hidden suffering of others.

As a result, 12-year-old George followed his heart's inclination to the Catholic faith of his mother and adopted it in a religious ceremony in Windsor in 1819. He then left home to pursue classical studies at the Saint-Sulpice Seminary in Montreal. (This college was inspired by Jesuit educational methods and eventually led to the establishment of the University of Montreal.) The impressive intellectual and spiritual education received during the four years George Muir spent there would constitute the fourth determining factor in his human and spiritual development.

Founded in France in 1641 by Jean-Jacques Olier, the Sulpician Congregation was essentially dedicated to priestly formation; and since Olier was a close friend of Vincent de Paul, his priestly members ardently devoted themselves to caring for the poor. In Montreal where the impoverished abounded in the early 1800s, the Sulpicians created networks of assistance, particularly in collaboration with the religious congregations of women at the time and, as of 1848, with the Society

of St. Vincent de Paul. They powerfully facilitated the Society's work in all the city's parishes, provided space for meetings, and assigned one of their members as first chaplain of the Particular Council of Montreal, the Reverend Léonard-Vincent-Léon Villeneuve, P.S.S.

In this atmosphere, the teenager's mind and heart blossomed. His keen intelligence reveled in the well-rounded college courses such as history, geography, mathematics, philosophy, languages like French, English, Latin and Greek, and an intensive study of the Gospels. His soul was strengthened through the prayers to which his mother Eliza had accustomed him—spiritual reading, the Mass, the Rosary, and visits to the Blessed Sacrament. One stipulation of the Seminary rule touched him personally, that of visits to sick classmates. Quite an inspiring preparation for a future Vincentian!

George may have thought of the priesthood but chose instead to read Law, possibly because of his limp; for the same reason no doubt, he never practiced as a lawyer but would gain employment as a government secretary. As of 1825, he pursued law studies under two lawyers, Jean-Roch Rolland and William Craigie Holmes Coffin, both of whom later occupied prestigious roles in courts of justice. Mr. Holmes Coffin also became very involved in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Such professional connections left their mark on George Manly Muir, as a fifth formative factor in his life. Admitted to the bar on March 25, 1830, he then undertook a civil service career which would span nearly half a century and in which he served his country with competence, integrity and distinction.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

In the 1830s, this country was still under colonial rule, and the seat of government was often moved because of

History - George Muir

cultural and political considerations.

When the Constitutional Act of 1791 divided the colony into two Provinces, Upper and Lower Canada, the Assembly of Lower Canada met in Quebec City until 1837, at the Bishop's Residence in Montmorency Park. This is where George Muir first became a clerk or secretary of the English Journal of Debates, and his office was on the north side of the building.

But when the 1837-1838 Rebellions broke out in both Provinces, their assemblies were dissolved and a Special Council was created which met at the Château Ramezay in Montreal. During this period, few civil servants were required, and George Muir suddenly found himself without a job; he thereby experienced unemployment and had to find work in unfamiliar surroundings. This could be seen as a sixth basic factor influencing his life. The situation reminded him of his own family's financial straits after his father's death in 1829 before full military pensions were instituted. How readily he would relate to the dire needs of the poor and the unemployed who "fall between the cracks"!

Following the Act of Union of 1840 (effective in February 1841), which joined Upper and Lower Canada as the single Province of Canada, Mr. Muir was restored to his secretarial position. But then began a constant migration, as unrest, destructive fires and political conflicts forced officials to move the seat of government from Kingston (1841-1843) to Montreal (1844-1849), to Toronto (1850-1851), to Quebec City (1852-1855), back to Toronto (1856-1859), to Quebec City (1860-1865), and to Ottawa (1866).

This situation was very disruptive, as both elected representatives and civil servants like George Muir had to relocate their offices and living quarters repeatedly in different cities.

Finally, in 1867, the British North America Act raised the three colonies (the Province of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) to the status of a federation with four Provinces: Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Many civil servants stayed in Ottawa to have better salaries. Proud of belonging to both the English and the French races, but attached to Quebec for many reasons, Mr. Muir chose the capital city of the new Province of Quebec, even though this meant a lower income. Initially appointed Clerk of the Executive Council, he became the first Clerk of the Quebec Legislative Assembly on October 27, 1867.

As Clerk of the House, he was in fact secretary general, in charge of the administration, personnel and services of the House, including the parliamentary Minutes, Library and Archives. These were daunting responsibilities in a newly-formed government! But George Manly Muir managed them all with a master's hand during a twelve-year-long tenure.

So much instability, with the disarray caused by frequent moves and the loss of irreplaceable documents by fire, was more than enough to occupy a civil servant like George Manly Muir. Yet he found time to live a meaningful private life, to become involved in charitable organizations, and even to found several lasting works that leave us in amazement.

To be continued...

Homelessness 101

by Albert Lozier, National Council collaborator and member of
Development & Peace of the Ottawa Archdiocese.

BARRIERS TO HAVING/KEEPING YOUR OWN PLACE TO LIVE

A number of diverse and complex factors have contributed to the problems of homelessness, mostly in large cities. Many of these factors are interrelated. The homeless are vulnerable because of economic, social, or personal reasons.

Lack of enough affordable and assisted decent housing (needs exceed resources); high housing costs; increases in other costs (damage deposits, first and last months rents, credit check charges, moving costs); families too large for available space; language, educational, and economic barriers that complicate housing searches; families with older boys and fathers are hard to place
Mental illness or disability and the lack of needed services.

Substance addiction and the lack of needed services

Low minimum wage, underpaid jobs, underemployment, unemployment; physical disability, or chronic health problems of family wage-earners.

Actual or threatened domestic violence or harassment; relationship breakdown.

Poverty; debts; low income, low welfare; day-to-day living (a job loss or illness will upset living arrangements); costly day-care; single parents with children; poor rental track record, past evictions; immigrants and refugees; minority groups; seniors may not have planned for their future, elderly without jobs or pension.

Criminal record, on parole, released from prison, in custody

Downturn in the economy; slowed economy producing layoffs.

Limited life skills; lack of employability skills; poor education; younger parents; pregnant or parenting teens; young adults released from foster care; runaway teens or those who have been rejected by their parents
Not enough resources for social services; changes and cuts in public assistance programs; less relationship building (intervention, case management, and therapy) that nurture personal growth towards independence; reduction in charitable donations, volunteerism, or non-profit programs (high cost of insurance)

Public housing that is sometimes socially unfit (users and pushers in the neighbourhood)

Refusal of shelter to individuals who are unmanageable (drunk, violent, aggressive, etc.)

LENGTH OF THE PERIOD OF HOMELESSNESS

The duration of life on the streets depends on several interdependent factors.

- Degree of accessibility of resources (housing and financial)
- Degree of external supports (personal and professional)
- Degree of personal resources and job skills

Limitation of personal skills and capacities by old age, disability, poor physical health, addiction, mental illness, and criminal history

Homelessness 101

CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS

Every story is unique, but many individuals or families that experience homelessness share some of the following stages.

- Living in a home: affordable permanent housing (private or subsidized)
- Chronic or punctual causes to possible loss of housing occur
- Subsidies for housing costs and support are provided
- Chronic or punctual causes bring loss of housing
- Short or long homelessness period
- Emergency shelter and support
- Transitory supported/assisted/affordable housing
- Permanent supported/assisted/affordable housing
- Permanent assisted/affordable housing
- Permanent private/affordable housing

DAYTIME ACTIVITIES FOR RESIDENTS IN EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Due to insufficient funding, some emergency shelters are closed during the day or part of the day.

During the day or part of the day, homeless families may have to leave shelters in which they are staying

Adults go to day shelters or drop-in centers; work or seek employment; seek housing; receive services, life skills, or training programs; apply for benefits; continue treatment; locate resources; pursue agreed upon goals.

Children go to school or daycare.

In addition, homeless people use libraries, local parks,

streets, malls, stores, or public transport to keep warm when nothing else is available

ALTERNATIVES FOR INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES WHO CANNOT BE PROVIDED A SHELTER OR VOUCHERS FOR HOTELS/MOTELS

Those who do not receive needed emergency shelter because of insufficient beds have alternatives, most of them undesirable.

- Return to reside in their cars
- Return to reside with the batterer
- Seek assistance from churches.
- Live with relatives or friends
- Go to jail for vagrancy
- Sleep in parks, on the streets, in doorways, under freeways or bridges, in dumpsters
- Stay with unsuitable men if you are a woman
- Go to campgrounds
- Squat in abandoned buildings
- Return to unsanitary housing
- Sleep in public buses or subway cars
- Walk the streets at night

SPECIFIC MEASURES BY MUNICIPAL, COUNTY, PROVINCIAL, AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS THAT WOULD HELP ALLEVIATE HOMELESSNESS

Appropriate funding for housing and services will go a long way towards alleviating and preventing homelessness.

Increase funding for support services for homeless residents, former homeless residents, and low-income homeowners.

Increase capital funding and tax incentives to maintain and develop affordable (low-priced) housing by private and government initiatives

Provide housing rental and utilities subsidies targeted to providing permanent supportive housing for the homeless.

Provide housing mortgage and utilities subsidies to maintain safe, decent, stable, and affordable community housing to those who already have a home but little income (families with minor children whose income is at or below 200 percent of the poverty level, and who are facing imminent loss of housing will receive emergency financial assistance and support services).

Increase funding for homelessness prevention program (identification of at-risk individuals and families, needs assessment, intervention with needed resources, and long term tracking to ensure favourable outcomes).

Maintain up-keep of actual emergency, transition, and permanent units.

Create and maintain more permanent housing units, in scattered sites, with rental subsidy programs.

Address substance abuse and mental illness issues (provide funding for more social services, mental health and substance abuse treatment).

Provide case management, employment counseling, other supportive services, and housing to youth who

are too old to remain in foster care, yet too young or without appropriate resources to rent apartments on the open market.

Subsidize low-income families or individuals, or households with special needs so that they do not have to pay more than 30 percent of their income towards rent.

Address limited skills issues by offering job-specific training that leads to employment and by funding more job developers to help homeless people obtain employment so they can earn livable wages (employment training, placement, and retention services).

Provide immediate assistance to first time homeless families to ensure that they maintain or secure a home with financial and employment assistance until they are financially independent.

Increase funding for criminal justice diversion programs, and for parolees and ex-offenders (re-entry programs: orientation and information sessions on employment, life skills training sessions, and transitional and emergency housing opportunities).

Establish Provincial Housing Trust Funds that primarily fund rental housing for extremely low-income families, for persons with disability or health issues, for elderly
Increase funding for programs that serve chronically homeless people and people at risk of homelessness (permanent supportive housing, case management - including follow-up --, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and health care).

Establish a coalition of stakeholders to coordinate the multiple public and private programs, services, and or-

Homelessness 101

ganizations that seek to address homelessness issues, each with their own goals (capital funding and service funding must be coordinated); partner with all local community action agencies that are presently involved in addressing the needs of the homeless, in order to avoid needless duplication of services and squandering of resources.

Address the needs of both the chronic homeless (often individuals who need intensive help and care) and the episodic homeless (often families who need emergency shelters, transitional housing, and other services, but who are more motivated to climb out of homelessness).

Address short-term (shelter) and long-term (housing) needs through procedures that are not only reactive but preventive; ensure that waiting lists take in consideration the urgency of needs and long term effects of non-provision.

Create and maintain permanent housing with on-going support for chronically homeless persons.

Fund the building of affordable subsidized housing units for non-disabled single adults and families of extremely low income, with providers grants preferably given to nonprofit, faith-based, or community-based organizations that exhibit an enduring commitment to supportive management.

Target homeless families with children ages birth to 6 (high quality early care can help children stabilize from the homeless experience, while giving parents support to work, study, and perform housing search).

Declare homelessness a health crisis and extend physi-

cal and mental medical assistance to single adults or families living in shelters and on the street.

Increase the percent of rent paid by subsidy, especially for families at the lower income levels (at or below 30 percent of the median family income).

Support an increase in the minimum wage which will more realistically help individuals and families meet basic needs such as housing.

Make substance treatment and mental health hospitalizations longer, to insure better stability and longer sobriety; provide more half-way residences for recovering substance abusers and mentally ill where they can be supervised in taking their medicine and treatment.

Study and promote the duplication of exemplary existing effective service delivery systems (best practices)....

Foster a holistic approach to family housing with a comprehensive program (employment or educational enhancement, life skills, community support, children's enhancement programs, and savings, etc.) designed to increase employability of parents, encourage family stability, and increase capacity for wage advancement.

Address the on-going emergency shelter needs of persons who choose to remain on the street or who return to the streets (especially in cold weather).

Facilitate housing search and application process for chronically homeless.

Provide stabilization programs during the transition period from the street to housing (help new residents to

link to sources of community support so that they will maintain their housing).

Spend as much time and money preventing homelessness as fighting it.

Take all possible means to ensure family stability and to avoid break-up of families for shelter reasons, with the welfare of children as a primary consideration (family shelters should accommodate whole families, not force break-ups).

If temporary sleeping shelters are closed during the daytime, provide other venues for activities that will prevent people returning to the streets.

Increase the length of emergency stays for families, to allow more time for housing search and for case management to effect some stabilization.

Help to keep families in their current housing or find another temporary housing option until a shelter unit becomes available; every family who needs immediate emergency shelter must be placed without being split.

Address the needs of those who refuse shelter or are refused shelter for antisocial behaviour by the creation and management of smaller, harm reduction type shelters.

Avoid shelter placement for most families, by expedited placement in affordable housing with extensive follow-up case management support.



LIVING SITUATIONS OF PERSONS BEFORE THEIR ENTRY INTO A PERMANENT HOUSING PROGRAM

- Place not meant for human habitation
- Emergency shelter or transitional housing
- Psychiatric facility
- Substance abuse treatment center
- Hospital (non-psychiatric)
- Jail, prison, or juvenile detention center
- Rented housing unit (could not afford rent or were evicted)
- Owned housing unit (could not afford mortgage)
- Staying with relatives or friends, or in a foster care home
- Hotel or motel (with or without voucher)

THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF HOMELESS POLICY

1. The belief that homelessness is the problem in itself (and not a symptom or effect of underlying systemic causes) prevails.
2. The belief that homeless people are second-class citizens and are personally to blame for their situation is current: homelessness is seen as primarily caused by the personal deficiencies of homeless individuals.
3. Ever-changing policies are geared toward trying to fix homeless people. Different subpopulations are targeted by different programs.
4. Periodic calls for local homeless plans are issued, based upon the newest policies. Temporary and local-responses to homelessness fail to address its systemic-causes.
5. Homelessness continues or increases.

LEGAL SOURCES OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING UNDER INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW: SEVEN SELECTED INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS, COVENANTS, DECLARATIONS, RESOLUTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

La Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), adopted by the UN General Assembly, in Article 25, states that: “(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959), proclaimed by UN General Assembly, in resolution 1386 (XIV) Principle 4, states that : “The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end special care and protection shall be provided to him and his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.”

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), Recommendation No. 115 on Worker's Housing (1961), Principle 2, states that: “It should be an objective of national policy to promote, within the framework of general housing policy, the construction of housing and related community facilities with a view to ensuring that adequate and decent housing accommodation and a suitable living environment are made available to all

workers and their families. A degree of priority should be accorded to those whose needs are most urgent.”

The Declaration on Social Progress and Development (1969), proclaimed by UN General Assembly, in resolution 2542 (XXIV) Part II, states that: “Social progress and development shall aim at the continuous raising of the material and spiritual standards of living of all members of society, with respect for and in compliance with human rights and fundamental freedoms, through the attainment of the following main goals: Article 10 (f) The provision for all, particularly persons in low-income groups and large families, of adequate housing and community services.”

The UN General Assembly resolution 42/146, entitled “The realization of the right to adequate housing” (1987), states that: “The General Assembly reiterates the need to take, at the national and international levels, measures to promote the right of all persons to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate housing; and calls upon all States and international organizations concerned to pay special attention to the realization of the right to adequate housing in carrying out measures to develop national shelter strategies and settlement improvement programmes within the framework of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000.”

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990), adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 45/158 Article 43.1, states that: “Migrant workers shall enjoy equality of treatment with nationals of the State of employment in relation to: . . . (d) Access to housing, including social housing schemes, and

protection against exploitation in respect of rents.”

The 1993 Commission on Human Settlements resolution 14/6, entitled “The human right to adequate housing”, states that: “The Commission on Human Settlements urges all States to cease any practices which could or do result in the infringements of the human right to adequate housing, in particular the practice of forced, mass evictions and any form of racial or other discrimination in the housing sphere”; . . . “Urges all States to comply with existing international agreements concerning the right to adequate housing, and to this end, to establish . . . appropriate monitoring mechanisms to provide, for national and international consideration,

accurate data and indicators on the extent of homelessness, inadequate housing conditions, persons without security of tenure, and other issues arising from the right to adequate housing and providing insights into policy, structural and other impediments to the efficient operation of the shelter sector.”



Environment

Eco-trend... bottled water

¹THE CANADIAN SCENE.

In Canada, water is everywhere. This country is one of the rare places on earth where its citizens do not worry much about its availability to quench a thirst, or by wasting away the precious resource as more, always, can be siphoned up from the underground basins or aquatic surfaces. Too many of us believe water is a renewable resource (not so), that we have plenty of it and so affordable. But water scarcity is part of the Canadian scene. The Council of Canadians reports that 20% of municipalities have faced water shortages in recent years¹. The most visible sign of our carefree relation to water is our prolific use of bottled water.

Bottled H₂O is as trendy as the cell phone. However, it has significant effects on our environment. It is a source of pollution with the energy (fossil fuels) required for the production, transportation and recycling of tons of plastic and glass, with a large number of bottles ending in landfills, all that while we have access to clean tap water. As well, it cost hundreds of times more than tap water and does not have to submit to same purity checks (in Ottawa, water is analysed every 45 minutes). Tap water must be good as some companies (ex. Dasani made by Coca Cola²) use municipal water to supply their bottling plants.

Fortunately, this current complacent attitude is changing as water treatment, a public utility in Canada, is costing more and pollution by industrial/human activity is cause for concern to more and more people. Many municipalities and institutions (e.g. schools) have already banned the sale of bottled water; the movement is gaining momentum.

The Society's principle on stewardship of the earth's resources and the Church's teaching on respect of the Creation is calling us to act in harmony with nature and with restraint for the benefit of future generations. Vincentians should reflect on the bottled water issue, and may wish to take the lead to reduce or eliminate bottled water at meetings and in their community. This action would be congruent with nature protection and conservation. SSVP Stores are recycling outlets; we should do more to promote the "green" aspects of this service activity, including the promotion of the ethical use of water in solidarity with the poor and for the common good. It is part of the Society's mission.

Clermont Fortin
1st VP, NCC- SSVP
April 2010

¹*Council of Canadians, 2009 report title Unbottle it!*

²*Magazine Capital Style, Food & Drink, p. 44.*