

TEN FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES IN THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

by Robert P. Maloney, C.M.

Here are ten building blocks upon which the Church's entire social teaching rests.
Follow this link for the details: ssvp.on.ca/socjus/en/SocialJustice.php?item=4



CLICKABLE!

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Readers,

The format of the *Vincenpaul Canada* magazine and the Changing Times newsletter were modified. We will now publish an electronic version of the *Vincenpaul Canada* newsletter. Three editions of this newsletter are dedicated to social justice: editions of February, June and October.

Please enjoy this Social Justice edition of the *Vincenpaul Canada* newsletter of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. I encourage you to submit any articles or comments that you may have about social justice for the next edition. You may also like to join our Facebook page for further discussions. Please help us to grow in our understanding and actions related to social justice.

Sincerely,

*Jim Paddon, Chairperson
National Social Justice Committee*

jpsvvp@hotmail.ca

CHAIR REPORT

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

Welcome to the June Social Justice Edition of *Vincenpaul*. All such editions will now be shorter in content, but I would encourage you to use the national website as a resource for further social justice information: www.ssvp.ca/social-justice. You can also contact us for any of your needs or questions at jpsvvp@hotmail.ca.

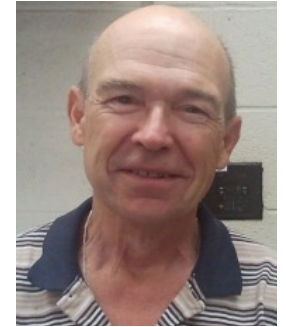
I would like to ask our readers to help our committee in identifying important social justice issues that should be addressed by the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. These could be national, regional or local issues. Please assist us by submitting your ideas to Jim Paddon at jpsvvp@hotmail.ca by September 1, 2018. Your comments and recommendations will greatly enhance our ability to develop a strategic plan related to social justice. While the issues certainly include affordable housing, homelessness, a fair and living wage, pharma care and food insecurity, there are other issues that we need to consider. Please help us with your submissions.

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE GUIDE IS NOW AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE AS A RESOURCE FOR CURRENT SOCIAL JUSTICE REPS OR ANYONE INTERESTED IN BEING A REP. PLEASE READ THE VARIOUS ARTICLES AND USE THEM AT YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL/CONFERENCE.

I would like to thank all council and conference presidents who have supported our request to appoint a social justice rep and to add social justice as an agenda item for all meetings. If you have not done so yet, please help us to achieve these goals. The social justice guide is also a very good tool to use to educate potential social justice reps about their role. If you have a rep at the council level and several conference reps, please form a committee at council level. This committee can then meet and discuss various topics and consider future action steps. The group dynamic of a social justice committee will also act as a supportive component of any success the committee hopes to achieve. It is always important to educate ourselves about poverty and what kind of advocacy or systemic change we should undertake. One of the best ways to do this is to engage with our neighbours in need and to listen them. The home visit can and should be an integral component of this undertaking. We can provide information on how you can use the home visit as a systemic change tool to increase our knowledge and understanding of poverty and how it affects those living in poverty.

Sincerely,

*Jim Paddon, Chairperson
National Social Justice Committee*



SPIRITUALITY

BELIEVING IN PEOPLE

To bring people around to making real systemic changes to their lives, one must believe in people. To grasp the good elements in a person, one must take the time to really understand that person.

We are all products of our story and this should never be overlooked. Lack of good parental guidance, bad experiences in school and with the law, early sexual victimization, these are all baggage that often hides the good inherent in a person.

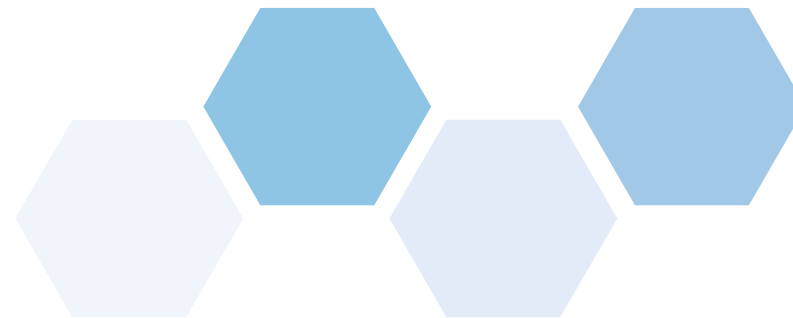
A conference that seriously wants to bring people out of poverty, must prepare well:

- Have sufficient membership so that the systemic change work is done without affecting the emergency assistance work.
- Have a good grasp of the neighbourhood, its challenges, as well as its advantages.
- Know well the various social services available in the area, develop contacts.
- From the first home visit, keep eyes open to detect individuals who give some indication that change would be possible.
- Commit the work to God on a daily basis.

One thing that can be guaranteed is the joy one feels when someone works their way out of the problems they face and begins to live a reasonably normal life; this is a wonderful gift.

In evaluating the people we serve, do remember that God does not create garbage!

Msgr. Peter Schonenbach
National Spiritual Advisor



THE HOME VISIT AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE

When the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul began in 1833, the first action undertaken by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and his fellow Vincentians was the home visit to those living in poverty. The notion of going out in pairs is one that few in other organizations attempt and yet when Ozanam asked Blessed Sister Rosalie Rendu what action they may take to demonstrate what their Catholic faith meant to them, she recommended the home visit. There are always some concerns about visiting someone who likely lives in an area afflicted by poor health, sanitation and danger to one's own safety.

However, Ozanam and his followers heeded Sister Rosalie's advice and began what I believe could be considered a true systemic change project. They went to seek and find Jesus Christ in the face of the poor of Paris and by serving Him through their actions, they were able to understand what Saint Vincent meant when he said it is us who are evangelized by Christ through our personal contact with Him as we meet the poor person.

The purity and spirituality of those first home visits continue to be the major focus of the work of the Society. However, if we look at the fact that Ozanam, who was a strong social justice advocate, most certainly realized, these home visits also gave us an opportunity to listen to those we seek to help and, in doing so, we gain a unique understanding of poverty. This understanding then enables us to speak and act in ways that may result in alleviating the causes of poverty.

There is no doubt that in today's world, the same reasons for doing home visits are just as important and vital if we are to fully understand why poverty exists and how we may encourage systemic change that can lead to hope for all for a better future. Unfortunately, for some of our members, the home visit has become more of a delivery service, which erodes the original intent.

In addition, we have some conferences that no longer do home visits. The reasons for both actions usually include an aging membership, lack of members and fear of going to some locations. Whether these are reasons or excuses, I will not judge.

I would rather focus on the benefits of the original notion of the home visit and what I am certain Ozanam envisioned. I like to use the three E's of ENGAGE-ENCOURAGE-ENABLE to explain what the home visit can and should mean to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

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To engage in a meaningful conversation with those we visit allows us to understand their needs and challenges while we endeavour to develop a relationship of caring and sharing. Rarely does anyone really listen to someone considered by many to be at the bottom of society. This engagement allows the person to retain the human dignity they are born with and deserve. It also allows us to encourage those we

visit to speak freely and hopefully, to share their opinions on what changes could lead to them escaping poverty, or at the very least, having some hope that things will improve.

The final and perhaps most important part of the personal contact we experience during the home visit is that, after the initial engagement and encouragement we offer, we

can enable those we meet to speak for themselves about the barriers they face, every day of their lives.

It is very rare that our new friends are ever given a means to express their fears, hopes and even solutions to changing systems and reasons why poverty exists and why they are caught in this terrible cycle. Yes, the home visit can be an essential part of systemic change and one that certainly demonstrates how valuable the advice Ozanam received from Sister Rosalie truly was.

*Jim Paddon, Chair
National Social Justice Committee*

THE TIME FOR PHARMACARE IS NOW

Fred Smith is 45 years old, he has a wife and two children. He works for the Safe Home Moving Company as a driver and house mover. His job is stressful and physically demanding. He is paid for 35 hours a week at \$15 an hour. The company has only three employees and so there is no supplemental health coverage.

At a routine visit, Fred's doctor told him that he had high blood pressure and needed to take prescription medication. When Fred took the prescriptions to the pharmacy, he was told that they would cost \$81.36 a month. He looked at his budget and decided that he could not afford them. Three months later, he went back to the doctor because he had chest pains and the doctor told him that he had angina, a common outcome of untreated hypertension. The doctor told him that if hypertension was not treated properly, Fred would be seriously disabled in just a few years. What can Fred do?

Fred is typical of the 1-in-10 people in Canada who, when prescribed medication, cannot afford it. His job is low wage in a workplace that does not provide benefits. He is gainfully employed and provides for his family, but cannot afford to look after his own health.

If Fred becomes disabled and dependent on a disability pension, his family will descend further into poverty. He may end up in hospital for treatment that could have been prevented by taking medication.



Currently, the availability of prescription drugs covered by the health care system varies widely across Canada. Generally, people with good jobs have benefit plans that provide excellent drug benefits. Seniors and people on social assistance generally have access to medically necessary drugs. People in low wage and precarious jobs don't have access to necessary medications. These people end up in hospitals and doctors' offices more often than others and so they cost the health care system much more than the price of medication that they can't afford.

Research has indicated that a national program to make medically necessary drugs available to all Canadians is desirable and affordable. Various models suggest that a national pharmacare program would save the country between 6 billion and 11 billion dollars a year, if negotiated and led by the federal government.

A successful program would incorporate the following principles:

- **Universality:** All Canadians would get medically necessary prescriptions.
- **Accessibility:** There would be no financial barriers such as dispensing fees to getting medication.
- **Comprehensiveness:** As many necessary medications as the public purse can afford would be included.
- **Public administration:** The body responsible for the program is publicly accountable and not for profit.
- **Portability:** The formulary of covered drugs would be available to Canadians everywhere in the country.

Canadians have been discussing pharmacare for 50 years, and 91% of Canadians agree that we need it. The federal government is finally discussing it, so let's get behind it and tell our Members of Parliament that we need and want a universal and effective pharmacare program.

www.pharmacare2020.ca

hsjcc.on.ca/the-consequences-of-patient-charges-for-prescription-drugs-in-canada-a-cross-sectional-survey-2018

*Corry Wink, National Social Justice Committee
Ontario Regional Council*

BASIC GUARANTEED INCOME

The concept of a guaranteed basic income is one that is gaining support in many nations. There are various models of such a program, but the basic idea is to provide financial support to those who qualify in the form of either a monthly supplement or an annual tax credit, which endeavours to bring that person or family closer to an income level that can give them financial security, not to mention human dignity.

The Ontario government started a 3-year basic income pilot project this past year in three Ontario cities (Hamilton, Lindsay and Thunder Bay). It is based on the use of the LIM (low income measurement) and is open to anyone who qualifies in these locations. It may surprise many of you to know that there was a similar experiment from 1974 to 1978 in Dauphin, Manitoba, which is commonly known as Mincome. If anyone would like to receive an article based on research done about this project, please contact me at jpsvp@hotmail.ca. Some of the interesting results were that some people who had held 2 or more jobs to support their families were able to stop working and return to school, which resulted in future employment and a more stable financial position. There were also fewer visits to doctors (which saves governments money!!) and, no doubt, healthier eating habits, as they could afford to buy better quality foods. Families were able to afford various opportunities for their children to participate with others to various activities, whether educational, sports or just having fun and exercise.

The one intangible result of a guaranteed basic income is also one of the principles of Catholic social teaching, Human Dignity. Every person is born with human dignity, which is a gift from God, and everyone deserves to be treated with the same level of dignity. However, our neighbours in need often face criticism, denigration and ridicule that is simply based on the fact they are poor! If a person is given the opportunity to live a life that gives them self-respect and dignity, will this not make that person a better citizen and someone who is then able to participate fully in society?

We must also ignore the statement that everyone who is getting this FREE money to do nothing is going to sit at home on their couch. This kind of thinking is like those who worry about someone using or abusing the various services or charities that provide food and clothing assistance. As Pope Francis has said, who are we to judge? Let's instead think about all those fellow Canadians who will have a chance for a much brighter future with a guaranteed basic income.

Please join in support of a guaranteed basic income. If you would like further information on how you can help, just send me an email.

*Jim Paddon, Chair
National Social Justice Committee*

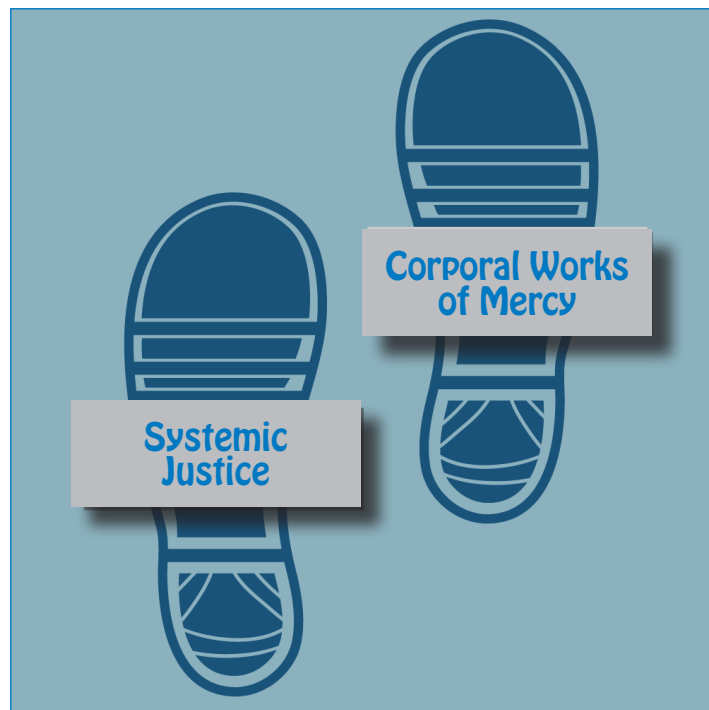
jpsvp@hotmail.ca



RECONCILIATION: A MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND COMPASSION

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is readily recognized as a faith-filled Catholic organization that serves the poor, providing food, clothing and assistance for other basic needs. But, as Jesus' followers, you are also called by the Good News to engage in the transformation of unjust systems.

Years ago, two Jesuits – Joe Holland and Peter Henriot – wrote about: “the two feet of justice.” That image of two feet has stayed with me. I think of how difficult it can be to hop any distance on one foot, regardless of whether it is the right or the left foot. One easily tires of the effort, gives up and just stops moving forward.



The work of justice is like that. I imagine one foot with the words: “Corporal Works of Mercy” emblazoned on it. The other is inscribed: “Systemic Justice.” In justice ministry, we need both.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has identified the systemic injustice facing Indigenous Peoples. It calls us to transformative action. We are challenged to reconcile our shameful and painful history and our relationships into caring, compassionate, merciful, and just individual, communal and systemic relationships.

Robert Schreiter, in his book: *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, writes:

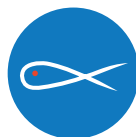
“Individual reconciliation occurs when the victim’s damaged humanity is restored. This restoration is the work of God... Frequently the experience of reconciliation also brings with it a commissioning or calling to undertake a special work.”

“...social reconciliation is not the same as individual reconciliation. Nonetheless, for social reconciliation to be successful there must be reconciled individuals present to help give leadership to the process, as well as... people who understand the meaning of individual reconciliation. Individual reconciliation helps nurture and strengthen social reconciliation, but social reconciliation cannot be reduced to individual reconciliation.” ¹

I pray: May you and I have the faith and the courage to engage in both individual and social, i.e. systemic reconciliation!

*Sister Priscilla Solomon, Sisters of St. Joseph, North Bay
Member, Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle.*

¹ Robert J. Schreiter C.P.P.S. Orbis Books NY. 2002 THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION: SPIRITUALITY AND STRATEGIES



MISSION

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization whose mission is:

To live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy.

VALUES

The Mission of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul implies that as Vincentians we:

- see Christ in anyone who suffers
- come together as a family
- have personal contact with the poor
- help in all possible ways.

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