



Greenhouse at the Suwa'ikh School, Coquitlam B.C.

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WE ARE
CALLED



2020 ANF
ANNUAL NATIONAL
FORMATION
Calgary, Alberta
June 25 to 27, 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



ANNUAL REPORTS

Well, it's that time of the year again, the time everyone loves to hate, report time. The time to submit your annual reports to the next higher council. The annual reports, complete with support documents and a list of the target dates for submissions can be found at: www.ssvp.ca/annual-reports.

According to the 2019 figures, the Society in Canada consists of 969 conferences and councils, with 14,000 active members, not counting the staff and volunteers. We make a significant impact on the health, wellness and viability of our communities, our nation and globally, especially in the lives of the poor, the marginalized, the forgotten and the oppressed whom we serve within our communities and around the world. To effectively do this, we need accurate information about our Society, its members and volunteers, our work, services and finances. Precise and timely information will enable us to determine the health of the Society, access our needs and shortcomings and thereby to plan our course for the future. It will enable us to speak on a national and global stage with the authority that accurate information and truth provide. It will also allow us to plan our response to disasters and catastrophes and unexpected or urgent issues arising from time to time.

Thank you to all the conferences who have already submitted their reports to their next higher council.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The Society is a charitable organization that relies principally on the generosity of our patrons and benefactors to assist in our works by their regular contributions of funds and goods, food, clothing and furniture, etc. Most of the funds are being raised at the conference level. That being the case, it is important for conferences and councils to send up excess funds to the next higher council. This may be the only reliable source of income for some councils, including the national and regional councils.

Since 2004, the National Council has set the amount of the annual contribution expected from each conference and council. The policy is available at: www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/6.3.7_fin_007_financial_contributions_to_the_nc_canada_2019-04.pdf.

It is the responsibility of each conference or council president and treasurer to ensure compliance to the policy. Funds are to be sent forward in accordance with The Rule. It is the responsibility of the next higher council president and treasurer to ensure compliance to these policies within their respective jurisdictions. A conference or council which is unable to make payment for the annual contribution shall request assistance from the next higher council. The policy is available at: www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/6.5.8_admin-pr_008_support_to_conferences-support_des_conferences_2017.pdf.

Thank you to all the conferences and councils that have paid their annual contribution in full.

Yours in a unity of prayer and service,

Claude Bédard, National President



The Annual
National Formation
will be held from
June 25 to 27, 2020
in Calgary, Alberta.

The link to register online
is posted on our website:
www.ssvp.ca/anf-2020.

More online information
will be forthcoming,
including updates on the
program and workshops
that will be offered.

We hope to see many
of you there.

Nothing pleases God more than to have his own children “tune in” in prayer.

We are in the season of Lent and it is in this period of the liturgical year that we enter into the “desert” in order to find in ourselves the springs of living waters, which are hidden somewhere in the seemingly waterless areas in our lives. Church tradition invites us to intensify three different disciplines in our lives: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. It is important to mention here that those disciplines are not to be practiced during Lent only, but throughout our daily lives. But it is during Lent that we take a closer look at them to see where we need some “improvement” so that there may be more room for God in our lives.

It is in this little reflection that I would like to share a story about the importance of prayer.

A girl went to a party, but she ended up staying longer than planned and had to walk home alone. She wasn't afraid because it was a small town and she lived only a few blocks away. As she walked along under the tall elm trees, she asked God to keep her safe from harm and danger.

When she reached the alley, which was a shortcut to her house, she decided to take it. However, halfway down the alley she noticed a man standing at the end as though he were waiting for her. She became uneasy and began to pray, asking for God's protection. A comforting feeling of quietness and security wrapped around her, and she felt as though someone was walking with her. When she reached the end of the alley, she walked right past the man and arrived home safely.

The following day, she read in the newspaper that a young woman had fallen a victim of violence in the same alley just twenty minutes after she had been there. Feeling overwhelmed by this tragedy and the fact that it could have been her, she began to weep. Thanking the Lord for her safety and to help this young woman, she decided to go to the police station.

She felt she could recognize the man, so she told them her story. The police asked her if she would be willing to look at a lineup to see if she could identify him. She agreed and immediately pointed out the man she had seen in the alley the night before. When the man was told he had been identified, he immediately broke down and confessed.

The officer thanked her for her bravery and asked if there was anything they could do for her. She asked if they would ask the man one question. She was curious as to why he had not attacked her. When the policeman asked him, he answered, «Because she wasn't alone. She had two tall men walking on either side of her.

This story, in its own way, illustrates that our prayers do not go unanswered. It is good and necessary for us to pray, as it places us in contact with our creator, our heavenly father who is always pleased to hear from his children. Nothing pleases God more than to have his own children “tune in” in prayer. It does not have to be only in moments of need, like in this story, but any time.

We know how much we want to share with our parents how we are doing. Whatever happens, we want them to know how things are going. And this is precisely what our parents want as well. They want us to stay in touch with them and share our lives with their joys and sorrows.

How much more, then, would our heavenly father want the same. He is always waiting for us to make that connection. The outcome is not always ours to know. But God listens and hears our prayers. We might not know when and how those prayers are answered, but we have to do our part.

I wish you a blessed Lenten Season.

*Padre Ain Leetma, National Spiritual Committee
B.C. & Yukon Regional Representative*

WORKING TOGETHER TO FEED THE HUNGRY

Since July 2018, Saint Luke's Parish in Maple Ridge has been volunteering time and resources to participate in a multi-denominational project supporting people in need in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows. The Community Dinner is every Saturday at 6 pm and held at Golden Ears United Church on Dewdney Trunk Road in Maple Ridge as it's closest to where the folks who need it live.

Saint Luke's Parish is one of five Christian communities who participate in the program, each taking a Saturday in the month; Saint Luke's is responsible for the 3rd Saturday but supplies help for the other weeks as well. Many of the folks we serve are without homes, some have a roof but may have physical, emotional or mental health challenges; all have needs greater than ours at this moment.

Saint Luke's Parish became involved when a parishioner who had been working with people who are homeless and had participated with other faith communities, approached a parish let's-get-stuff-done kind of guy and asked if he thought Saint Luke's would do this. The question went to the Parish Leadership Team and Father Mario Marin and the rest is history.

There are approximately 75 volunteers (including families) who participate and who represent many parish groups including the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Knights of Columbus, Catholic Women's League, Saint Luke's PREP (Parish Religious Education Program) and their siblings and/or parents, as well as parishioners at large. We have a prayer team who pray over any guest who needs prayer. This is a Saint Luke's community participating with the Maple Ridge Faith Community to reach out to others.



Approximately 82 guests are given a healthy dinner and take-away sandwiches and treats every Saturday. We have had up to 122 people! Volunteers cook and serve 12-14 different food dishes each time. Some volunteers provide the food, some provide service at the dinner, and some do both. Others do set-up and clean-up, including the kitchen, the floors and the bathrooms!

A couple of PREP youth who come to community dinner gave a presentation at class on how great it was to be part of this. The number of PREP volunteers is increasing. We had 12 PREP volunteers at the Christmas Dinner held December 22, 2019!

Thanks to a very generous donation of 'Street Packs' from Catholic Charities and Our Lady of Fatima Knights of Columbus and Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Packs were handed out as raffle prizes on December 22, 2019, having been FILLED by generous parishioners of Saint Luke's. Thirty Packs were raffled and they brought tears to the eyes of many recipients of the prizes.

If you are interested in donating items for distribution to people who don't have a home, please consider the following. This list was made up with the help of the people we serve:

- bottled water
- socks, socks and socks
- scarves, toque, hat
- cracker snack packs with cheese, tuna or peanut butter
- soft-chew granola or cereal bars
- fruit snacks, mini apple sauces
- gift certificates for fast food outlets
- dried soups
- breakfast cereals
- hand wipes, Kleenex (a big need)
- tooth brush
- band-aids
- comb or small brush
- chap-stick
- mints, cough drops, gum
- coats, sweaters, blankets
- and notes of encouragement and support.

Items can be donated through most parishes, via the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Knights of Columbus or Catholic Women's League. If you are outside Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows and can't get to Saint Luke's Parish easily and your parish isn't involved directly in a project supporting people without homes and you wish to donate items to a project close to you, please contact the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul at 604-873-1306 or Catholic Charities, The Door is Open at 604-683-0281.

*Norah Wilson, President
North Fraser Particular Council*

OUR LADY OF FATIMA AND ALL SAINTS CONFERENCES CONNECTION WITH SUWA'LKH SCHOOL

Suwa'lkh is an alternative high school for mostly, but not exclusively, aboriginal students. They range in age from 11 to 19. **The name Suwa'lkh means «first beginnings»**, and the school includes a culturally relevant curriculum supported by community elders. At Suwa'lkh, students learn at their own pace in a setting that allows them to do well and gives them an opportunity to be academically successful.

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul members from All Saints and Our Lady of Fatima alternate each month to supply food hampers and \$200 in gift cards. As most of the students come from an underprivileged background, they are provided with an open door starting at 8 am and a warm breakfast if needed, and lunch is always provided. Students are taken, in small groups, to the local supermarket to be given advice on healthy food choices and then return to the school to help put lunch together for students and teachers.

The school has an extensive outdoor program, locally developed in partnership with Outward Bound Canada. Their latest project is an outdoor garden and the addition of a 40-foot greenhouse where they grow their own produce for use in their hot lunch program.

Prior to Christmas each year, our two SSVP conferences have supplied the school with turkeys and trimmings for their family Christmas dinner at the school. Our members also contribute Christmas baking. In addition, the students are given movie passes as a Christmas gift from the two conferences.

At the beginning, we had hoped to have had a more «hands on» connection with the school, but we feel that our contributions of the food hampers and the gift cards are much appreciated and are a positive contribution.

*Margaret Reilly, President
Our Lady of Fatima, Coquitlam BC*



SSVP OUTREACH TO TAHSIS ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

The Holy Father reminds us that **“poverty is at the heart of the Gospel”** and Pope Francis goes on to urge each of us to reflect on the fact that **“as long as Lazarus lies at the door of our home, (Cf. Luke 16:19-21) there cannot be justice or social peace”**.

Bishop Gary of the Victoria Diocese was serving the parish of Holy Family/Notre Dame in Port Alberni as temporary pastor in the summer of 2017 while the search for a new permanent pastor was underway.

Each Sunday, the bishop would head 300 kms north to the tiny remote community of Tahsis on Vancouver Island’s west coast to celebrate mass with a small group of local residents. During his interactions with the people of Tahsis, the bishop became acutely aware of the hardships faced by so many families, especially during the long dark days of winter. It was a town that had seen better days. After the mill shut down a number of years ago, many residents had to leave to look for work elsewhere. The 200 or so permanent residents who remained faced a much less prosperous future.

At a Particular Council meeting in Port Alberni, the bishop addressed Vincentians from all the conferences on northern Vancouver Island, as our Spiritual Advisor. Bishop Gary, knowing that our mandate is **“to seek and find the forgotten, the suffering and the deprived, so that we may bring them God’s love”**, used the opportunity to describe for us the poverty he had witnessed in Tahsis. He challenged us to do something about it.

We arranged to meet with a group of residents to assess the situation for ourselves. The five Vincentians who travelled to Tahsis to meet with these people were deeply moved by what they learned and witnessed. We resolved to do whatever we could to ease their suffering.

Within a week of that meeting, substantial food hampers were delivered to some of the poorest households in the community, transported there by the bishop on his weekly visits. A trusty band of four local residents assumed responsibility to identify those most in need and to deliver hampers to them, including fresh fruit and vegetables (a rare treat for some residents).

Since that time we have supported the community on a monthly basis with food supplies and pet food.

A celebratory mass and BBQ were held in Tahsis in August 2018. Sixteen Vincentians shared an afternoon with the 26 local volunteers who now operate the program. They told us many heart-warming stories of the impact the program has had on this small community. It was a feel-good experience for everyone involved. The visit left us in no doubt that this initiative is worth continuing as long as the need remains.

*Mike O’Gorman, Vice-President
Vancouver Island Particular Council*



CALL FOR WORKSHOPS - ANF - JUNE 25-27, 2020

WORKSHOPS ARE HELD ON THURSDAY JUNE 25, 2019

The theme presented at this ANF is:

“WE ARE CALLED”

The theme has been chosen so that we as Vincentians may take time to reflect on how we interact with those we serve. Workshops may be developed around the theme.

NATIONAL COMMITTEES SPONSORED WORKSHOPS – TOPICS VARY FROM YEAR TO YEAR:

1. Roles of the President and Executive - conferences/councils;
2. Succession planning - conferences/councils;
3. Policies and procedures;
4. Recruitment and orientation;
5. Train the trainers.

OTHER POTENTIAL WORKSHOP TOPICS:

1. Structural causes of poverty;
2. Collaboration with other organizations;
3. Spirituality of the work of a Vincentian;
4. Foundations of our Society;
5. Special works – the public face of our Society;
6. SSVp in North of 60;
7. Advocacy and how to advocate effectively;
8. Systemic change projects;
9. Youth in action;
10. Fundraising.

Workshops are typically 75 minutes long. Presenters must provide their own presentation materials and equipment, i.e. portable disk drives and their own pcs for connection to existing in-house-supplied AV equipment. Any handout materials are the responsibility of the presenters to produce, bring and supply to attendees.

Final date for submission of workshop forms is April 1, 2020. You may mail your forms in, or email them to exdir-digen@ssvp.ca.

Richard Pommainville, Executive Director
2463 Innes Road, Ottawa ON K1B 3K3

[CLICK HERE FOR ONLINE FORM](#)



Title of workshop: _____

Language presented: English ____ French ____

Description of the workshop: _____

Presenter name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Short bio - presenter: _____

How does the title/topic tie into the AGA theme?

Required room size/type: _____

Required AV materials: _____

Handout materials are the responsibility of the presenter.

Please send by April 1, 2020 to:

Richard Pommainville, Executive Director
2463 Innes Road, Ottawa ON K1B 3K3
exdir-digen@ssvp.ca

Approved by the National Training Committee

Date: _____



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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Charity Registration No. 132410671RR0001**

**Official publication of the
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - Canada
ISSN 2560-824X
Made with the collaboration of:
Mary Baskin, Ghislaine DuNord and
Denise Miron.
Editor : Nicole Schryburt
Graphic Design: Nicole Schryburt**



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