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NATIONAL FORMATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Annual National Formation (ANF) assembly has been cancelled for 2021 due to COVID-19. Hopefully, we can once again meet in person in 2022. One of the tasks of the Formation Committee is to coordinate the workshops that are normally presented at the ANF (formerly AGA). It was decided that, by presenting webinars, we could continue to provide the membership with important learning opportunities. We have also decided that this will be on-going even after in-person meetings can be resumed. The topics for the webinars fall under the four pillars that the Society has identified as core components. They are Leadership, Vincentian Life, Spirituality, and Special Works. Webinar topics will generally fall within one of these categories. We currently have a call out for representations and we look forward to receiving many expressions of interest. We are also committed to working collaboratively with our other National Committees.

The Formation Committee is revising and renewing the existing training modules and one member of our committee has taken on the task of reviewing each one to upgrade language and current practice. We have also developed a module for Conference Executives and are currently working on preparing a *Conference in a Box* that is designed to establish a new Conference or to renew an existing Conference. We are also looking at leadership modules for Presidents at all levels of the Society and prospective executives.

There is a wealth of training and resource material that is available to the members at all levels and, to make it more accessible, we are categorizing all of the existing material on the SSVP website under the heading RESOURCES AND FORMATION. There is some excellent work being done across all regions and our goal is to increase the number of users who benefit from these resources. We are in the process of organizing the material under the four pillars as a high-level approach with subcategories that are easy for a user to define.

The role of the Formation Committee is to review what exists, to identify gaps, and to address the gaps by coordinating the development of resources and tools to fill the gaps. This must be an inclusive process and we must engage all members in this process. The Committee is designed to support and facilitate formation across the country.

Yours in Christ,

*Deborah Joyce, Chair
National Formation Committee*



MESSAGE FROM OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CIRCLE

Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle is a Catholic Coalition of Indigenous people, bishops, lay movements, clergy, and institutes of consecrated life, engaged in renewing and fostering relationships between the Catholic Church and Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle has a fourfold purpose:

1. To provide a forum for its members to dialogue and encourage deeper understanding of the relationships between the Church and Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous spiritualities in Canada.
2. To serve as a united Catholic public voice on relations and dialogue between the Church and Indigenous Peoples, and between Catholic and Indigenous spiritualities in Canada.
3. To assist Catholics in engagement with the Truth and Reconciliation process and its Calls to Action.
4. To carry out agreed upon initiatives and concrete actions.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle is motivated by the love of Christ, filled with great hope for the future and attentive to the Holy Spirit's action in our world, to the glory of our compassionate Creator and Father.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle is pleased to provide you this 2021 Pentecost message.

*Jim Paddon, Chair
National Social Justice Committee*

Message from Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle - Pentecost, 2021

Send forth your spirit and renew the face of the Earth (Ps. 104)

Greetings and blessings on the Feast of Pentecost,

As Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle, focused on the work of reconciliation between Indigenous and all Canadians, we want to renew and celebrate the Spirit of Pentecost. Still relatively new as a coalition we are convinced of the importance of language, the challenges of unity in diversity, and the impossibility of progress in reconciliation in our Church and communities apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. It is urgent that we pray for each other in these times when, even as we see signs that the Covid 19 pandemic is lifting, the effects of isolation, of our immense vulnerability and of our profound loss and grief still weigh on our spirits individually and as communities. Surrounded by this shared suffering, but also grateful for the many acts of love and compassion that we have all witnessed, may we find the strength as the disciples did on the first Pentecost, to step out in faith to build a new way forward together.

Holy Scriptures tell us that the Church was born at such a time as this. The first disciples found themselves still huddled together, with the windows of their souls guarded and the doors to their hearts locked. Into this reluctance and uncertainty, the Holy Spirit poured as a mighty wind and as fire. The Church at Pentecost was born with a oneness that welcomes and celebrates a wide diversity of languages and cultures. As a part of the Community of Faith born in this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle strives to be a sign of that "one faith expressed in many different ways."ⁱ

In the Acts of the Apostles we are told of people from many nations proclaiming with amazement, “we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.” (Acts 2:11). This action of the Holy Spirit highlights the importance of speaking and hearing one’s own language. Convinced of the prophetic importance of this message, the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle continues to emphasize the importance of Indigenous languages. We strongly support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which states “Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons”.ⁱⁱ Members of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle are committed to encouraging and celebrating the revitalization of these teachings and languages.ⁱⁱⁱ

The gift of the Holy Spirit is not for the Church alone but is the Spirit of the Creating God renewing the whole world- the land, the people, and all living things. Moved by this Spirit and prompted by his Holiness Pope Francis we are sent to go boldly into our families and communities, into our educational, health, and social institutions, and even into the world of politics to bring the power of unity and love that are the true fruits of the presence of the Spirit of God. We are called to do the difficult work of justice and reconciliation, “to build a better kind of politics, one aimed at the service of the Common Good”.^{iv} The Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle sees in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples a framework to guide our work toward this goal. In language that is embraced by the international community this declaration helps us to concretize the goal set before us by Pope Francis when he stated, “it is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their lands are proposed.”^v With the boldness that is asked of us, we members of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle pledge to do what we can to help our Catholic community to increase awareness of the significance of UNDRIP as a framework for reconciliation and just relations in Canada.^{vi}

On this great feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Spirit of God, we invite you to pray with us the ancient song of the People of Israel: “send forth your spirit and renew the face of the Earth.” (Ps. 104)

ⁱ Homily of Pope John Paul II at Martyr’s Shrine (Huron) September 15, 1984.

ⁱⁱ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 13.

ⁱⁱⁱ Message of Support from Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle on the occasion of the United Nations 2019 Year of Indigenous languages.

^{iv} Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship, October 3, 2020 (#154)

^v Pope Francis. Encyclical Letter Laudato si: On Care for Our Common Home, May 24, 2015 (#146)

^{vi} Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle Statement on Including UNDRIP in Canadian Law



SEEDS OF HOPE

First food, then what? Being the link from awareness to action!



A story of hope... Alice hadn't heard of the opportunity but was really interested in knowing more about how to give her two children the opportunity. They are age 14 and 10. A follow-up call by a Vincentian answered more questions and then she felt ready to make the appointment at her bank to open the RESP. This was a really big step for Alice. After the appointment, she was so excited that she called us as soon as she left the bank!

Afterwards, we dropped off framed congratulatory "WE BELIEVE IN YOU" certificates for her children. This is the way we mark the occasion. It is such a key step the parent has taken, that we want to celebrate it!

Do you want make a difference in the lives of over 150,000 children across Canada?

Do you serve families with children 17 years or younger at your conference or in your store? The Canada Learning Bond (CLB) is up to \$2,000 of free government funds that will create much needed hope for a brighter educational future. In BC, there is an extra grant of \$1,200!

How does it work? The CLB is deposited directly into a child's Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) for children born January 1, 2004 or later.

Does it cost anything? No! It doesn't cost any money to open an RESP and receive the CLB, not even one penny!

Want to learn more? Follow this link to the National website to access the SOH Project toolkit. An updated toolkit in English and French is now available <https://www.ssvp.ca/seeds-hope-toolkit>

Contact me, Linda Alexander, Seeds of Hope Project Coordinator at seedsofhope@ssvp.ca and I will help your team get started.

Schedule a Zoom coaching session for conference to help you bring this much-needed hope for a brighter educational future to the precious children you serve!

So What? The mere existence of educational savings greatly increases the odds that a child will continue past high school. The money is waiting quietly unclaimed and accomplishing nothing.

Don't they already know about the CLB? No! Nationally, only one in three eligible children have received these funds, due primarily to low awareness. The take-up rate for families the Society serves is drastically lower due to barriers to access.

How can I help? The reality is that many of the families we serve struggle with complex and cascading challenges, so it takes an informed and engaged member of SSVP to:

1. Make the families **aware** of the opportunity, and
2. **'Walk alongside'** them to encourage and support them to take the steps to access.

CHANGING TIMES

May 2021

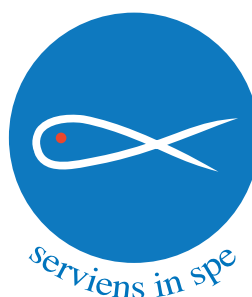
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Housing Campaign

In concert with the launch of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul's Canada-wide multi-year National Action Plan on Housing, this is the third in a series of newsletters to help you and your conference address the housing needs in your community.

We hope and pray the content in this and future editions will inform and inspire us to serve in new and holistic ways!

[CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE](#)
[National Newsletter](#)

**Safe, Secure and Affordable Housing
is a Human Right!**



Halifax gets off to a great start!

In March, the Halifax Particular Council facilitated a housing workshop. More than 30 Vincentians discussed homelessness and housing issues, as well as the steps their conferences could take to be part of the solution.

Three projects have been funded and completed:

1. Provided new portable beds, mattresses and bedding to the residents of the Out of the Cold (OTC) Shelter in Halifax, replacing borrowed Salvation Army cots. Approximate cost: \$11,500.
2. Provided funding to support the Sackville Area Warming Centre's social worker and her work, locating long-term housing for the users of the Centre. Approximate cost: \$10,000.
3. One parish received diocesan approval to house one gentleman in a tiny shelter, located on church property. No direct costs involved.
 - For a view of their full PowerPoint presentation [click here](#)
 - For a view of their Workshop notes [click here](#)
 - For a view of their first Newsletter [click here](#)

Share what your council and/or conference is doing to make a difference!
E-mail us at: sj-nac@ssvp.ca

Turn to page two for more!

Champions Corner

Become a housing champion for your Conference or Council!

If you need help getting started, reach out to us at sj-nac@ssvp.ca.

To date, the National Action Plan Committee has facilitated presentations in London, Edmonton and Windsor. If your conference would like to facilitate a virtual meeting with your social justice team and with other Vincentians who are curious about the housing needs in your community, we can help!

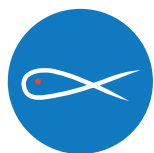
Things your conference can do

- Reach out to those you already serve to determine their housing concerns, the challenges of paying rent and how precarious this situation is for them. Are they facing evictions? Can you think of ways to improve the situation?
- Determine what housing support programs there are in your area and how to contact housing support workers.
- Try to identify the severity of homelessness in your conference area by talking to your pastor, parishioners, police chief and local health officials, particularly those in emergency services.
- Determine if homeless people are being housed in shelters, hotels or motels in your area, and how many. Has the number been increasing lately, and by how much?
- Begin a dialogue with other faith groups, shelters, warming centres, social agencies, charities, native groups, etc. on the possible solutions to your local housing issues. Consider partnering with one or more of these other groups.
- Arrange a brief presentation during a weekend mass to discuss housing and homelessness. Solicit the involvement of interested parishioners, especially those with social services skills, to become advocates and perhaps join your conference.
- Consider identifying at least one conference member as your social justice representative or housing champion.

Inspire and attract new Vincentians!

36% of Canadians have been homeless themselves or know someone who has been.

Our focus on affordable housing may compel several parishioners to become members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Ask them to join us today!



○ God, as we recall the life and virtues of Blessed Frédéric and Blessed Rosalie, grant that we may continue their work of bringing good news to the poor. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.





TWINNING

The San Francisco de Asis Conference, Jinotega, Nicaragua is twinned with the Jésus-Marie- Joseph Conference, Orléans, Ontario. Here is a testimonial from the Nicaragua Conference.

May the Lord God, our Heavenly Father, fill you with abundant blessings. These are our best wishes from the San Francisco de Asis Conference in Jinotega, Nicaragua.

Brothers and sisters, with great joy in these moments of pandemic, we send you a Vincentian hug. We are also taking advantage of the occasion to inform you that we have received your financial support, with which we have been able to help many families in the marginal neighborhoods of our city and the countryside.

In December 2020, we carried out a Christmas activity with children and parents. A special lunch was made for them and toys were donated to the children. Clothes were also provided.

On December 24, food packages were made for families affected by hurricane ETA in a rural community that bears the name of Santa Maria de Tazua in the municipality of Bocay, a very remote community where there is a lot of poverty.

We thank God and our sister conference in Canada, as their help has come at the right time. We are very grateful to God for taking care of us and protecting us from the pandemic, since in the midst of it we continue to reach those most in need.

Maria Dolores Perez Cano
President, San Francisco de Asis Conference, Jinotega





NORTH OF 60 PROJECT

Anchor, the youth group at St. Thomas More parish in Edmonton, home of the Divine Mercy SSVP Conference, graciously painted this beautiful mural on a sea container destined for Tsiighetchic, NT.

Anchor members met eight times to complete the painting of Tsiighetchic's the Holy Name of Mary RC church and a picture of Our Lady of Lourdes, the namesake of the church. The container will be permanently located next to the church and used to store food and other goods sent to Tsiighetchic by SSVP, as the items are distributed to those in need.

*Peter Ouellette, North of 60 project
Western Regional Council*





QUESTION & ANSWER

Q: Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) would like me to submit the T3010 for my conference online instead of by mail. I need to become a representative. How do I do that?

A: Returns (e.g., T3010) can be filed electronically with NETFILE. NETFILE is an online filing service that allows representatives to file their returns directly with CRA. There is a two-step process to become a representative. The first is to obtain a Representative ID (repID) from CRA; the second is to submit this information to National, and National will then confirm with CRA that you are authorized.

Please refer to form 9.7.2 in the National Operations Manual:

https://www.ssvp.ca/sites/default/files/9.7.2_access_to_the_cra_netfile_for_a_conference_or_council_representative_2020-11_form_p.pdf