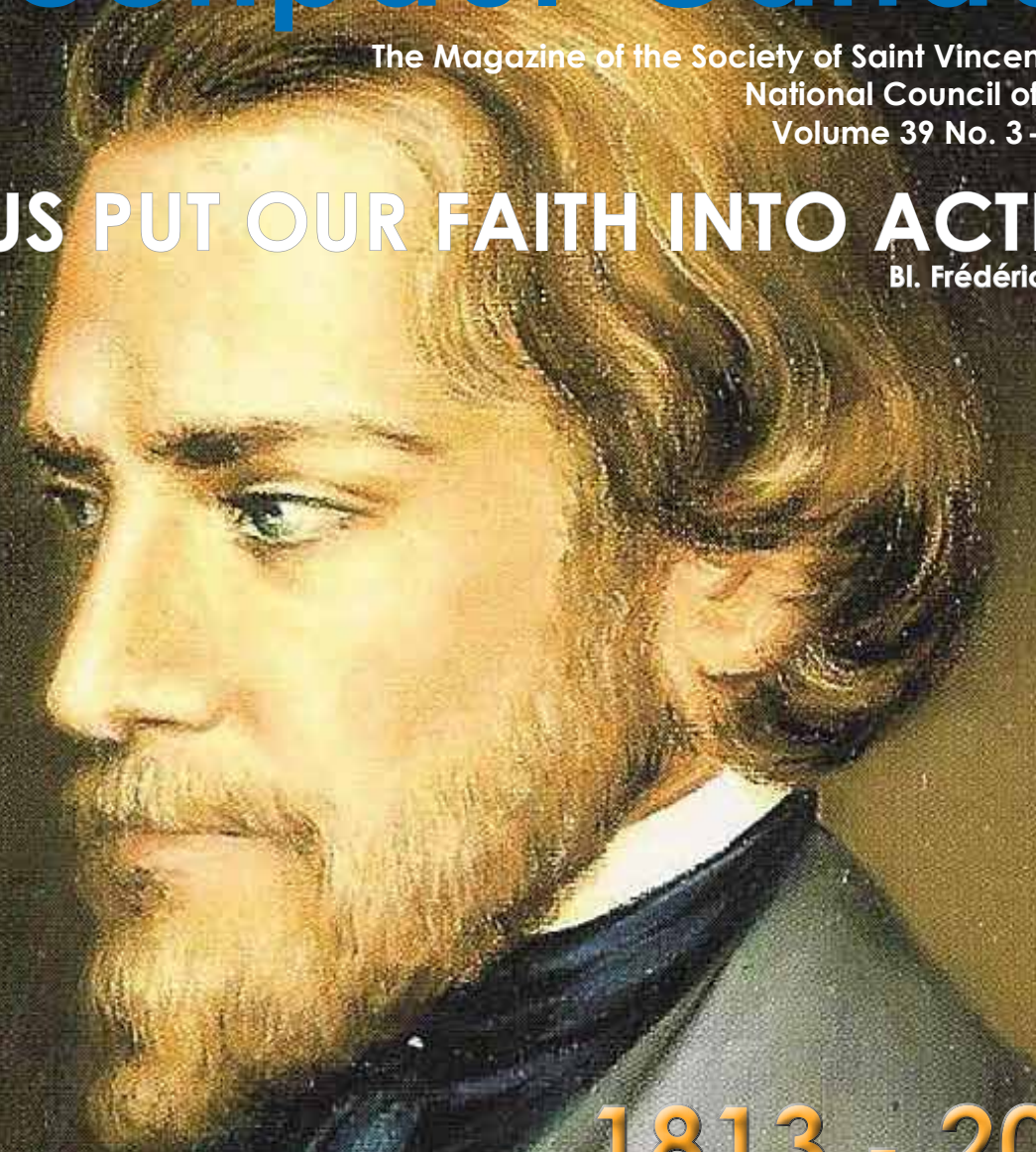


Vincenpaul-Canada

The Magazine of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
National Council of Canada
Volume 39 No. 3 - Fall 2013

LET US PUT OUR FAITH INTO ACTION

Bl. Frédéric Ozanam



1813 - 2013

Bicentenary of the birth of Frederic Ozanam



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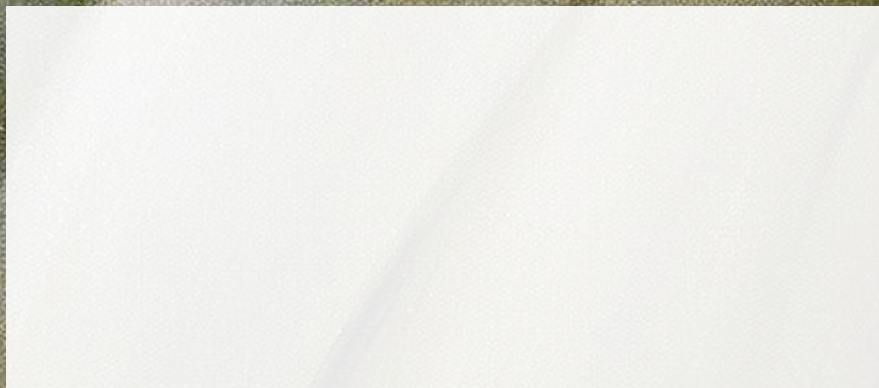


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The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a worldwide Christian community, founded in Paris in 1833, by a group of young Catholic lay people.

Membership is open to men and women, young and old. The SSVP asks that members accept fully the Christian ethos and are committed to express their love of God through personal service to their neighbours in need. The service provided by a conference is usually concentrated on home visits, the person-to-person contact with the needy. This is a fundamental part of the Society's mission. However, activities may include "Special Works", which serve people in a wider area or provide specialized service to those living in poverty.

In Canada, more than 8,200 volunteers are serving about 450,000 people each year. Where appropriate, members offer material or other type of assistance to serve those in need overcome crises, and develop with them long-term solutions to their problems.

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Message from the President

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER VINCENTIANS,

This is my first address to you as President of the Society and I will begin by introducing the men and women who have agreed to join me on the Executive Board of the National Council.

From Courtenay, British Columbia: Claude Bédard



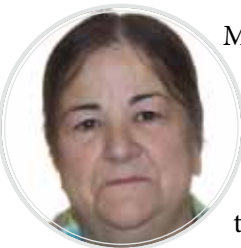
Claude has been active with the Society at different levels in B.C. for many years and has accepted one of the Vice-President positions.

From Waterloo, Ontario: Jason Hunt

Jason joined the Society in 2005 and, since then, has been very active with the youth group in Waterloo and on the Ontario Regional Youth Council. Jason will be the youth representative for the National Council.



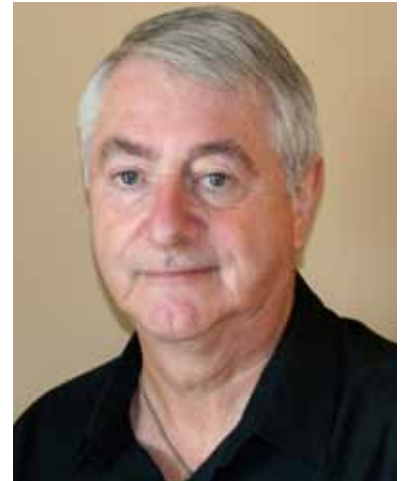
From Gatineau, Québec: Madelaine Soulière Brown



Madelaine has been with the Society since 1987, and has held various positions in her Conference, her Particular Council, and in the Gatineau Central Council. Madelaine will hold the position of Secretary.

From Gatineau, Québec: Michel Olivier

Michel joined the Society in 1995, and since then, has held various positions in his Conference, his Particular council, the Quebec Regional Council and the National Council. Michel will hold a position of Vice-President. ▶▶▶



Mission

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organisation 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 is anyone who suffers
- come together as a family
- have personal contact with the poor
- help in all possible ways

Message from the President

From Halifax, Nova Scotia: Carol Horne



Carol has been involved with the Society for many years. She was Vice-President on Penny Craig's Executive Board and has accepted to continue as a Vice-President.

From Ottawa, Ontario: Monsignor Peter Schonenbach

Mgr. Schonenbach has been the National Council Spiritual Advisor for the past nine years, and has accepted to continue in that position. Personally, I know that I will need his precious guidance quite a lot.



From Ottawa, Ontario: Solange Fortin



Solange has been a member of the Society for over ten years and is presently president of her conference. Further more she is secretary treasurer on the board of directors of "Centre Espoir Sophie", a drop in centre for women in Ottawa. Solange will be our treasurer.

So, this is the team who accepted to be at your service for the next 6 years.

What are the issues in 2013?

What I am hearing from our Strategic Planning Team is that communication is becoming the number one issue. We will have to improve our communication at all levels – internally, to better understand each other, and externally, to ensure that the world knows what we are doing, how we are doing it and what makes us different from other groups.

The second issue is that we must increase our services to those in need in Canada, and to our brothers and sisters in countries not as fortunate as ours.

Communication

How to ensure that we better understand one another is a challenge in today's world. With all the communication tools available, it is amazing to hear people say they are not informed. We at the National Council will have to review how we communicate with our members to ensure that you receive and understand the communication we are sending out and that we get your feedback.

We will also have to review how we communicate with non-Vincentians who do not know about us and what we are doing. Let's look at some of our great achievements throughout Canada in 2012/2013. We have visited 158,842 homes and helped 403,217 individuals. We received \$34,630,336 and gave back \$32,715,632 to people in need. These are impressive figures, but who knows that? This is the kind of information that needs to be publicized so that people living in areas where we don't have a Conference are made aware of our existence and may decide to join us or help us. (For more statistics, see annex A.)

We operate differently from other organizations. We do home visits; we insist on personal contact; we take the time to listen to people in need; we pray for them and for ourselves to seek God's guidance in our work. This approach is recognized as one of the best ways to help the people whom we serve regain confidence in themselves because they feel that they are treated as human beings.

Because of these differences, we should be able to recruit more members and increase the number of Conferences to better serve the people in need. These are the kinds of action people are looking for. They want to volunteer but more importantly, they want to feel that they are doing something important. The key question is "how do we communicate this information effectively to them?"

Message from the President

Increase our help in Canada

As I said earlier, we are doing a great job already but we always need to look at ways we can do better.

Poverty is changing and we need to adapt to today's reality. We see more and more working people seeking help. Our hours of operation and their hours of availability often don't coincide. We will have to find a way to serve them as well.

Something we are beginning to do, and will have do more of, is to help in areas where we are not present, where poverty is more severe than in our major cities and where help is very limited. We cannot let our Canadian brothers and sisters live in these terrible conditions and not react. We can do our share in helping in those areas. We just need to find ways to do it, to organize the help, to make it effective and, for that, we will need the help of other organizations.

We have 850 Conferences and Councils and more than 12,000 members in Canada. We do a lot of good work. Let's just try to do a little more to ensure that all those who need help receive it.

Outside Canada

Unfortunately, two-thirds of the inhabitants of our planet wake up in the morning wondering if they will have something to eat that day. Often, they will go a few days without food. One hundred and five (105) of our Conferences and Councils are twinned with others outside of Canada. We need to increase that number significantly. I am sure that the vast majority of our Conferences and Councils can find a way to help the less fortunate of our planet without reducing their services locally. Twinning is one way to help and support the poorest of the poor in those countries. Twinning is a fundamental activity of the Society as it is the expression of Vincentian fraternity and solidarity between countries and within Canada.

How it works is very simple. If your Conference or Council is interested, please fill in the application form available on our website: www.ssvp.ca or from our administrative assistant: twinning@ssvp.ca, tel: **1-866-997-7787**

Your Conference or Council will then be twinned with a Conference or Council in a designated country. Once this is done, you can send quarterly contributions by cheque (of \$100 to \$500) to the National Council and these contributions are then transferred to the receiving Conferences.

Last year, we had 85 active external twins and transferred \$82,696 to our twins in 19 countries. This is wonderful and we must be proud of that success. Now let's try to do better in the coming year.

**Jean-Noël Cormier, President
National Council of Canada**



Dr. Michael Thio, International President, presents ICG's Executive member pin to Jean-Noël Cormier, new National President.

International Council General

THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF OUR RULE



This month of October, we will celebrate the first decade of the new Rule of the Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul, which, after three years of hard work on the part of the Vincentians from many places and cultures of the world, was approved in the Eternal City of Rome in October 2003. This celebration coincides with the bicentenary of the birth of one of our cofounders, the Blessed Frederic Ozanam. The happy coincidence of both events makes especially important for the Vincentians this year 2013 in which the General Council has celebrated in Paris the birth of Frederic Ozanam.

The first decade of the Rule and its consequences for the life of the Society, has been hidden by that celebration. Let us not finish the year without referring to the new Rule and be glad about its existence; I hope to contribute to it with the following lines.

This third Rule of the Society throughout its then one hundred and seventy years of life, (1833/2003) has had an important and fast acceptance and coming into force throughout the more than one hundred and forty countries where the Conferences are established in the world. It has brought about important changes in the Society all over the world and fundamentally, it has reminded us the true *raison d'être* of our foundation and the justification today of our very existence.

Now, upon celebrating this event, I would like to remind the fellow members reading these lines, the most fundamental parts that in April 2004, when printing officially the text of the new Rule for the first time, were included as a Prologue:

“Without prayer, it is impossible to understand the existence of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, of Conferences. In reality, the first Conference emerged at the beginning of the 19th century from a common prayer of a few youths in Paris, who wanted to convert their prayer into action. These youths used to a life of collective prayer, wanted to extend it through serving the poor, devoting themselves to the most needy. But they did it without forgetting to reinforce the need for prayer, which precedes any tangible action for the good of others, of those who suffer.

It is also quite difficult for one to understand service within Conferences if one does not accept the necessity to serve on a personal basis, by establishing contact with those who need us, in their own environment, wherever they feel the most confident. Since the beginning, Conferences “went” to the poor without waiting for them to come to them. In other words, and as the Rule comments, Vincentians seek to help the needy precisely where they feel the most at ease, even psychologically. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has sought so much this type of contact, where the poor live, that the concept of the “visit”, as the expression of what is most intimate in our commitment, has become a classic among ourselves: the “home visit” to the poor, the “visit” has the expression of a meeting that is always personal and intimate among themselves and to those whom they want to serve.

In order to succeed, to achieve an intimate commitment and meeting with the poorest, it is necessary to first have a solid fraternal community within each one of our Conferences. If the Rule, as it states, calls upon us to meet through individual and collective prayer and to benefit from it, it nevertheless invites us to a brotherly relationship among brothers. How is it possible to love others, those whom we do not know, if we do not love each other? The Rule invites us to strengthen this brotherhood that was always predominant, not only in the actions of the

International Council General

Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul, but also in their very existence.

In a world increasingly open to communication and proximity, thanks to increasingly sophisticated means of communication, poverty us. On the contrary, the phenomenon known as “globalization” must make us feel responsible for any type of poverty all over the world. We are called upon to fight against any kind of poverty we may encounter, we must feel and be responsible wherever it manifests itself, whomever it affects, and as far away as it may be. In reality, it should remind us that we must feel called upon to fight against suffering, and that the work of brothers in other regions is also our work.

Finally, we are part of the Church and we join it anywhere we are for our apostolate. The Rule reminds us to understand that whenever we approach any suffering person, whenever we contribute to alleviate suffering, and whenever we put balm on the wound of those injured by life, we pretend nothing else than to bring Christ and his Church’s message of Love. We are aware of this extraordinary representation and of our responsibility in showing the Holy Church as being closer, more committed, and gentler. We are aware that in several places, the Church can be perceived as a whole and in its commitment only through the Society, through each Conference”.

The documents approved in order to improve the service of entities like the Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul, should not be ‘dead’ and be kept only in our libraries. On the contrary, they must be continuously studied and deepened to obtain from each Vincentian, from each Conference, the best service for those who suffer.

The Holy Father, on the last 28th July, before the Coordination Committee of CELAM, referred once more to the documents commonly known as of “Aparecida” and to the need of including its conclusions in the daily life of the Latin American Church. He did not want them to become a “library” document. On the contrary: he wanted them as a document, which is alive and renovating the life of the American Churches. In

the same way our Rule should be considered as document which is alive and impels us to renovate our daily devotion, in an open-minded way towards the poverties we aspire to relieve and to the very requirement of a life of individual prayer and, at the same time, engaged in the brotherhood of each Conference.

We are celebrating the first ten years of the life of our Rule. Has this text reached its full development among the Vincentians? Have we succeeded in making it a constant source of inspiration for each of us, members of the Conferences? Personally, I think that although it has been remarkably well accepted as I said at the beginning of these lines, we still have a long way to cover.

I believe that for the next years and as a high-priority task, the Board of the General Council, should promote, at least per Continents, some study days to deepen the knowledge of the Rule, which later would reach the last corner of our Society, to each of our Conferences.

The Rule, the first decade of which we are celebrating in this month of October 2013, has still a long way to go until it shapes the life of each of our fellow members.

The Society is strong enough to do it. Let us do it! It will be the best way to celebrate the happy event of this Christian, Catholic and lay Society that knows how to be in pace with the new times.

José Ramón Díaz-Torremocha
XIV President General (1999 - 2010)



International Council General



Dr. Michael Thio's speech at the AGA 2013, in Ottawa ON. The Spirituality, Charism and Vision in the person of Blessed Frederic Ozanam and the Society

Introduction to my address: 200th Anniversary of the birth of Blessed Frederic Ozanam and the global activities of SSVP.

Let me begin with an appropriate quote from scripture:-

**“He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and He will reward him for what he has done”
Prov 19:17**

When we consider how St. Vincent de Paul, in 1609, and Blessed Frederic Ozanam, in 1831, arrived in Paris, interesting similarities and differences emerge. St. Vincent in his journey across the Gulf of Lyon was captured by pirates and sold into slavery, and then he escaped back to France, received an appointment in Rome and was eventually given a mission in Paris. None of this roundabout route to Paris could possibly have been planned.

On the other hand, Blessed Frederic's arrival was very much of a plan. His father wanted him to begin studying at the Sorbonne University in the autumn of 1830, but the July revolution that year prompted a postponement and he eventually arrived the following year.

When he began his studies in Paris, he joined the History Conference, a university debating society, in which there were also some Saint-Simonian students, a new religious sect bitterly opposed to Christianity. One of these admitted that Christians had done much good in the past but what was the Church doing now in the troubled times of early 19th century France where there was so much poverty and suffering among its people. Blessed Frederic and his Catholic friends reflected and admitted they were not doing much. He persuaded some of them to found a new society which would not merely debate, but in which members would perform some kind of Christian action by helping people in need.

They founded the Charity Conference which soon changed its name to the St. Vincent de Paul Conference. When he responded to the challenge “What is the Church doing NOW?” Blessed Frederic chose to do so in a way which seemed alien to most Christian students and intellectuals at that time. Belonging to a revolutionary age, very much in a minority and constantly on the defensive, they were used to “arguing” through the spoken and written word. They were not used to “doing”. However, these 6 students and an adult in May 1833, had this inspiration to prove yet again, that Christianity can do for the poor what no doctrine before or since has been able to do – and while innovators spend time theorising about how to change the world, these 7 humble men, more modestly, decided to climb staircases looking for hidden sufferings in their area with God's love in their hearts.

Examples of Christian action and charity given by the early members proved an important influence – many people from the middle and upper classes joined the Society and were brought into close contact with the poor. By seeing how the poor lived it stirred up their social conscience. To some extent, Blessed Frederic's idealism has found a means of practical application.

One of the functions of the Society must therefore be to act as a buffer between the rich and the poor. It is that, in the name of Charity, Christians place themselves between two opposing sides, going from one side to the

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other doing good and may they obtain, from the rich, many charitable donations and, from the poor, much resignation. May they bring presents to the poor and words of acknowledgement to the rich. May they make them become used to regarding each other as brothers and may they inspire them with a little mutual charity. This is one of the aspects of our Vincentian work.

St. Vincent de Paul's founding of seminaries sprang from a realization that many priests were hopelessly ill-equipped to fulfil their mission. In contrast, others were so learned that their preaching amounted virtually to a literary exercise, aimed at cramming more Latin quotations into a homily than would be necessary and not many understood what was preached.

If St. Vincent had insisted that his priests should preach in a simple style, which must be understood by the ordinary people, Blessed Frederic was to make a similar plea for more appropriate homilies. Warning that the Church was then under attack from increasing numbers of new enemies, he insisted Christians must learn to reply by arguments and language more appropriate to the times in which they lived.

On behalf of the Catholic students at the Sorbonne, he and two friends took a petition to the Archbishop of Paris to appoint a preacher able to relate more closely with the young generation. Fr. Lacordaire, a convert from rationalism and a qualified barrister, was appointed and he was adept at using rationalists' own techniques to re-state Christian doctrines in a way that remained relevant and relates to those times. Fr. Lacordaire exerted a tremendous influence on the revival of the Faith, especially among young people.

Blessed Frederic's support for Fr. Lacordaire had been based largely on the belief that an "intellectual" approach was required if converts were to be won. He never ceased to stress this need, believing Catholics should be able to explain their religion and, if necessary, argue about it, but he continued still more to realise the importance of Christian "action" as well. Throughout the rest of his life, his emphasis would move more strongly towards demonstrating his beliefs through acts

of Charity, rather than in cleverly contrived arguments. He wrote: **"I think Christianity is the formula in religious practice as a profession of Faith, as a symbol of HOPE, as the earthly fulfillment of God's Love."**

Ozanam believed that social happiness could only be achieved through spiritual revival. Mankind's first need and the first need of society are religious ideas. The heart thirsts for the infinite. Besides, if there is a God and there are human beings, there must be a relationship between them – therefore a religion. Without the restraining influence of religion, many societies had lapsed into

public immorality.

St. Vincent and Blessed Frederic were not content to offer charity as the initial but only solution. For them Charity must be a prelude to Justice. Blessed Frederic may have been an idealist but he was also a realist. In one of his lectures in commercial law he told his students that public charity should have a role to play in moments of crisis.

Not remaining content with providing charity to the poor, St. Vincent had also been determined to persuade the rich and powerful that it was natural justice for poor people to enjoy standards of health and living conditions worthy of their human dignity. He set the example of care provided by the Daughters of Charity whom he sent to work in over-crowded hospitals.

Providentially, during Blessed Frederic's time, Blessed Sr. Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity, was inspirational and instrumental as mentor and collaborator to Blessed Frederic and his companions and in providing much advice and assistance to them

When Blessed Frederic complained about the conditions in which the poor families were forced to live, he did not want their poverty relieved solely by alms-giving. He also suggested improvements in the economic structure which was causing poverty. **In other words, he was advocating Systemic Change. ▶▶▶**

International Council General

When politicians discussed ways of alleviating the suffering caused by poverty, Blessed Frederic asked if they truly understood the causes of human misery. He begged them not to be concerned only with material conditions but drew their attention to how a fundamental lack of spiritual purpose was responsible for much of the unhappiness.

When writing or lecturing about working-class conditions, he really knew what he was talking about. One of the few people belonging to the educated middle class who had seen firsthand what he described and analysed in visits to the poor in their homes. Blessed Frederic was a constant visitor to families in the worst slum conditions in Paris. In a visit to a home he saw two families sharing a small room with no single piece of furniture and the whole room was bare. They slept on the floor. He saw only a small basket suspended below the middle of the ceiling held

together by strings on each side of the basket and fastened on to the wall. In the small basket was a loaf of bread. This was to keep the rats from getting to it. The room was cold with no lighting. The living conditions were appalling.

Charity ought not to humiliate the recipient. Far from humiliating, alms-giving with God's love in our hearts honours the giver and the receiver, accords respect and preserves the dignity of the human person. Help gives honour when it joins the visit which consoles, with advice which enlightens, with the handshake of warmth which restores broken courage, when it treats the poor with respect, not only as equals but as superiors, since they are suffering from something which we perhaps will never suffer, since they are among us as ambassadors from God sent to test our Justice and Charity and to save us by our Christian works.

We have seen how Blessed Frederic's approach developed from being mainly intellectual to showing an increased concern for good actions, as well as, good arguments. At the same time, he was also becoming

aware that political solutions would never solve problems associated with the industrial revolution. He knew that religious and social questions were much more important than changes of political government.

He saw Christianity as the most important basis for any solution. He believed the Church should show concern for the poor workers because of the tradition which had been handed down.

Blessed Frederic was a great advocate of social peace and social justice, fundamental to his religious beliefs, his political and economic theories. It was his conviction that social problems must be the primary concern of everyone. This is why he believed all classes must be allowed to propose solutions. The rich and the poor, the haves and the have nots. **There is exploitation when the master considers the worker not as an associate, nor as a helper but as an instrument from which he must draw the maximum service at the lowest possible cost. This is considered a great social injustice.**

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity should be duties and not just rights. True Christians should have no choice about exercising charity to others. Justice alone could not save society.

By following in St. Vincent's footsteps, Blessed Frederic tried to imitate not his exact same works so much as his spirit of Charity. Blessed Frederic realized that many practices must develop differently if the Gospel were still to mean anything. The Gospel itself never changes but our application of its precepts can never remain exactly the same.

If the Gospel is "Good News" then not only must it be good for us but it must also be NEW. If it ever ceased to be new, it would no longer be "NEWS". It would be "history".

As something new, the Gospel will be fresh and capable of helping us to find new ways of living it ourselves and of communicating it to others. Both St. Vincent and Blessed Frederic found ways of serving Christ in the

International Council General

poor. If one of the charisms of both St. Vincent and Blessed Frederic was to care for poor people, the care of souls was always an important part of their mission. The Congregation of the Mission had been founded not just to provide material assistance but to preach the Gospel. St. Vincent saw people's need to be spiritual. Blessed Frederic gave this same message to members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He stressed that material aid was not the most important part of their service to the poor. **Through the members Spirituality and their loving Christian action in witnessing to God is how many Christians have been brought back to the Faith and how many non-Christians were evangelized. This is one of the key aspects of our Vincentian Spirituality.**

In the same account, Blessed Frederic expressed concern about the extent to which Catholics had a shallow knowledge of their Faith. Their practice of it also lacked commitment. They possess the Faith, but a Faith which is lukewarm; they still practise their religion, but often without understanding it. We must bring light into this semi-darkness, warm up this chill; edification, leading to conversion, is the chief necessity. There is no lack of Catholics among us. We must mould them to sanctify.

Blessed Frederic never shrank from his responsibility as a Christian to seek, in the words of St. Paul, **“what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do”**. Despite criticizing this lack of Faith and indifference to religious practice, Blessed Frederic always remained humble in his charitable work. It is at such time that we acknowledge, in the words of St. Vincent, **that the poor, who belong to Jesus Christ, are our lords and masters and that we are hardly worthy of rendering to them our petty services.**

He also refused to remain content at whatever good work he did, realising there would be always much more to do as he said **“Charity must never look to the past but always to the future, because the number of good deeds already accomplished is very small, while the present and future hardships remain infinite”**.

Blessed Frederic had contributed tremendously to the social, political and historical teachings of his time. He valued many new political and social ideas in as much as they complied with the precepts of charity. His vision of peaceful reform through willing co-operation was, however, shared by many other liberal Catholics of his time. This illustrated the principle that no one could secure reform without help from both God and neighbours. Blessed Frederic supported publicly the need for political and social reforms to be implemented through democracy.

Believing his Society's charism included the saving of souls, Blessed Frederic considered this as his own personal vocation as a committed layman. We may think it hardly surprising that, after a life of such Christian commitment and concern to save the souls of others, Blessed Frederic contemplated the end of his life without fear. He died at the early age of 40, after many years of illness.

His widow, Amelie, described how his reading of Sacred Scripture had been her husband's constant daily practice. His meditations on the Bible brought consolation for himself but could also be a gift to others. He annotated many of the readings, in the hope they might later help others suffering like himself. After his death, on September 8, 1853, Amelie reviewed these notes and the collection, published five years later, was entitled “The Book of the Sick”. The Council General has produced the English version of the book in conjunction with the 200th Anniversary celebration of the birth of Blessed Frederic this year and it is now available and you can purchase the book through the Council General's website: www.ssvpglobal.org.

The local priest, Fr. Pignatell, prepared Blessed Frederic for death with the words **“Take courage, my son, with confidence in God”**. **Blessed Frederic's reply was simply “Why should I fear God? I love Him so much!”**

▶▶▶

International Council General

This statement confirms what Amelie had written: When the bad days returned and his body was stricken with illness, his soul, thus strengthened and magnified, was raised up by the very thoughts with which he had fed it. As the disease progressed, his piety was still evident and simply grew stronger, so I can bear witness that he was constantly living in the presence of God. One of his invocations to God in his remaining days was **“Lord, I want what you want, as you want and when you want, I want it because you want it”**.

Blessed Frederic even saw his suffering as a form of service to God. When eventually unable to practice the charitable works which had been so much the centre of his more active life, this kind of service seemed all that remained.

In one of his final writings to his close friend he mentioned - **“Finally and above all, dear friend, pray for me, so that, if God does not want me to serve Him by working, I might resign myself to serving Him by suffering.”** -- **WHAT MAN OF FAITH! What an inspirational leader. Truly a great man of God!**

“You did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so the Father will give you whatever you ask of Him in my name” says the Lord in John 15:16.

Dr. Michael Thio
President General



Amélie and Marie, Ozanam's wife and daughter

In Memoriam

It is with deep regret that we announce the following deaths:

- Claude Hubert**, Trinité Conference, Orléans ON, January 1, 2013
René Boulet, Notre-Dame-de-Foy Conference, QC, January 3, 2013
Robert Paquette, St Vincent de Paul Conference, Windsor ON, January 5, 2013
Leona Ford, Holy Redeemer Conference, Charlottetown PE, January 16, 2013
David McAsey, Holy Spirit and St. Gerard Conferences, Calgary AB, February 6, 2013
Gary Fagan, Holy Family Conference, Amherst NS, 7 février 2013
Eileen Orysiuk, St. Pius X Conference, Calgary AB, 20 février 2013
Angénard Morin, St-Denys-du-Plateau Conference, Ste-Foy QC, 14 mars 2013
Gertrude Webb, Holy Redeemer Conference, Charlottetown PE, 18 mars 2013
Andy Laliberte, St Simon & Jude Conference, Belle River ON, 9 avril 2013
Ron Sass, Huronia Central Council ON, 18 avril 2013
Beatrice Boutette, St Anthony of Padua Conference, Harrow QC, 22 avril 2013
Audrey Quinn, St Raphael Conference, Burlington ON, 25 avril 2013
Vincent Sobocan, St Thomas Conference, Windsor ON, 20 mai 2013
Allan Graves, Sarnia Particular Council, Lambton ON, 5 juin 2013
Rosemary Woods, Charles Garnier Conference, Kelowna BC, juillet 2013
Linda Olaksew, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Conference, Kamloop BC, août 2013
Mike McCormick, East West Fraser Particular Council, BC, août 2013
Lorraine Duxbury, Holy Family Conference, Amherst NS, 31 août 2013
Denis Hamel, Victoriaville Conference QC, 7 septembre 2013
Roland Meloche, Ste-Angèle Conference, St-Léonard QC, septembre 2013
Pierrette Cousineau, St-Thomas d'Aquin Conference, Ottawa ON, October 2, 2013
Jerome Bernard, St John Vianney Conference, Windsor ON
Roland Breault, Most Precious Blood Conference, Windsor ON
Phil Charette, St Michael Conference, Leamington ON
Debbie Frimer, Our Lady of Attonement Conference, Windsor ON
Don Harvey, St Mary's Conference, Collingwood ON
Frank Maisonville, St John the Baptist Conference, Amherstburg ON
Messias Pavao, St Michael Conference, Leamington ON
Andre Roy, St Jerome Conference, Windsor ON
Gerry St Pierre, St John the Baptist Conference, Amherstburg ON
Andrew Tygat, Holy Name of Jesus Conference, Essex ON
Barb Young, store manager, London ON
Gord Bergl, St. Michael Conference, Calgary AB
Marlene Soby, St. Michael Conference, Calgary AB

They were our brothers serving the poor.

Lord, we pray that all the good they did bear fruit and be continued.

Help us keep their memory alive in our hearts. Let us keep them in our prayers.

Please send your death notices to editor@ssvp.ca

FREDERIC OZANAM'S VOCATION

“More than ever, I fear any resolution, any determination on which one could not go back. The absence of vocation, and contrary aspirations for diverse vocations, arise in me more than ever before.”¹ That is what Frederic Ozanam writes to his cousin Henri in 1836, at 24, after brilliantly completing university studies in law. Upon entering active life, Frederic feels very deeply a fear of ultimate commitment. Evil spirits step into the breach:

**“They track me down; now they surround me;
they set their eyes to cast me to the ground.
They are like a lion eager to tear,
as a young lion lurking in ambush?”**

Facing turmoil, to get through the night, (“nothing is more impenetrable than my own future³”), Frederic decides to surrender himself entirely to God, with his desires and his fears: the will to dedicate himself completely to God, perplexity towards his friend Lacordaire’s invitation to join the Dominicans, hesitation towards marriage that makes him “dream”, but that he perceives as a “dual selfishness”, strong attraction towards literature and a literary career...

In that surrender, Frederic will experience the same thing as did Abraham on the mountain, when he is ready to sacrifice what counts the most for him in order to please God. Frederic, through prayer, meetings, advice seeking, scrutiny of his life, finds the answer to his question: God does not ask him to renounce his deepest desires, because He is the instigator of those feelings. Frederic’s intimate aspirations meet the father’s purpose! Therefore, Frederic must not feel guilty if he gets married, and pursues a literary career.

Frederic perceives it intensely when he becomes associate professor of literature, coming first at the exam: “Such a marvellously providential success confuses me,” he writes on October 20, 1840 to François Lallier, his best friend, “I think I see in it what you have seen: an indication of God’s purpose for me; a true vocation, what my prayers have been asking for so many years⁴.” What he could have decided on his own, to become professor of literature, was submitted and offered to God. Therefore, the fulfilment of desire takes on a different dimension: it becomes a donation. Frederic does not grab a position; he receives it from the Providence.

As well, his union with Amélie Soulacroix, in June 1841, at the age of 28, does not only come from his own will. Ozanam sees it as a present from God, who acts on his wish. Therefore, a feeling of peace, and of immense joy. Three days after his wedding, he writes to a friend, “It is thus with a very fraternal simplicity that I want to share my happiness with you. It is so great, it goes beyond all expectations and all dreams, and, since last Wednesday [...] I find myself in a state of calm, serene, delicious enchantment that could not have been foretold [...]. I am illuminated by inner happiness⁵.”

Those states of university professor, husband and soon, with the birth of little Marie, of father, Ozanam will experience them in the missionary mode, in order to expand the Kingdom in locations that concern lay people directly. Thus, in the French university of the 19th century, dominated by rationalists, he is able to raise a Christian voice, while being respected by his colleagues for his scientific rigour and his great human qualities.

His state of life as a layman is also a source of great fertility, through the role he plays in the foundation and the development of the Society of Saint Vincent-de-Paul. All his life, he constantly attempts to meet

1 Letter from Frederic Ozanam and Henri Pessonneaux, Lyon, October 21, 1836, quoted by Gérard Cholvy, *Frederic Ozanam, l’engagement d’un intellectuel catholique au XIXe siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 2003, p. 310.

2 Psalm 16.

3 Letter from Frederic Ozanam to Léonce Curnier, Lyon, October 29, 1835, quoted by Gérard Cholvy, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

4 Letter from Frederic Ozanam to François Lallier, Mayence, October 20, 1840, quoted by Gérard Cholvy, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

5 Letter from Frederic Ozanam to Jean-Jacques Ampère, June 26, 1841, quoted by Gérard Cholvy, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

God through serving the poor, and to work for the wealthier class to experience sharing with the working class. He plays a major role in the expansion of the Society abroad and dreams of enfolding the entire world in a “network of charity”.

The evocation of Ozanam’s commitment to the Kingdom would be incomplete if we ignored his political reflection and action. He follows passionately the French revolution of 1848, and initiates a Christian-democratic current that is looking to reconcile the Church with modern ideas.

Can we not say that Ozanam’s commitment, based on God, is extraordinarily rich?

**“He is like a tree
planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.”⁶**

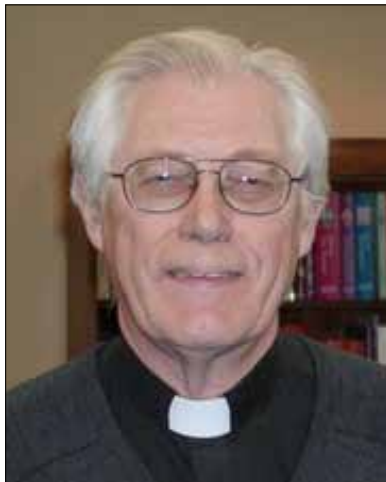
**Charles Mercier, collaborator, guest speaker
at the Quebec Regional Council Conference,
in September 2013.**

*Mr. Mercier is Master of Contemporary History lectures
at the Montesquieu University, Bordeaux IV, France.*

6 Psalm 1.

Spirituality

LET US PUT OUR FAITH INTO ACTION



Some of you may recall my reflection on the new theme, “Let us put our Faith into action”, at the last AGA. Several asked me at that time if the material would be available and so my message today is a recall of the AGA reflection.

In May your National Council had its usual meeting for that time of the year and at that meeting some time is set aside for Spiritual reflection. This year I spoke about the theology of Hans Urs von Balthazar primarily because his theology has deeply influenced our current Pope Francis. In short the classic way theology proceeds is to deal with doctrines, the morality and then if there is time, the Good and the Beautiful as reflections of God. Von Balthazar begins with the latter, the Good and the Beautiful, which he identifies with the Glory of God, and finishes with doctrine. He points to the approach taken by St Paul. Enraptured by his meeting with Christ he begins by proclaiming the greatness of Jesus, then discusses what disciples should do and lastly sets up the doctrines that are needed for the on-going life of the Church.

This process is suggested by our Theme. Our Living Faith pushes us into caritative action. The said action is indeed witnessing to the centrality of Christ in the entire process.

Of course our Theme is also grounded in the New Testament:

In the Letter of James, Chapter 2, verse 18 we read:

I, by my works, will show you my Faith

Living this theme puts us in very good company. Thomas à Kempis, in his famous work, *The Imitation of Christ*, speaks of true disciples:

Their lives are grounded and sustained by God, they give back to God all the benefits he has bestowed upon them and do all things to the glory of God alone.

Vincentians are not social workers; they are special agents of God’s Providence. With wisdom, based on their experience, they discern the problems they encounter and respond with the Generosity of God Himself

In the First Letter of John, Chapter 4, verse 18 we read:

Let us love, not in word and speech, but in truth and action.

That John adds truth to action suggests to me that our Vincentian action must follow the classic two-step program of Catholic Social Action:

- 1-the immediate emergency action
- 2-work on systematic change

Indeed our action is more than merely responding to a call for help. We must reflect intelligently on why the call was made. Our action must be an enriched response, one that tries to find solutions that will turn the person in need into a free and self-sustaining individual who in turn can respond to the need of others. There are many Vincentian Conferences that are acting in this manner.

Some of you may know of the great International Catholic Charity, **Aid to the Church in Need**. This work began in 1947 when a Belgian Norbertine priest, Werenfried van Straaten, began bringing aid, material and spiritual, to the devastated parts of Europe, especially Germany. He became known as the Bacon Priest because of his great skill in raising the help he needed.

When farmers claimed they were too poor to give him something, he would remind them of the ham they had curing in the attic and that they could certainly spare one for those in need. Reading his biography is to see Faith in Action. Our secular world scoffs at the claims of the Church that the Way of Christ is indeed the Good News. We begin arguing the validating of our doctrine not by fancy words but by bringing loving attention and solution to real human problems. Our action brings credibility to the claims of our Faith,

Our theme takes us right back to the founding history of our Society. We use the term Conference because at the outset, Frederic Ozanam, secure in his tower of academia, enjoyed discussing with colleagues the great social ideas that one could discern in Church doctrine and Tradition. But he was forcefully reminded that talk is cheap and reflection must lead to concrete action. He took this to heart and as a result our Society exists.

I conclude with two illustrations: The first is provided by Pope Francis who on Holy Thursday went to the Roman Prison housing young offenders to celebrate the ritual washing of feet, His action spoke more loudly than any homily. The second is related to World Youth Day 2002 held in Toronto. A retired actress living in Ottawa was absolutely convinced that her sinful life exceeded the power of God to forgive. During the World Youth Day event, as you may recall, the TV coverage was outstanding. Our little actress told me later that she could not take her eyes away from the TV image and she spent her time crying. Later she received the sacraments of the Church

Our God is a God of Action but to extend His Providence where He wants it to reach He requires each one of us. As I said earlier Vincentians are Special Agents for God's Loving Providence.

Peter Schonenbach
National Spiritual Advisor



YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013

AGA 2014



Alberta Legislature



Elk Island National Park of Canada

“LET US BE AS CHRIST TO ONE ANOTHER”

Edmonton Councils & Conferences are thrilled to host you and we look forward to seeing you all in 2014!

June 11 - 15, 2014 Edmonton AB

More details on cost, accommodation, workshops, etc. will be communicated during the winter, via our Vincenpaul-Canada magazine and the National Council website: www.ssvp.ca

If you wish to know more about activities in the Edmonton region, visit: www.edmonton.com

We are expecting many of you, in the hope of having the pleasure to share our Vincentian ties during that event.

2014 AGA Committee



West Edmonton Mall



Edmonton



Devonian Botanical Garden

Photos from the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation - www.edmonton.com

CALL FOR WORKSHOPS - AGA 2014

The theme in 2014 is

“LET US BE AS CHRIST TO ONE ANOTHER”

This theme has been set so that we as Vincentians may take time to reflect on how we relate to each other.

Workshops developed around the theme - at least 4 workshops in French and 4 in English that would develop this topic.

Yearly administrative workshops: usually the responsibility of the education committee.

1. Role of the President and executive - Conference/ councils
2. Role of Treasurer - Conference/councils
3. Role of Secretary - Conference/councils
4. Succession planning - Conference/councils
5. The meeting - Conference/councils

Other possible topics for workshops

1. Fundraising
2. Isolated conferences
3. Systemic Change

Please submit your proposals and requirements for workshops to

Lynn L'Heureux, Education/Formation Committee
tonlynlh@gmail.com
15 Grafton Dr. SW
Calgary AB T3E 4W1

Please fill form to present workshop

Title of Workshop: _____

Length: _____

Language Presented: English _____ French _____

Presenter Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Biographical Data: : _____

Topic Content Summary: _____

How does the topic tie into the AGA theme?

Handout Materials:

Required Room size/type

Required AV Materials

Associated Costs if any

Please send to:

Lynn L'Heureux, Education/Formation Committee
tonlynlh@gmail.com

15 Grafton Dr. SW, Calgary AB T3E 4W1

Approved by National Council Education Committee:

Date: _____

World Youth Day

“GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS”

“GO. DO NOT BE AFRAID. AND SERVE.”

That was the message that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, gave to the estimated 3.75 million pilgrims from 175 countries who were gathered on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during World Youth Day. It is a message that Pope Francis has preached about and lived constantly since his election to the papacy earlier this year. It is also a message that resonates strongly with all Vincentians who, following in the footsteps and spiritual guidance of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, have been called to live their faith through the service of Jesus Christ in the poor.



Amanda Harte, Jason Hunt, Julien Spiewak (Vice President - Youth, International Council General), Maria Harte, Neil Dixon, Christina Yeboah

Vincentian Youth Gathering

Before heading to Rio, the six delegates from Canada gathered with the almost 1,000 Vincentians from around the world in Belo Horizonte, approximately 400km north of Rio. Our three day gathering took place at the Cidade dos Meninos, or the City of Boys, a boarding school providing accommodations and an excellent education to children from poor families in the surrounding area. Our accommodations were in the bunk houses normally used by the boys for their living quarters and included beds for 16 people, toilets, showers and a common room.



As the Vincentians gathered in Belo Horizonte throughout the day, the festivities did not start until that evening with opening prayers in the auditorium and the introduction of our theme for the next few days – Vincentians: Missionaries of Charity. Let us go to the poor! Following our prayers, we broke off into English/French, Portuguese and

Spanish language groups to pray the missionary rosary by candlelight throughout the City of Boys. It was an inspiring sight once the various languages combined together in common prayer for the final decade of the rosary, with the symbolism of our candle lights fighting off the surrounding darkness.



Our three days in Belo Horizonte were filled with catechesis, workshops, prayer and mass and a strong sense of sharing and community with our brother and sister Vincentians from around the world. Through the catechesis with Michael Thio, International President of SSVP, we were challenged to identify and address the new forms of poverty in our own backyards and around the world. Fr. Gregory Gay, Spiritual Animator for the Vincentian Family, talked about the Vincentian missionary spirit and the challenge for each of us to grow in the characteristic virtues of Vincentians, being

World Youth Day

simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification and zeal. Our final catechesis with Yasmin Cajuste, International President of the Vincentian Marian Youth, spoke about how our works of charity and of service are a source of strength for evangelisation.

Our activities also included workshops on helping the poor to claim their power, the Vincentian vocation and Vincentian spirituality. We toured the surrounding area, with stops at some points of interest in Nova Lima (a surrounding town), including a retirement home run by the Society and a visit to the local Particular Council. And we were entertained as well, with presentations of song and dance from various countries, lessons on how to samba, and a football (soccer) and volleyball tournament.



World Youth Days

As we arrived in Rio for the start of World Youth Day, the excitement in the city was palpable and couldn't be dampened despite the colder than normal temperatures and the rain. We first arrived at our home for the week, a school run by the Daughters of Charity as part of the Immaculate Conception Parish in the Botafogo region of Rio. While the guys set up with their American, Irish, and Scottish friends from FamVin who were also staying at the school, the girls awaited news from their host families whose homes they would be staying in that week.

The days during our week in Rio were always exciting and full of energy, as we gathered on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings with the other English

speaking pilgrims at various catechesis sessions spread throughout Rio. We were privileged to hear from Bishop Anthony Fischer from the Diocese of Parramatta in Australia speak on the theme "Thirsting for hope, thirsting for God". The next day we heard the Archbishop of Brisbane, Mark Coleridge, also of Australia, speak on the theme of "To be Christ's disciples". And finally, we attended a standing room only session at the Vivo Rio Convention Centre to hear Cardinal Sean O'Mally, Archbishop of Boston, give his session on the theme "To be missionaries: go forth".



Mary Kate Truss (USA), Neil Dixon (Canada), Daniel Bryne (Scotland), Christina Yeboah (Canada), Tony Carlin (Scotland)

Our afternoons and evenings were full of adventures, activities, and meeting other pilgrims from around the world. One afternoon we attended a Canadian pilgrim prayer service, which was broadcasted live on Salt & Light television. We ventured up Corcovado to the foot of Christo Redentor. We attended a prayer service by the Vincentian Family in Rio to pray for peace around the world.

There were also events that involved all pilgrims of World Youth Day which were all celebrated on Copacabana Beach. These included the Opening Mass with Orani João Tempesta, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, a welcome ceremony to Pope Francis, the celebration of the Way of the Cross, an evening prayer vigil and adoration of the Eucharist and, on the last day, a mass celebrated by Pope Francis that was attended by an estimated 3.75 million people. ▶▶

World Youth Day

So now what?

The constant theme of the Vincentian Family gathering and of the World Youth Days was to take what we experienced, what we know, and what we learned from our time in Brazil and to spread that to our family, our friends, and our neighbours. We are all called to be missionaries throughout the world, whether it is in our own backyards, in our cities or somewhere else around the world. Jesus calls each and every one of us to be evangelisers of the word of God and to be servants of others.



Neil Dixon, Maria Harte, Amanda Harte, Christina Yeboah, Jason Hunt

While I know that it was an unforgettable and life changing experience for our group of pilgrims it is something we will always be able to strive for, to rise up to the challenge and mission given to us by Pope Francis to go, do not be afraid, and serve and to make disciples of all nations.

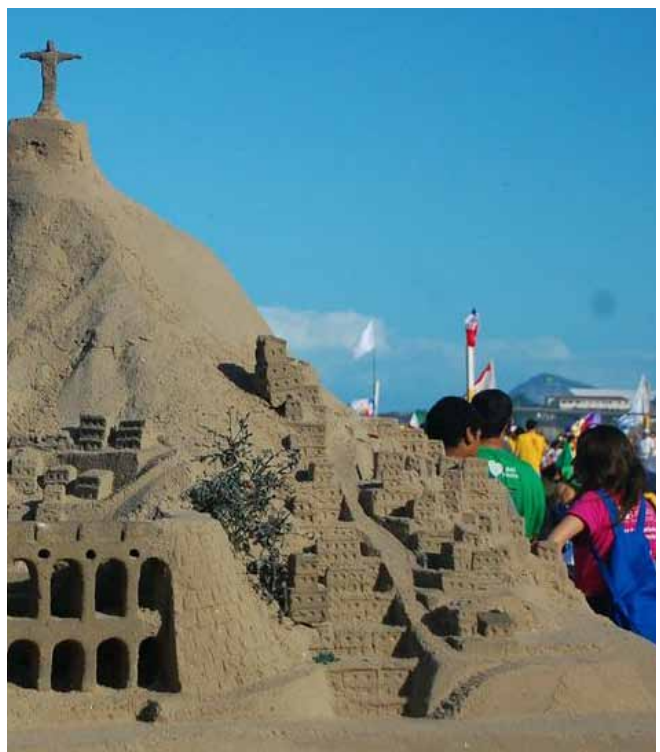
Jason Hunt
National Youth Rep



Maria Harte, Christina Yeboah, Amanda Harte



Christina Yeboah, Neil Dixon



Emmanuel Bailly's Scholarship

WINNER OF THE EMMANUEL BAILLY'S SCHOLARSHIP - 2013



Adam Doyle

My Name is Adam Doyle. I was born on August 10th, 1995 in Halifax Nova Scotia to Blair and Angela Doyle. I have two siblings, Aaron and Amanda. I have lived on the Dartmouth side my entire life, attending Portland Estates Elementary School, Ellenville Junior High and finally Dartmouth High School from which I have just recently graduated. Next year I will be studying engineering at SMU. Throughout my years of schooling, I have paddled for Senobe Aquatic Club down on Lake Banook, played rugby for the Dartmouth Spartans and attended mass regularly at St. Clements Parish. These are just a few of the many activities I've participated in over the years.

Due to my father's influence I have spent much of my youth outdoors. Kayaking, hiking, canoeing and just camping in general have occupied a large portion of my time. Annually we spend a week canoeing in the back country and running rapids. Another large factor in my life has been the church. After attending several Steubenville conferences and being a lector/ altar server at St. Clements, I can legitimately say that I have contributed lots of time to the church and don't plan on slowing down anytime soon. Every year I help out with the St. Vincent de Paul Society through our parish; delivering food to the less fortunate and spreading the joy of the season.

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

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

All the details are in the pamphlet available on our web site www.ssvp.ca, in the "Youth" section. Nominations of the candidates must be sent to your Regional President at the latest on February 1st, 2014.



Caroline Gilbert, Youth Rep, presents the Emmanuel Bailly Scholarship 2013 to Dennis McCormack, Atlantic Regional Council, for Adam Doyle.

Twinning

TWINNING AND REPORTING



Internal Twinning

Twinning takes two forms, internal and external (with developing countries). Internal twinning, i.e. between Conferences and Councils within Canada, has been part of the twinning program for many years. It is an expression of sharing and solidarity with our Brothers and sisters Vincentians from economically challenged regions of Canada.

The Chair of the National Twinning Committee approves this type of twinning in collaboration with Twinning Regional Coordinators. Once the twinning is confirmed, donor Conferences/Councils correspond with their recipient twin and send funds directly to them without going through the National as there is no legal requirement to do so. The *Internal Transmittal Form* (see Website www.ssvp.ca, link Forms, Twinning 9.18) shall be filled at each transfer and sent with the cheque to the recipient twin.

A copy of the filled Form must be forwarded to the National Council, either by fax ((613) 837-7375), by e-mail (twinning@ssvp.ca) or by mail. Donor Conferences/Councils do not always complete this step which results in incomplete/obsolete data at the National level on the monies sent to recipient twins. I am asking that each donor internal twin send a copy of the Internal Transmittal Form to the National to insure the integrity of the program.

Twinning Annual Report

The Annual Twinning Report is forwarded to Twinning Regional Coordinators by Conferences/Councils and includes internal and external twinning as indicated on the Form. In regards to internal twinning, only donor twins need to complete the Report.

Another year comes to a close again and the National Administrative Assistant for twinning, Mme Nicole Schryburt, will send to each twin, in early 2014, a copy of the Annual Twinning Report. I am asking the cooperation of each Vincentian responsible for twinning to complete the one page Report and forward it to their Twinning Regional Coordinator **no later than February 1st, 2014**. This date has been set as the Twinning Commission of the International Council General requires that National reports be filed by February 15, each year. I thank in advance twinning representatives from all over Canada for their collaboration in filling the Annual Report within the time frame allowed. A Report shall be filled for each twinning. I encourage twinning representatives to consult with their Regional Twinning Coordinators for advice or information on any matter related to twinning.

I wish to thank all Conference/Council presidents and twinning representatives for their commitment to twinning, a fundamental mission of the Society; I need your cooperation in ensuring the proper administration of the program, as you are the true stewards of twinning in the Society.

May Blessed Frederic Ozanam and our saint Patron St. Vincent de Paul guide and support you in every action to help those living in poverty.

**Clermont Fortin, Chair
National Twinning Committee
National Council of Canada.
twinning-chair@ssvp.ca**

Systemic Change

SSVP – TRICYCLING OUT OF POVERTY!

By John Freund, CM on Famvin News

Fifteen tricycles make it possible for fifteen people to support their families by delivering produce in the Dominican Republic. Obviously these are not the tricycles many of us used as children.

The SSVP of Canada participated in this project.

Edmund Keane shares this message from Mónica Alcántara de Martínez of the Dominican Republic as example of a Systemic Change Project in her country. This project could be replicated in other places.

Dear brothers,

Please receive warm greetings, this message is to inform you that yesterday August 31, 2013 we delivered 15 tricycles with fruits, sugar cane, avocados and coconut, to an equal number of unemployed parents, who live in extreme poverty, so that they can earn a living for their families.

Our beloved Father Alejandro Paulino CM who is the advisor of the Council of the Dominican Vincentian Family was present and proceeded to bless this project, placing it in the loving hands of God. He also exhorted the beneficiaries to work with earnestness and joy for the good of their families, saying that in the future, they could help other parents earn a living working hard, but with dignity.

After the blessing, we proceeded to the distribution in presence of the presidents of the conferences from the SSVP Zonal Council of Santo Domingo Este, with their respective beneficiaries who would be responsible for the supervision of this project. Finally we formally gave each parent his tricycle, plus the merchandise for sale. We will also donate an umbrella and a chain and padlock for its safety.

With gratitude and joy,

**Mónica Alcántara de Martínez
President, Superior Council
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
Dominican Republic**



Canada's Councils in Action

QUEBEC REGIONAL COUNCIL BICENTENNIAL OF THE BIRTH OF BLESSED FREDERIC OZANAM, PARIS, APRIL 2013

Wanting to highlight the bicentennial of the birth of our blessed founder Frederic Ozanam, the Council International organized in Paris an international conference that took place on April 19-21, 2013.

Location

The conference was held at the Palais d'Iéna (near the Trocadero and the Eiffel Tower). The important building accommodates the French Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC). It offers large meeting halls, namely a hemicycle able to sit over 500 people.

Participants

Over 300 participants from 24 countries and five continents gathered for the occasion, and had the opportunity to fraternize while attending very valuable lectures and forums. Let us note the welcome from the National Council of France and the President International, Mr. Michael Thio, from Singapore. Finally, the presence of the Ozanam family (descendants of Frederic and of his brother Charles) conferred to the meeting its unique character.

Contents

Six speakers could be heard over the two days of the conference, exploring the following topics: "*Blessed Frederic Ozanam, precursor to the social issue*", "*The Spirituality and Charisma of the Blessed Frederic Ozanam*", "*Frederic Ozanam's correspondence: half a century of the history of an enterprise*", "*Frederic Ozanam and Misery*", "*Frederic Ozanam, the one who brings souls closer together*", and "*The Gospel is also a Social Teaching*".

Those conferences should be published on the site **Ozanam.fr**. Some were published in whole or in part on our site *Ozanam's Dream*.

Forums

Sixteen talks on various experiences were presented. France, England, Brazil, Spain, Chile, Slovakia, Lebanon and Quebec participated.

Some of the topics discussed: *How to attract youths, Social reinsertion, and Vincentian love for the poorest among the poor.*

Quebec's Share

Quebec was allowed to give three presentations.

Mrs. Louise Larivière, Regional Council representative, presented "*Ozanam's Dream, from yesterday to today*". Her presentation took place in the hemicycle and generated much enthusiasm (see article in *Le rêve d'Ozanam*). We asked that the document be translated into several languages.

Mrs. Lise Boyer, President of the St-Jean-sur-Richelieu Particular Council, presented "*An organization in the heart of the community*". It is a vast service project on behalf of about 3,000 needy people in the area. That organization needs the collaboration of all members of the three Conferences of the Particular Council. Every year, we distribute up to one million dollars in goods, which requires a sum of 450,000 \$ in fund raising. The entire community is called upon and actively participates (police corps, fire department, military college, municipal administration, and businesses). Mrs. Boyer was accompanied by Mrs. Lorraine Bessette, Vice-President.

The Québec Central Council presented "*Two caravans looking for street youths*". Mr. Jean-Marc Vaillancourt, President, underlined the originality of the activity that has been going on for the past 20 years, focusing on hospitality, listening, and prevention. The *Le Marginal* caravan reaches every year approximately 4,000 homeless youths aged 18 to 35, to whom we serve a warm meal, blankets, clothing and counselling of all kind. The *La Bohème* caravan tours four different neighbourhoods between May and October, to meet with teenagers in distress, aged between 12 and 17.

The Quebec presentations were very well received. There were many questions. It seems that the originality of the various activities has raised much interest.

Canada's Councils in Action

Other strong moments

Concert in Saint-Sulpice

On April 19, at 8:30 p.m., there was a concert in the church of Saint-Sulpice. The Spanish pianist, Ana Vega Toscano, performed pieces by the Spanish composer Santiago Masarnau, friend of the Blessed Frederic Ozanam and founder of the SSVP in Spain, in 1849.

Mass at Notre Dame

Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, Archbishop of Paris, the Cardinals of Madrid and of Kinshasa, and another Bishop, as well as numerous priests and deacons celebrated with the Conference participants, and a considerable crowd, the Mass of the Good Shepherd on Sunday in the Notre-Dame Basilica. The Cardinal's homely and the message from Pope Francis were strong moments in that celebration that concluded the very special and very fraternal meeting of our Society, which, let us not forget, also celebrates this year the 180th anniversary of its foundation.

Jean-Marc Vaillancourt

Chief of the Quebec delegation



Canada's Councils in Action

QUEBEC REGIONAL COUNCIL

BICENTENNIAL OF THE BIRTH OF BLESSED FREDERIC OZANAM, PARIS, APRIL 2013

The following articles were written by Louise Larivière, Senior Communication Advisor for the Quebec Regional Council. Mrs. Larivière was designated by the National Council to present an overview of the “Rêve d’Ozanam” (Ozanam’s Dream) concept to the delegates assembled in Paris, last April, for the Bicentennial of the birth of Frederic Ozanam. Ozanam’s Dream is a campaign aiming to make Quebecers aware of the mission of the Society since 2011. The following texts represent in substance the various conferences she attended.

BICENTENNIAL OF FREDERIC OZANAM

GREAT AND MAGNIFICENT DAY AT THE PALAIS D’IÉNA IN PARIS!

Friday, April 19, 2013. The picture is not insignificant, it translates what remains after a long and enriching day at the Palais d’Iéna, the first day of the Bicentennial of the birth of Frederic Ozanam: a *key mate* satisfied about a presentation that he still keeps in its USB belly, leaning on a few mandarins to snack on at the end of the day, a bag of chocolate offered by the Hong Kong delegation, as a thanking gesture for having been able to share the enthusiasm that animates us in Quebec around the “Rêve d’Ozanam” campaign, and my badge, ready to return to active service the morning after.

I was allowed 20 minutes to make the presentation on behalf of the Provincial Council: from the conception of “Ozanam’s Dream” to the implementation of the 2011 and 2012 campaigns, up to this year’s campaign, “The one thousand and one faces of Frederic”. I was finally allowed double the time. The emotion was great stepping down from the podium: many came to see me, and everyone congratulated Quebec on its audacity, for undertaking to adapt the Ozanam image in such a fashion... Some of the delegates said that they want the clip to be translated into several languages, so that every country can use it! An appeal launched to the Council General International and to others who said they were touched by such a perspective. Thus, I come back home with another project in my hands.

The delegates appreciated the various messages in previous campaigns. Lebanon came to “apologize”; they will copy the 2012 message: “Poverty spans centuries, and so does hope”. I was happy to give them permission on the spot, of course on behalf of the Provincial Council. Moreover, is such sharing not part of Frederic’s thinking of *embracing the world in a network of charity*? Of course! So please copy us joyfully all over the world. We

must not imprison ideas; they must circulate, as blood does in our veins, as does the air that we breathe. Let us open the valves of fraternity and may the message spread all over.

So then, while you are waiting for another message from your nice-web-editor traveling in the city of lights, my *key mate* and myself will go to sleep in order to be ready for another Bicentennial day, tomorrow Saturday, April 20. I will of course mail pictures taken during the three first days of next week; follow us on:

www.lerevedozanam.com and above all, subscribe.

Scoop: moving encounter with Frederic Ozanam’s descendants! TO BE FOLLOWED!



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THE BICENTENNIAL, AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT

Paris, April 21. Lise Boyer, President of the **St-Jean-sur-Richelieu Particular Council**, fraternises with one delegate from Chile, in the garden of the Notre-Dame Cathedral, after a Mass celebrated by the Paris Cardinal. Let us note that the Quebec delegation was chaired by Jean-Marc Vaillancourt, President de the **Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul of Québec**. The Provincial Council was also part of the delegation, with a presentation of the concept “Ozanam’s Dream”, which rallied several delegates around the important theme of youth.

In total, 23 countries participated to the **Bicentennial of the birth of Frederic Ozanam**. There were over 300 Vincentians attending the various conferences taking place at the Palais d’Iéna on Friday and Saturday April 19 and 20. Such representation efforts are essential; since they fall within a mandate of an international nature, let us not forget it.

List of participants: Brazil, Chile, Québec-Canada, USA, New Zealand, Algeria, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, England, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Malta, Monaco, Rumania, Slovakia, Turkey, Australia, Benin, Nigeria, France.



THE POPE SALUTES THE WORK OF FREDERIC OZANAM

The Bicentennial celebrations ended with a High Mass at the **Notre-Dame de Paris** Cathedral, on Sunday, April 20. The Mass was celebrated by no other than Cardinal André VINGT-TROIS, Paris Archbishop, in front of hundreds of Vincentians, moved by the solemn, albeit intimate, character of the celebration. Everyone was touched by the reading of a word written by **Pope Francis** about Frederic Ozanam, a word that was read by the Cardinal with much sincerity. The Pope underlined the works of Frederic Ozanam, who introduced a charity of proximity, at a time in history when very few people did that. The Cathedral had also published a leaflet, part of which is as follows.

Joining the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

Christians dealing with poverty

Poverty is increasingly present in our society in crisis. We are also witnessing a disintegration of social ties, giving way to the scourge of solitude in all segments of the population, young and old.

In 1833, Frederic Ozanam had already realized that, and was deciding, with his friends, to create a “Conference of Charity”. His goal: to visit poor and isolated people in the neighbourhood, thus fostering a charity of proximity and build with those people a friendly relationship. Nowadays, there are more than 50,000 conferences of charity that, across 150 countries in the world, work at the very core of their parish, their neighbourhood, or their commune, in order to “embrace the world in a network of charity” according to the wish of Frederic Ozanam.

The delegates gathered one last time in the Cathedral gardens after the Mass; let us mention that all continents were present, and 24 countries participated in the Bicentennial, some delegations were composed of a great number of people. It was a great moment in Vincentian history.

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QUEBEC REGIONAL COUNCIL

BICENTENNIAL OF THE BIRTH OF BLESSED FREDERIC OZANAM, PARIS, APRIL 2013



Charles Mercier is a historian and Master of History Conferences at the University of Bordeaux. Co-author of the book "Ozanam, l'homme de la promesse" (Ozanam, the man of the promise), he replaced at a moment's notice a speaker who was scheduled to address

participants to the Bicentennial Conference at the Palais d'Iéna, on Saturday, April 20. His presentation was very well received. Charles Mercier has this Olympian calm, inspired by confidence, or Faith, or perhaps a little bit of both. His tranquil voice is in itself an invitation; his words are sincere; delivered with moderation. It is a recipe that does not fail: that of speakers who stand out. I had the opportunity to attend that extraordinary conference, and I share with you today a few excerpts, as well as the feelings I experienced receiving his message. My apologies to Monsieur Mercier if I made a few mistakes in my interpretation of his speech.

FREDERIC OZANAM AND MISERY

How to define misery?

Misery is different from poverty, which is defined in relation to wealth – in France, those who earn less than 60% of median income. Misery falls under that threshold; it is the extreme form of poverty. Misery is living on the edge, being unable to meet one's basic needs. Being poor, one keeps fighting against adversity, but when living in misery, one has surrendered, participating directly to the degradation of one's life, part of the world of defeatism. Someone who lives in misery has no more social ties; it is the exclusion from the human community. Relationships with others have been cut off. It is appropriate here to recall the fragility of the link between ourselves and others. Misery! We are never very far from it.

Southern masses do not necessarily live exclusion. In richer countries, the rupture is more dramatic; misery brings about reclusion via the perspective of a blocked future. At the time of Ozanam, there is great misery; it is an urban phenomenon. Industrialisation sees a growing importance given to machines. Working tools, progressively more expensive and abundant, are in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Workers depend on them, working under alienating conditions that result in alcoholism, family violence... Rural populations crowd together in cities that have not had time to adapt: in suburbs or in the centre, in blighted neighbourhoods. In Paris, the Mouffetard neighbourhood, now bourgeois, was then in misery.

Frederic Ozanam describes it thus: *on both sides of a foul stream are five-storey houses, nauseous low-ceiling rooms, most of them without a fireplace. No furniture hides the nakedness of their desolate walls. At the far end of some sort of basement, a family on a straw mat. On a string stretched across the room, a piece of bread hangs to shelter it against rats. Higher levels are hardly better: an attic room with two openings, a woman and eight children, straw sheltering them. An old woman subsisted eight days eating pieces of stale bread dipped in cold water.*

Survival, waiting for death; proximity leading to vice, rapes, battered women...

Traditional solidarity disappears, workers corporations end. Migration from rural areas to the city leads to the thinning of social ties, misery looms nearby. In 1848, one million people, one quarter of the population, is threatened by hunger. Frederic Ozanam studied very near Mouffetard Street. He could have avoided going there, but he chose to face that misery, and meet those who lived in that area. It is then that he meets Sister Rosalie Rendu, who works in the very core of those neighbourhoods. <http://www.vincentdepaul.be>

Honourable Assistance

We believe in two types of assistance, the one that humiliates, and the one that honours. Assistance humiliates when it approaches man from the bottom, when it cares only about material suffering, about what generates

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pity, when it brings only a piece of bread, given in a few minutes; receiving without giving. When you feed those who suffer, you only stifle their complaints. Assistance honours when it is moral and political, when it cares about what frees man and makes him greater. It is the enlightening advice. Let us treat the poor as a superior being, because he suffers what we do not suffer. Assistance then becomes honourable, because it can become mutual. The hand that you shake can shake yours in turn.

Assistance must not be only material. Giving bread without tenderness maintains life, but it is nothing more than animal life. Tone assails, tone creates hierarchy. It looks like it seeks to alleviate the misfortune of the poor, that hierarchy now visible. The poor will remain accountable forever; the link with the human community has not been restored.

Thus the necessary notion of equality to adopt with the poor. At the time of Ozanam, it is a very original concept: it is the rich who makes a step, the relation is then inverted.

Do not judge: recognize misery behind certain behaviours

Attempting not to judge behaviours. Someone tries to take advantage of the system, we feel betrayed in the assistance we try to give, and when trust is thus shaken, we may be tempted to stop. We tend to make a distinction between the “good” and the “bad” poor. The good one has gratitude, the other is alcoholic, cunning...

For Ozanam, misery can soften the heart and revive energy. About the upper class, he will say, *“Those lords must know hunger, thirst and a naked attic to experience a few beats in their hearts. Soon, your young people will climb the stairs of the destitute, saddened by the wrong, and happy of the good accomplished. The “show” of misery is able to wake up sleeping souls. We should fall on our knees at their feet...”*

In 1848, he calls upon the rich to share their riches, invites them to spend to stimulate the economy, he encourages sharing.

Ozanam was giving 1/10 to 1/6 of his revenues. He calls upon the priests' morale and strongly appeals to ecclesiastics. He asks them to go to the suburbs, outside of rich parishes. He demands of the clergy that they preach sharing to the rich. In 1848, he presents a project about progressive taxation to the legislative session: large land-owners would pay 25%, medium ones 10%, and small ones 5%. That was an audacious project for those times. He also proposed that a widespread national subscription be launched. Doing that, he promotes a spirit of sharing and service, rather than that of domination.

Since the 19th century, misery has changed. Despite some kind of a momentary reprieve towards the end of the 20th century, misery progresses once again. In France, there are new situations of exclusion: 75% of people in a state of poverty have parents who had not had money problems. Misery circulates, and is becoming a global threat to society.

Ozanam's message today would be to avoid imprisoning the destitute in a specific status, vigilance, solidarity and equality.

Today, that preoccupation continues. Among the new tools: social and solidarity economy. In Chile, with the Ozanam Club, in Bangladesh, micro-credit. In France, the Table de Cana, founded by a priest, fostered the re-socialization of the homeless and the construction of a competitive business, chosen for its competencies. We must **think outside the box**, going beyond formats, and calling upon creativity.

Frederic Ozanam was innovative, inspired by Saint Vincent de Paul. Nowadays, being faithful to Ozanam's message means **to remain inventive**, to create new ways of dealing with misery.

This note was written by Louise Larivière, member of the Quebec Society of Saint Vincent de Paul delegation, lecturer presenter of the campaign “Le Rêve d'Ozanam” (Ozanam's Dream) for the Provincial Council, at the Bicentennial of the birth of Frederic Ozanam, last April.

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Gérard Cholvy is Professor Emeritus at the University of Montpellier III. First biographer of Frederic Ozanam, for 30 years he has spread and publicized Ozanam's image in France and abroad. He is an honoured member of the Society. At the Bicentennial, he presented a speech that was rich in teachings about Frederic Ozanam, precursor on the social issue.

Paris, April 20, 2013, excerpts from Gérard Cholvy's speech

FREDERIC OZANAM, PRECURSOR ON THE SOCIAL ISSUE

Frederic Ozanam was able to find what attitude should be: *assistance humiliates when it approaches man from the bottom, but it honours when it approaches from the top, when it joins to the bread that feeds the visit that consoles.*

Historians influenced by Marxist analysis did not take into consideration the slowness of the first industrial revolutions settlement in France. In those times, France was very largely rural and artisanal: 40% of the population worked in agriculture. In 1831 the Canut revolt takes place in Lyon, before that of the Commune in 1871. Ozanam perceived the new character, meeting the Saint Vincentians in Lyon, on January 15, 1831. To his friend Materne to whom he wrote letters, he said, "they wither me with those thoughts of interest". Frederic had a philosophy teacher who launched him into an intellectual pursuit. A young man of 18, son of a well-known physician, he was already writing articles. He wrote reflections on the doctrine of Saint-Simon. Count Saint-Simon, who passed away in 1825, was one of the first instances of an industrial revolution, of the reorganization of European society; in the 19th century, he was already talking about only one parliament and a unique currency. Saint-Simon's influence was considerable. Ozanam planned to refute the latest work of the Master: the new Christianity. He found religion too individualistic... "Hitherto every form of society has been based ... on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes", dixit Karl Marx, "He speculates on his fellow men as on cattle". In 1831, Frederic says, "it suffices to refer to the text to see that this quote is not his... the formula belongs to Saint-Simon, who has been our authors' source of inspiration". Improvement of men by men, and the exploitation of the globe.

While studying commercial law, Frederic Ozanam discovers social revolution in the field. In 1830, in Paris,

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he fights on both the intellectual and spiritual fronts. In Lyon, he mixes with upper-class elite – there were no more than 2,500 graduates in all of France. He meets Emmanuel Bailly. They recognize the role of Christianity in the past, but they ask: where are the works that testify of our faith? This criticism was well deserved. What to do? Let us help others as Jesus did. On April 23, six students gather around 40 year-old Bailly to create the Conference of Charity. Frederic Ozanam, intelligence and the unifying force, was the main founder of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, thus named in 1835. **He wants to form an association where can be found friendship, and examples.** *If we go under the roof of the poor, it is to become fraternal and increasingly friends. Visiting the poor is the way.*

End of 1835: no work of charity can remain foreign to the Society, which is not a fraternity: it was founded by lay people, who manage it and take responsibility for it, with a mandate to evangelize. Frederic is conscious that good is accomplished mostly close to us. Little by little, the members broaden their scope. Apprenticeship is threatened by the beginning of mechanization. They regroup apprentices on Sundays, for relaxation, games, and religious training. In 1836, Frederic Ozanam talks about the potential usefulness of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in such a context. What divides men is a social issue, not a political one: *many men have too much and wish to have even more, while others have little or nothing.* There could be a terrible fight. Frederic Ozanam explored the menacing social state, he listens to direct echoes of two insurrections (Canut in Lyon). 1844-48, he continues to participate to the life of a conference. As good doesn't make any noise, and noise doesn't do any good, we know very little of those times; we find out more from his wife Amélie. He then teaches Foreign Literature at the Sorbonne. Some do little more than giving alms. He knows how to make visits to the poor a true sharing experience. He evaluates the 1846-1847 crises: a terrible famine in Ireland, the exodus to the United States, the flight of the banks – it becomes difficult to pay employees. April 1848, Frederic Ozanam underlines the necessity of progressive taxation – income

tax was established in France in 1914, compelled by necessities.

Frederic Ozanam was a precursor: he challenged economic liberalism that reduces human activity to calculating interest. His visit to the international exhibition in London is a revelation. Socialism presents truths mixed with many mistakes: it promises happiness on earth and eliminates competition! The idea of association was not popular with many people at the time. Frederic promotes it, among workers, or between masters and workers. In the class struggle, he opposes reconciliation through the association. We know that at that time, the Le Chapelier¹ law prohibits it: no intermediary between the individual and the nation. It will be difficult to introduce the association. The state has a role to play; it must teach and educate the people. The worker becomes an associate; he is then entitled to retirement.

On March 6, 1848, he says, “Behind the political revolution, there is a social revolution, issues of work, rest, salary”. Frederic Ozanam is not the first or only social Catholic of his time, but he will have been a **representative of an important democratic current.**

*To find out more, read Gérard Chovly's abridged work: *Frederic Ozanam, Biographie*, éditions Artège (this last work follows an 800-page biography, written by the same author). According to comments gathered among F.O.'s family members, that work is a true reference.

1 The Le Chapelier law, promulgated in France on June 14, 1791, is a law prohibiting not only workers organizations, namely trade corporations, but also farmers and workers assemblies, as well as companionship.

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Excerpt from the speech by Dr. Michael Thio, President General of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, while welcoming delegates from the five continents.

Our hearts are filled with Joy and Jubilation to be part of this celebration and we welcome you and thank you for joining us on this very auspicious occasion of being in the presence of 13 members of the Ozanam Family who are among us. We remember the Blessed Frederic and his dear wife, Amelie, who was so fully supportive of him in his works and life, a gift from God. A man of deep spirituality well learned, with tremendous charisma, a great and capable leader who was able to influence people. It is appropriate to remember the founders, Emmanuel Bally, the first President, François Lavier, Secretary and in charge of the Rule of the Society, Jules Devault, Treasurer dedicated to the works. We also have Paul Lamache, Augustin Le Clavandier, and Félix Clavier, who were part of the first great ones. Frederic had hopes, he had dreams: gather everyone in a charity organization. Today, 780,000 members and 1,300,000 volunteers help over 30 million poor each day. A dream come true. Frederic has wanted to imitate, not the works, but the spirit of Saint Vincent. Ozanam said that material help was not the most important, but rather spirituality, a testimony to God. Some who had lost Faith have found it again. A basic element of our Vincentian spirituality. Faith allows us to recognize the presents that God has bestowed to us, and spirituality gives us the fruit of that spirituality. We are part of that heritage, and all Vincentians will keep on working as servants to the poor. The United Nations considers us as internationally recognized global NGO. All Vincentians are essential to maintain such dynamism. Your role is fundamental, and you must be very proud of this.

Excerpt from the speech by Jean-Paul Delevoye, President of the French Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC) – the ESEC was hosting the Bicentennial which took place in Paris, at the Palais d'Iéna.

He speaks of the modernity that is very strongly felt: our society is metamorphosing through digital technology, and our relationship with time is evolving. Science gives us more time; there are more and more centenarians. But we give less and less life to our time, becoming orphans with regards to the meaning of our life. **Ozanam offers social resiliency.** How can we rebuild ourselves after those brutal changes, industrial revolution, and digital revolution? We will go from a society of abundance to a society of rarity. Raw materials are limited, while generosity is inexhaustible if we know how to stimulate it, to encourage it not by acquisition, but by sharing. Salute the goodwill of delegates gathered, messages transmitted, the responsibility of Vincentians to help political decision makers reconciling progress and values. Humanity revitalized: take advantage of man's greatness rather than his littleness.

Word from Bertrand Gousset, President of SSVP National Council in France

Talks about Ozanam as a republican Catholic, of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, to enfold the world in a network of charity.

April 23, 1833 saw the birth of the first lay association in the world, others followed. To meet the challenges of time. The approach has kept its novelty. Proximity charity has served the men in the first Conference. Three original approaches: lay people within the Church with actors form the civil society, much decentralized organization giving birth to subsidiarity, a movement made of volunteers, but demanding, fraternal, not professional – very few staff among our organizations, sustainable volunteer work. Call to researchers: in this era of globalization, think about the exceptional characteristics explaining with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul continues, the spirit and the work go much beyond the creation of the Society.

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Migrant Workers - Mass and Meal

As we enjoy Ontario fruits and vegetables we often forget those who spend hours toiling in the fields or greenhouses to produce the produce. Today it is 34 degrees with a humidex of over 43 degrees so if you work all day out in the fields it is hot.

Many of the Migrant workers are part of the Agricultural Workers programme where they spend 6 to 9 months working in the fields or greenhouses. To be part of this programme you must be married with a family and pass a medical. Many come back to the same farm or greenhouse year after year.

As part of a **Systemic Change** project funded by ONRC St Joseph's Conference in Chatham, working with the Kent Migrant Workers Committee, workers either road their bikes or we bussed them to St Joseph's church where a Mass in Spanish was celebrated complete with Spanish Music.

The workers, plus several other Spanish speaking friends, came to the Spirit and Light Centre for a delicious meal and a time to connect with everyone. Several tables of donated clothes were available for the workers to take; as well, everyone received packages of soap and shampoo.

Those who attended thought it was a very worthwhile effort and we will do it again in August.



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CREATING HOPE FOR A BRIGHTER EDUCATIONAL FUTURE

The Systemic Change Team has launched an RESP (Registered Education Savings Plan) Project with the goal of supporting the children in their pursuit of post-secondary education (full time or part time studies in: apprenticeship programs, colleges, trade schools, universities).

Education is one of the most critical and important elements in breaking out of the cycle of poverty. The statistics show that the 'mere existence of educational savings makes a child 50 percent more likely to pursue post-secondary education' and this is such a powerful and hopeful statistic.

The first step in the project is to educate the SSVP volunteers on the Canada Learning Bond and Canada Education Savings Grant programs so they can inform and support the parents in accessing this funding for their children. The parent must apply for a Social Insurance Number for the child and open up an RESP account. Some parents may find government and financial programs intimidating, so encouragement by informed SSVP volunteers is critical to empower them to take the necessary action.

The Canada Learning Bond (CLB) offers up to \$ 2,000 in free education money provided by the government of Canada for children born after January 1, 2004 into families who receive the National Child Supplement (net income of \$43,561 or less). Upon registering, children receive \$ 500 and an additional \$ 100 annually until they reach 15 years of age and the funds are retroactive. No parental contribution is required!

Only 1 in 4 children who are eligible for the Canada Learning Bond has received it. Through our SSVP network, we can work together to change this statistic.

The Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG) offers a matching grant for contributions into an RESP and depending on income levels, can reach up to a 40% grant.

Through the joint sponsorship of the Ontario Regional Council (ONRC) and the Halton Particular Council (HPC), we have funding available to provide children in

our Particular Council with a \$50 contribution into an opened RESP.

A parishioner in one of the SSVP Conferences has been so inspired by the project that they are providing an additional \$ 100 monthly contribution to their local Conference's project and hope other parishioners will be similarly inspired to help.

Given the persistent gap in the pursuit of post-secondary by students from higher and lower-income families, these savings are more than dollars – they can be a catalyst. Studies show that once the RESP account is opened, it tends to attract additional contributions even though they are not required. As the savings grow, so does a student's confidence to apply to post-secondary. Application and acceptance opens the door to scholarships, bursaries and other forms of financial aid. Finally, higher education improves employability, earnings and financial stability for a lifetime.

Here is a letter received by a client expressing her gratitude for the support for her 6 year old son (all names have been changed to retain confidentiality)

Through John's gentle yet persuasive guidance, I was encouraged to open an RESP for Michael. I am very grateful for this. As Michael is as well. He's already planning a career as an engineer for VIA Rail. He's also planning my retirement "on board the lunch coach, so I can still make his lunch". John also took the time to call and check the status on said account. During his phone calls he was always full of kind encouraging words.

She expresses her gratitude for the impact this has made on her family.

For more information on the RESP Project, please contact Linda Alexander at alex.lmja@gmail.com.

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BACKPACKS FOR SCHOOL

Holy Rosary Conference, Burlington

SSVP Holy Rosary Burlington partnered with the Aldershot Hub and Holy Rosary School to get new backpacks and supplies to children in our Community! Approximately 55 backpacks were collected with school supplies donated to fill our packs.

Elske De Visch Eybergen
Holy Rosary Burlington

Mary Mother of God Conference, Oakville

With the help of our generous congregation, we were able to pack 134 back packs with school supplies. In this number, 10 bags were packed for the 2 affiliated schools in anticipation of children arriving at school with no supplies (as happens every year.....) We work closely with the schools for client referrals, so in these cases, the schools will make the parents aware that they can contact SSVP for additional support, if needed.

The parents fill out a Back Pack Wish list form per child. We type these up on colourful cards and ask the parishioners to sponsor a child and return the back pack with the card attached.

We had volunteers standing by the back to school back pack display before and after the masses on 3 week-ends and our Priest supportively made announcements about the programs.

We also asked for donations towards the purchase of school snacks.

We picked up 25 different book titles from First Books Canada as part of the program.

We also handed out 23 RESP congratulatory certificates.

To go back one step, we held our 2nd annual back to school shoe shopping at Walmart on Saturday, August 24. The children need 2 pairs of shoes, and indoor and outdoor pair, and we rarely receive 'nice' shoes during our clothing drives, as they wear out so fast, so shoes are a void. The clients signed up in time slots and then then came so the children could pick up a new pair of shoes (up to a maximum value of \$ 25). We had volunteers

on hand and Walmart arranged for extra staff to help the clients with their shopping and then we paid for the purchase at the check out.

On Tuesday, August 27, we had the clients come from 9:00 to 12:00 or from 5:00 to 7:00 to pick up their items.

What a wonderful event to know that the children are all set for back to school. A number of the volunteers had baked treats so the families were able to sit and enjoy the baking and have a chat. The children had so much fun picking out brand new beautiful books and many sat at the tables to read them.

The children for whom RESP accounts have been set up enjoyed receiving their beautiful certificates and you could see the pride in the parent's faces. We also made sure to include words of encouragement and support for the parents that are still working through the steps.

We will not stop our follow up efforts until each child receives the post secondary funds to which they are entitled.

They then picked up their brand new back packs filled with supplies and their bag of school snacks.

It is hard to convey how wonderful the event was, knowing that the children are all set for school, but will share a few moments with you. One little boy just loves his new shoes so much that the mom has found it hard to talk him into taking them off. One mom shared that her daughter had been counting down the 'number of sleeps' until she could come to pick up her back pack. Another girl shared that she was so disappointed when she found out Monday was a holiday, because it meant she had to wait one more day to get back to school. And a grade 9 student proudly showed off her new High School student card she had just received at her school orientation.

Linda Alexander
SSVP Mary Mother of God,
Oakville



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Lac- Megantic Aid Project - August 2013

The great tragedy in Lac Megantic put a hole in the center of the town and also through the hearts of the people. There are so many people hurt by this tragedy it is almost un-imaginable.

As Vincentians and as Christians we realized that we must show these unfortunate people that we care, by our actions and not just by words and prayers. We must tell them that our thoughts and prayers are with them in this time of sorrow, (*En ces temps difficiles, nos pensées et prières sont avec vous*).

As Vincentians, we are privileged to have the opportunity to serve our neighbours when we can. We are fortunate that our benefactors are so generous with their goods and make our helping possible.



We decided to bring gifts and money from our Vincentians and parishioners. However, our most important reason for going was to tell them that we share their grief. (*Nous partageons votre chagrin.*)

We spoke at the masses on the weekend in Saint John of The Cross Parish in Mississauga. We gave people an information sheet on what we needed as they went into the church and had a display table where they signed the sympathy cards and gave donations.

Our parishioners, over the weekend gave \$2,400.00, a large amount of bedding, clothes, water and supplies. 720 of our parishioners signed an 8.5 X 14" sympathy card.



We wanted them to know that our Vincentians and parishioners hope that our prayers will comfort them and that their faith and the loving memories of their family and friends will heal their hearts in time. (*Nous espérons que nos prières vous réconforteront et qu'avec le temps, votre foi et vos beaux souvenirs guériront vos cœurs*). Over 700 of our parishioners signed two Sympathy cards this weekend. They want you, the people of Lac Megantic, to know that they share your pain. Their hearts go out to you.



The Vincentians at the Peterborough store lent us a 14' truck, serviced and filled with gas for the week. The truck which we nicknamed "The Little Vinnie" gave the Society good visibility and served the purpose well. Our sincere thanks to them for their generosity.

All clothing and food that came was sorted. Sarah, Silas and Zelina checked that all clothes were clean and in good repair. All food was checked to ensure nothing was stale dated. Very little had to be rejected.

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Kevin from Our Lady of The Airways Conference brought food twice and stayed and worked. Mary Teng and her family came twice with goods for the truck. The second trip was 20 cases of bottled water.



We have the goods, the sympathy card and the cheque so it is Tuesday morning and we are on the way to Lac-Megantic, 800 Km away.



The trip was not totally un-eventful with road closures, out of date GPS etc..

This picture gives an idea of Lac-Megantic when we arrived. We were offered a tour of the Red Zone but why would I want to see where 47+ people were burned to death so we kindly refused. >>>



It was humbling to see the extreme generosity of the Vincentians and parishioners as they brought goods and money;our parish always responds well.

Our parishioners donated \$2,400 dollars which was brought in a cheque. From the smile of our Peel North treasurer Zelina she must be happy with the count.



Canada's Councils in Action

The church was only a few hundred feet from the disaster area.

The town was in disarray and rightly so. Groups were coming from all over with relief items and nobody quite knew where to put them. The main thing they seemed to want was furniture. Some felt they had too much of some things and not enough of others. This would be a normal feeling but as the days and weeks go by the supplies will dwindle, especially for people with no work.

Ironically, one of the town's industries that was lost was a furniture factory and a melamine plant. Both employed several hundred people. And were dependant on the railroad for cheap transportation.

Initially when we arrived in Lac-Mégantic we were met by Louise Larivière, Senior Communication Consultant for the Quebec Saint Vincent de Paul Regional Council. She had some contacts and acted as our interpreter. Louise arranged for us to go to a warehouse where we were met by Isabelle Gagnon, the Communications person for the town and a councillor by the name of Roger Garant.



At this point we presented the cheque from our Particular Council and parish and a copy of the sympathy card.

The truck was unloaded and everything was skidded by off-duty firemen. These were the individuals who fought the horrific inferno. Unloading the truck was more for therapy than anything else. One fireman told of finding one body in a basement under a table. It was one of the ones that could be identified.



As I looked at the material that was skidded, I was amazed that it all came from one truck. There were skids of water, diapers, pasta, clothing, dishes even a futon and a fridge. With Silas and Sarah we could never get better people to sort and pack.

We went to the recreation Centre which was the centre of everything at this point and joined Louise and the pastor, Father Lemay for lunch. The place was busy with the media looking for stories. I'm sure the people wished everyone would go and leave them alone. After this Father took us to the church. It is a beautiful old church with lots of stained glass and statues like most French churches.

Canada's Councils in Action

Father Lemay was tired but appreciated our being there. He seemed surprised that so many people were aware of their tragedy and that they cared.

The church is beautiful inside. There are memorial boards around the church for each lost person.



William Fr. Lemay Shirley
Sainte-Agnès Church
Lac-Mégantic

They had pictures and mementos and boards with notes from the grieving family and visitors.

There were several candle racks and a lot of visitors.

We presented the sympathy card from our parish and Father Lemay assured us that it would be read at each of the Sunday masses.

William Graham
Peel North Particular Council
svdpbill@hotmail.com

BC & YUKON REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Vancouver Central Council & The Betty O'Flynn Memorial Fund Committee were delighted to inform two applicants this year that they are the recipients of the 2013 Betty O'Flynn Memorial Bursary.

Congratulations to Riley Colten & Daniel Curalli!

We wish you both every success in your future studies.



Riley Colton accepting the Betty O'Flynn Bursary from Ivan Douglas, Vancouver Central Council's President & Sheila Coutu, Betty O'Flynn Memorial Fund Chairperson.



Canada's Councils in Action

WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

Disaster Relief - Southern Alberta Flood of 2013

The rally by Vincentians to assist the families in need from this disaster started very quickly after the flood.

Bishop Henry of the Diocese of Calgary involved SSVP in his committee for long term relief. Calgary Central Council organized volunteers from the Vincentian community to travel by bus to High River and to Siksika Nations to assist in clean up.



At the SSVP National AGA in Ottawa an appeal was made for funds to provide financial backup to Conferences that were providing food for those in need. The strongest appeal came from members of Calgary's St Francis Youth Conference whose members live in the flood affected area. They were able to tell the sad story of disaster and evacuation. They met with Penny Craig and Michael Thio, the National and the International Presidents. They like all of the Vincentians present were completely taken by their plea for assistance. Contributions came from SSVP Conferences and Councils across Canada as well as from CGI (SSVP International). Many private donors from both Canada and the USA also contributed. This relief fund currently sits at over \$35,000.00. This money will be used by SSVP Conferences that service the flood affected communities for the purchase of food to feed those in need.



Vincentians had to do more. The Edmonton Council answered the call to assist Holy Spirit School in High River by providing "Back to School" backpacks and school supplies as well as extra cash to purchase what was needed for the kids in need. These backpacks were accepted with the love and gratitude that assures all of us that this community will bounce back from this disaster even stronger than anyone ever thought it could.

But our Society is best working with disaster recovery in the "second wave" response in the service of those in need. This was apparent with SSVP in Edmonton and their experience of assisting in the disaster recovery from the devastating fires in Slave Lake Alberta two years ago.



Canada's Councils in Action

They proved that the strategy of providing clothing, bedding, household items and handyman tools only when they are needed results in less waste and efficient delivery. The community that is recovering from disaster knows what they need and when they need it. Often the best time to deliver is when temporary housing has been built and the families are settling in. Highway trailers can be donated for a few months and converted into distribution centres for the disbursement of goods to these families in need. Working with the Calgary Knights of Columbus, Edmonton Vincentians provided a truck load of these items for their distribution to High River and other areas in need. More will be available from our Vincentian family on request.



WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

SSVP Edmonton Gets a Facelift

The “New” Distribution Centre of the Edmonton Society of St. Vincent de Paul opened in August with much anticipation.

Through a **Community Facility Enhancement Program Grant from the Government of Alberta**, we have a shiny more efficient and pleasant facility in which to work.

The \$23,230 grant represented 50% of the total project costs. The Society added cash contributions plus donated and in-kind matching amounts.

This distribution building is the hub of the Edmonton operation and will see us with new shelving, improved lighting, increased electrical capabilities—all of which will help us serve the poor in our community.

The skilled and unskilled labour provided by our Vincentians has brought us together as we serve and prepare to serve into the future.



Canada's Councils in Action

WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

NORTH OF 60 PROJECT

Several years ago our recently departed Vincentian, Eileen Orysiuk started to work with Sister Fay Trombley of Tuktoyaktuk, NWT. Through their efforts, a new SSVP Conference was born. The Tuk Project brought awareness to our Society of the needs of that community. The project team developed food supply programs, church renovation supplies and manpower, driver training programs for the youth and many other initiatives that have led to systemic change in the community of Tuktoyaktuk. There are many more Northern communities in need. The success of the special works of the Tuk Committee led us into thinking about growth. Last year the North of 60 Committee was formed.



Discussions with Fr. Chilaka Magnus of Inuvik, Sister Dorica Server of Wales Cove, and Roger Plouffe of On Eagles Wings (<http://www.oneagleswings.org/>) helped to establish the focus of growth in SSVP formation and Northern Community support.



Three communities were identified for 2013:

- Paulatuk, where Sister Fay was already working on the formation of a new SSVP Conference,
- Gjoa Haven, where an SSVP Conference already exists, however the Conference President, Ilulik (Keith) Nimiqtaqtuq, was asking for material and spiritual assistance,
- Inuvik, where Fr. Magnus was asking for financial support to keep their soup kitchen going for another year.



So why is our help needed? As Sister Dorica says “health is much more than the absence of disease”. A number of factors have an impact on the health of individuals and communities, including income, economic development, housing, environment, food security, education and self-determination.

When food cost and food availability are looked at through a health lens, we see that Inuit families across

Canada's Councils in Action

Canada continue to face challenges in accessing adequate nutritional food.

Some of the causes are low income in Inuit families, changing dietary habits, high cost of food in the North, increasing costs of harvesting and hunting (price of gas for snowmobiles), and lack of awareness of healthy eating habits.

In a 2003 study in Kugaaruk, Nunavut on food security, five out of six Inuit households were classified as “food insecure”. This is an issue that affects many Inuit communities. Over half of the households studied had experienced hunger in the last year.

According to this study, 80 per cent of Inuit women surveyed in earlier Food Mail Program projects (Pond Inlet and Repulse Bay) said they had run out of money to buy food in the previous month. More than 60 per cent of households with children were hungry in the previous 12 months. In Labrador (now Nunatsiavut), 28 per cent of households reported that they on occasion did not have enough to eat with seven per cent stating that they often had insufficient food.

While there is little information on how Inuit families cope internally with food shortages, it is common that in such households, parents (particularly mothers) will forgo meals so their children can eat.

Food costs in the North remain much higher than those in southern Canada. Studies of food costs at grocery stores indicate that northerners pay far more than



southerners for the same basket of food. The Northern Food Basket for one week for a family of four, in Kugaaruk costs \$327, double that of Edmonton. Three-quarters of the families would have incomes insufficient, or nearly insufficient, to cover the cost of a healthy diet and other necessary family costs.

Early this year Ann Marie Hansen, working with CWL at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Westbank, B.C. and their new SSVP Conference held discussions with Sr. Fay. They purchased food that was financed by the Western Region's North of 60 Fund and organized to transport it to Tuktoyaktuk by ice roads truck and to Paulatuk by fly in shipments. These were much needed emergency supplies for spring delivery. It was great to have an SSVP Conference in the BC and Yukon Region helping us with a Western Region Council special project. ▶▶▶



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At this same time our North of 60 Committee had negotiated the support of the Northern Transportation Company Limited NTCL (<http://www.ntcl.com/>) and Landtran Systems (<http://www.landtran.com/>) for their help to provide us with three sea containers and to ship these containers to our Northern community destinations. This all came together. The cooperation and generosity of these companies has been beyond expectations.



Supplies for these three sea containers were provided by the generous donations of SSVP Conferences in Edmonton. Several thousand pounds of food donated by parishioners, purchased specialty dried meats, vegetables and powdered milk, donated clothing, bedding, freezers, fabric, sewing machines, priests vestments, and many other items filled the containers to the maximum

volume. The only problem was that so much came in so fast that we could not keep an inventory list of all the products that were shipped.

It is mid August at the time of reporting this status. The container has arrived at Inuvik and the other two are on the barge in transit.

The team has done a great job of developing the list of Northern community needs and the logistics of transport. Vincentians from Winnipeg, Leduc and Edmonton have been active. The funds have been coming in regularly to support this project but, although money is needed, it is not the key. SSVP and Vincentians from across Canada are needed. The spirit of Ozanam hearing the cry of the poor has been brought to the table. Yes we need more. We have the need to grow this outreach to more Northern communities. SSVP new Conference formation and material support to Canada's far North needs to be a priority. Please talk about it in your Conferences. If there is a Vincentian who is interested in taking on the challenge and enjoying the rewards of mentoring one of our many Northern communities in need, then please encourage them to join our North of 60 team with the intent to grow the program in 2014.

God bless and I thank all of you for your support.

**Peter Ouellette, President
Western Regional Council**




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FAMVIN/WYD 2013

By Stephen Lane, President of the SSVP Conference in Formation at the University of Alberta.



Famvin 2013 began as I landed in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Throughout the following days, I met Vincentians from various continents and countries. Each worked in SSVP differently, but with the same underlying objective: helping the poor. Workshops explored the history and spirituality of SSVP, painting a vibrant picture of Ozanam and Rendu serving together. A tour of the SSVP ministry in the town of Nova Lima illustrated this charity in a senior's residence and palliative care unit.

Bussing to Rio de Janeiro for World Youth Day, a Brazilian and I had an impromptu all-night Portuguese/English lesson which ended up allowing communication with my host family. Highlights of WYD were daily catechesis sessions with Bishops and Cardinals, as well as, a Vigil and Mass with the new Pope. I even managed to see the landmarks of Christ the Redeemer and Sugarloaf Mountain while visiting with Barbadians, Indonesians, Poles and more.

Attending these events grew me spiritually, and I learned from participants and teachers alike. I'm grateful to SSVP for sending me to this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

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FROM "SETBACKS" TO "BLESSINGS"

By Jbf on January 4, 2013 in Vincentian Family News · www.famvin.org

Each year Lynn L'Heureux, Special Needs co-coordinator & Advisor of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Calgary, Alberta, Canada and her husband Tony look forward to delivering Christmas hampers or baskets to those who fall through the cracks at Christmas. This year she suffered some serious setbacks –being diagnosed with cancer and the death of her beloved brother-in-law. To her surprise these setbacks set the stage for involving more people in ministry; these new servants of the poor discovering the blessings of service; Lynn and her husband in turn discovering new blessings! She writes...



BRINGING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE DARKNESS OF POVERTY

Each year during Advent, Christmas hampers are prepared. My parish of St. Michael's in Calgary prepared 182. Each organization in Calgary prepares these hampers by a cut-off date. About 8 years ago my husband and I decided we would be the last minute after deadlines deliverers. We raised money separately and gave a very substantial hamper with gifts and food for a month, to those who fell through the cracks.

My family joined in, giving up their Christmas gifts, so others could have them. Two years ago my son got his staff excited about doing this, as well as, his friend who owned another company and the list grew. We, with the help of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul presidents chose the families who were most in need and that usually included illness, or recent death or tragedy and very often they were immigrants or single parents.

This year was very different for me. I was diagnosed with cancer and had surgery on December 13. The day after

my surgery, December 14 Tony's brother, Robert died. Needless to say, I could not deliver the hampers and visit with the people and my husband persevered in his sorrow. We decided to get others to help with deliveries and they had to receive a quick screening and training. Those who helped had never been near the suffering or those who lived in the darkness of poverty.

My job was to call each one and do the visit by telephone. This became more difficult for me as a few of the recipients knew me from Church and knew I was recovering from my cancer. They wanted to know why I was doing this instead of doing nothing but resting. I assured them, that they were part of my healing. It gave the opportunity for me to share the joy of Christ's light, no matter what is happening. One of the wonderful people we serve came to help with the work. She needed to give back and was truly moved.

My phone visits were spent encouraging those in need to get their children and themselves to make a wish list. I had to phone to remind them to make their wish lists more than once and convince them, they were not being greedy, but it would give the shoppers an opportunity to have a variety to choose from, as well as getting them what they really wanted and also what they needed.

Through many conversations, they became excited and the lists were long and fun to sort through. The kids were very excited and the parents thought it was such a good idea and really helped them feel that they had been lifted from their poverty, even for a little while. We know Christmas is not about the gifts, but the joy of Christ's birth and the light He brings along with that joy to everyone.

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We asked our new family to suggest favorite foods and entertainment. We really wanted Christmas to be special for families who barely existed. Sometimes for many, God is so far away and there is no light at the end of the tunnel. When you lose hope, it is hard to pull yourself up. We tried to help by giving them hope and seeing that light get brighter at the end of their tunnel.

Then came deliver day, December 22nd and our chiropractor gave us the use of his offices to pack the hampers. He and his wife delivered two of the hampers. Another hamper was delivered by a care giver and the wife of the patient. This was truly special. The third helpers were in-law family and had always donated but had never helped. The three others were owners of the donating companies and staff members. Of course my husband Tony was also a deliverer, shopper and organizer.

The comments from the volunteers were so amazing. They felt that what they did was Christmas and everything else would pale compared to the joy of bringing Christ's light to the door. The care giver and immigrant from South Africa said he had never experienced anything like this and wanted to do it again. My son-in-law got the largest two families because he had a truck and he was overwhelmed by the last family and what they lived in. He recognized then that we have to do more to help lift these people from poverty.

The best was the letters of thanks from every single family. These were heart warming to the staff of the two companies who donated the funds which were matched by the companies. Each family writing the "thank you" note was so moved by the love and sharing of the volunteers.

One story in particular from a man with six kids (one an infant) who did not want to receive help was awesome. He was very proud and very ill. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul got a counselor in to convince the man that the help was for his children, because they needed extra while he was recovering from his severe illness. His thank you was the biggest of all. We talked many times on our phone visits and he shared how God had

left his life and Christmas meant nothing. I told him if God seemed distant, He didn't move. We are the ones that move from God, He is always there waiting for us to come to Him.

We prayed and he after a few days he had joy in his voice. We talked about seeing Christ, especially in the worst of times and trying to turn them into the best of times. This wonderful man told me it wasn't about the gifts on his list for the many children, but that he knew what they wanted. He said he had stopped sharing with his family and wouldn't let them love. Now everyday was joyful and that is before he got the hamper, so it was truly about the light of Christ in the life of his family. He told us his family prayed together for all of us.

One thing we did was bring all the toys and gifts in black garbage bags and gave wrapping paper and tape so the parents could wrap the gifts for the children in the family. All thank you notes included this as the best gift, because it was from them, when they could get nothing.

This truly gave my husband and me a new sense of giving which is usually just part of another day. It made us celebrate differently. We prayed in thanksgiving that evening for our wonderful life and we thanked God for calling us to serve those in poverty. We gave blessings to each other and rejoiced in our sorrow and thanked God for always being there with His great light. We prayed for all Vincentians and for everyone who thought of others this Christmas, especially our new helpers.

We all need the Light of Christ. It sure shone on me and my family during this special hamper delivery time. It was more than another day. It was joy filled and Tony and I were truly surrounded by the light of Christ.

Lynn L'Heureux

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FREDERIC OZANAM'S BICENTENARY IN AMHERST NS

The gathering was held on April 22, 2013 and was put on by the Holy Family Conference, Amherst, Nova Scotia. The Celebration consisted of the celebration of evening Mass by Father Vernon Driscoll, highlighted by the singing of hymns relating to service to the poor, led by our organist Joyce Fraser, the breaking of the word by our Spiritual Director, Deacon Howard Gotell, and our annual re-commissioning ceremony for current members. Father Driscoll and Deacon Gotell have over 10 years of service with our Conference.

We were honoured by the attendance of Dennis McCormack, President of Atlantic Regional Council, who also brought greetings and regrets from Dave O'Connor, President of Halifax Particular Council. President Dennis also assisted with the presentation of service certificates and pins for members of our Conference who were honoured with 10 – 30 years service at a time of fellowship in our Church Hall, immediately following Mass. President Dorritt called the members forward for their recognition and Vice-President Veronica Richards assisted Dennis with the presentations.



Birthday cake and refreshments were served at the program which was highlighted by the presentation of the service awards, recognition of the achievements of our Blessed Founder, and a video created locally in which a 25+ year member, Isabel Jackson, shared her memories of attendance at Frederic's beatification in Paris in 1997. At that time, she was the President of

Atlantic. A friend of Isabel's, Anne Melanson, also from our local Conference, accompanied her on that historic visit. This video was created as part of our celebration of Frederic's 200th and will be part of our history and available for viewing by our members and prospective new members for many years to come.



At the same time, we recorded information about Frederic's life and his many achievements. Our current President, Dorritt Amos, did this portion of the video, which was not part of the evening program, but will also be available for training and educational purposes.

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Coincidentally, this date marked the 30th Anniversary of our Local Conference and several founding members were in attendance. The Founding President, Louise Belliveau, graciously shared some memories of the formation of the St. Charles/Nativity of our Lady Conference, which has recently being renamed Holy Family Conference. (Louise is wearing a red jacket at the podium.)

The speaker (with the green jacket) is our only 30 years member, Viola Corbett, who shared what her service with SSVP has meant to her and her late husband.

During the months prior to our celebration a weekly insertion appeared in our church bulletin to inform the readers, and especially our youth, about the life of an extraordinary young man.



Louise Belliveau, Founding President



Viola Corbett, Speaker



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ATLANTIC REGIONAL COUNCIL

ATLANTIC NOTES

Vincentians of St. Stephen's Conference Florence Cape Breton are working on a number of initiatives designed to assist needy seniors in the area of Florence, North Sydney, Sydney Mines and other communities. Outreach projects include a very successful foot care clinic for needy seniors with diabetes and other health related problems. There is currently a large waiting list for this service with support from The Lakes Community Health Board.

Fifty women with mobility issues attend a Chair Yoga class located at St. Stephen's Hall Florence. They range in age from fifty to eighty and appreciate the social and health enhancing opportunities provided by the clinic.

For information contact Jane Jessome, President of St Stephen Conference, Florence: djessome@eastlink.ca

Sixty-five Vincentians attended the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Annual Regional Council meeting Atlantic held in Cape Breton May 24 to May 26. 'Serving The Poor' a special presentation by Father Paul Abbass at the conference is now available in audio format. Contact Dennis McCormack for further information at: dennis.mccormack@bellaliant.net

The Glace Bay Particular Council are working on projects designed to involve younger people in the work of The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Members of the Girl Guides were invited to design posters on the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and the winners of the poster contest attended a Pizza luncheon provided by the Society. Below are a selection of pictures of this wonderful project. Our appreciation goes out to Jim MacIntyre and the members of Glace Bay Particular Council. For further information on this project write to Jim MacIntyre: mcintyre1944@gmail.com



What's New ?

NEW ITEMS

See our
online catalogue
to order
these articles,
and several others,
by visiting
our website at:
www.ssvp.ca.

You may also
order by phone at
1 866 997-7787.



SSVP candle

Logo in front, mission at the back
Ref. : 221 ENG
\$7.00



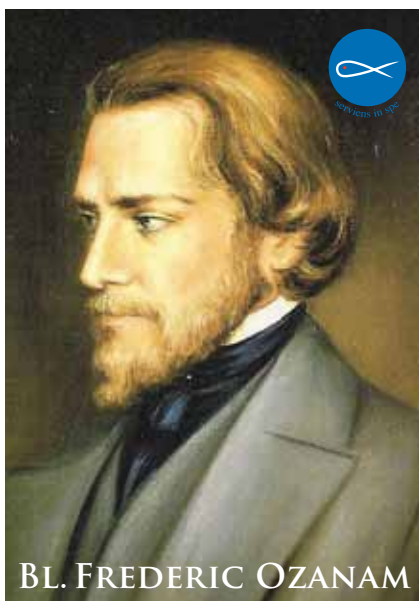
Bicentenary Zipper-pull

Frédéric Ozanam
Ref. : 211
\$4.00



Bicentenary Pen

Ref. : 217
\$2.00



BL. FREDERIC OZANAM

PRAYER FOR THE CANONIZATION OF BLESSED FREDERIC OZANAM

Lord,
You made Blessed Frederic Ozanam a witness of the Gospel, full of wonder at the mystery of the Church. You inspired him to alleviate poverty and injustice and endowed him with untiring generosity in the service of all who were suffering.

In family life, he revealed a most genuine love as a son, brother, husband and father.

In secular life, his ardent passion for the truth enlightened his thought, writing and teaching.

His vision for our society was a network of charity encircling the world and he instilled St. Vincent de Paul's spirit of love, boldness and humility.

His prophetic social vision appears in every aspect of his short life, together with the radiance of his virtues.

We thank you Lord, for those many gifts and we ask, if it is your will, the grace of a miracle through the intercession of Blessed Frederic Ozanam.

May the Church proclaim his holiness, as a saint, a providential light for today's world!

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.



Temporary Tattoo

SSVP Logo, 1,5" round
Ref. 219
20 Tattoos for \$3

Card - Prayer for the Canonization of Frédéric Ozanam

Front : Ozanam's picture
Back : prayer for his canonization
Size: 3,5" x 5"
Ref. : 109
\$0,50

Vincentian Stories of the Heart - Book 2

CALLING ALL WRITERS!

Many of you have asked for more Stories of the Heart book. I have received a few stories from some of you.

The first book was made to celebrate the year 2000 – The great Jubilee. Once again we will honour the work we do, with our stories of service, hope, humour and love. These are our stories of the heart.

Please send in any original stories, poems or prayers. We must have a consent form and a declaration that the material is original. Try to keep your story to 500 words or less. However if your story requires a few more words, do not let that stop you from sending it. The editors and publisher will decide. We have a team ready to receive your writings.

We serve Christ in those in need. We protect them and ensure their needs are kept anonymous, so please change the names to protect those we serve.

All of us want to hear your best story. You are not limited to one. So put your thinking caps on and send your original stories, poems, or prayers; we'll do the rest. Proceeds from the sale of these will go to the Vincentian Youth. Send to Lynn L'Heureux email: calgaryssvpadm@gmail.com.

Please also send along the consent form available on National's website: www.ssvp.ca in the "Form to download" section. **Get busy writing!**

Blessings,

Lynn L'Heureux

TEXTS FROM THE FIRST BOOK

PRAYER FOR VINCENTIAN SPIRIT

Heavenly Father, deepen my Vincentian spirit, not only at this meeting,
But my whole life through.
Help me to treat others as a Vincentian would do.
Help me to see the kindness and love in each person I meet.
Whether they are in my home or walking on the street.
Help me to give love and patience to my spouse and each family member.
Give me your love and help me to remember,
Each person I meet, friend, foe, lover, sister or brother,
Has You in them and we must love one another.
Each person I meet is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, anew.
And I must love them, as I love You.
Dear Blessed Ozanam, show me your love,
Help me focus on things that are above.
Your love of the poor, and others each day,
Dear Blessed Ozanam, show me the way.

**Submitted by Lynn L'Heureux
South Particular Council President
St. Michael's Conference
Calgary, Alberta**

Vincentian Stories of the Heart - Book 2

PRAYER IS ANSWERED

When asked to let my name stand as candidate for National President, I was taken aback to say the least, and my immediate response was an absolute “no”. I knew nothing about the National Council, and didn’t have a clue³ what the National President did.

The Vincentians that wanted to nominate me assured me that I was the perfect candidate; a long time Vincentian, bilingual, a woman and in my fifties. They also informed me that my duties as president would be to chair 6 meetings per year, attend the annual meetings of 4 provincial councils, and write the occasional article for the VincenPaul magazine. Although this did not seem too complicated, I still did not feel that I would be up to the task.

As the pressure mounted and I started receiving calls from other Vincentians urging me to accept, I decided to use my family as an excuse not to run. To my dismay, they also thought it was a good idea, and my husband completely endorsed it, brushing aside the excuse that I had never spoken in public, telling me I could learn.

Seeing that everyone was serious about the situation and that I could no longer just laugh it off, I decided to fall on my usual decision making means: Prayer and meditation. I had great doubts about my capacities and certainly God knew that I was not cut out for this and would somehow let me know.

The weekend preceding the closing of nominations found us at our cottage in the mountains of the Eastern Townships of Quebec, just two miles from the Vermont border. Saturday was spent walking in the forest, meditation and sharing my apprehensions and indecision with God. That night my husband and I sat on the porch under the starlit sky, watching the satellites and meteorites go by while I pondered my dilemma and prayed that some “inner voice” would guide me or that I would receive a sign of some kind.

Sunday dawned warm and sunny and we decided to cross the border into Vermont to attend Mass at a little country in the town of North Troy. We knew the pastor, Father George Poulin, who had invited us to visit, but we did not know the name of the parish and had only seen the church steeple as we drove along the highway.

As we stepped into this picturesque small white church, the sun shone down on a beautiful stature of Saint Vincent de Paul. It was disproportionately large, and being laminated by the sun, it seemed to dominate the little church of the parish of St. Vincent de Paul. I had my answer!

And the rest is history. . . .

Submitted by Ellen Schrybur
Past National President

A TOUGH INDOCTRINATION

Joyce Wilson was our latest recruit. Ashy, proper lady, she volunteered to be on one of our visitation teams. Her very first call was to a trailer park to assist a family with a severely handicapped, teenage boy. On entering the trailer, she was greeted by the family dog who calmly cocked his leg and urinated all over Joyce’s lower pants, socks and loafers. The poor wife was distraught, and after reprimanding the dog, invited Joyce to sit down in an armchair. As she sank into the chair, she realised the cushion was soaking wet. You guessed it – dog urine! The seat of her pants were now also soaked with urine from the dog.

When Joyce returned home, she called me up with the story and said meekly, “John, are all the calls going to be like this? I honestly don’t think I can handle it.” For some intangible reason many of Joyce’s calls over the following few months were of the quirky variety. I didn’t expect to see her again after that tough initial call, but Joyce stuck with it and became stronger and stronger, becoming one of our most dedicated Vincentians.

Submitted by John Horan
President, St. Bonaventure Conference
Calgary, Alberta

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE USE OF A CONVENTION?

That's it, the Convention and Annual General Assembly 2013 of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of Canada are now over. Next year, Edmonton will welcome Vincentians. Seeing the presentation they had prepared for us, the Albertan meeting is full of promises! After that, we are invited to Hamilton, and then, Vancouver. On the esplanade of the University of Ottawa, I took a walk with a man who is obviously part of the organization in Vancouver, in 2015. He mentioned, no, he insisted on telling me that he really looked forward to welcoming me there, and that we would be very well received. He was very excited about it, and talked about it as if it was due to happen... tomorrow. But, I thought almost aloud, it is still three years from now! I had not yet understood the impact of those "High Masses".

The SSVP Convention is not a glamour thing, it is not a popular gathering and even less an Olympic meet, and yet, there is something in it of the same kind. It comes from gregariousness, a visceral human need to "belong". Belonging to a group in order to testify one's attachment to a culture, a religion, or a cause. It doesn't matter, the important thing is to be there, to share information with others, and particularly to test one's engagement and come out of it stronger.

A convention is somewhat of a test

Some wonder if such a manifestation has a *raison d'être*: we must travel, and there are costs, what we eat is not necessarily to our liking, accommodation might suit us, or not, once there we have to make an effort to follow the program, be at the right place at the right time, but all of this is of little relevance.

Telephone or web convention, or any convention transmitted via sophisticated technological means during which one almost touches one's colleague will never replace those mass gatherings. As what matters is to be together. And when we succeed in thinking together as a group, and that reflection is followed by an improvement in behaviour, mentality, understanding and service, we have accomplished something tangible.

A convention is full of relevance

The Society's Convention even goes beyond. Of course, religion and spirituality occupy a prominent place, but it is the congregation of men and women, sharing the same passion, that will make all the difference. Pure cooperation is what we breathe at the SSVP Convention. We fill our lungs with it and when we come out, the air is more breathable, and remains so for the rest of the year, when harder moments occur.

A convention is a deep breath

As a Conference member, I deemed it important to be there. As web editor of the "Le Rêve d'Ozanam" site, I had to attend. And believe me, I will be present next year in Edmonton, where a young Society still has the ardour of the beginner, because let us not forget that the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, although deeply rooted in the community it serves confidently, is above all a **world organization**, with regions.

A convention calls us to order

We are not alone; none of us is, although we are sometimes isolated within our Conferences, Particular Councils, even Regional Councils. The Society is a family; a large universal family, with Canada as a major link.

A convention is an exercise in commemoration

Many thanks to the Ottawa Central Council and the Gatineau Central Council, hosts of the 2013 AGA. So much work and organization, most of it accomplished by volunteers. It is quite something!

See you next year in Edmonton!

Louise Larivière
Senior Communication Advisor for the Quebec
Regional Council

AGA 2013



AGA 2013



Parade of the Banners



Committee Reports



Dr. Michael Thio
International President



Msgr. Paul-André
Durocher
Keynote Speaker

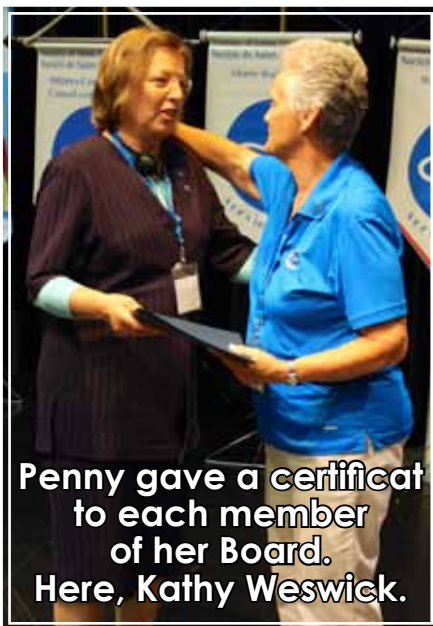


Sr. Lucille Nantel sings on
Canada Day



Emmanuel Bailly, Sr. Rosalie Rendu
and Frédéric Ozanam visited us for
the Bicentenary of Ozanam's birth
and distributed gifts to all Vincenzians
attending the AGA.

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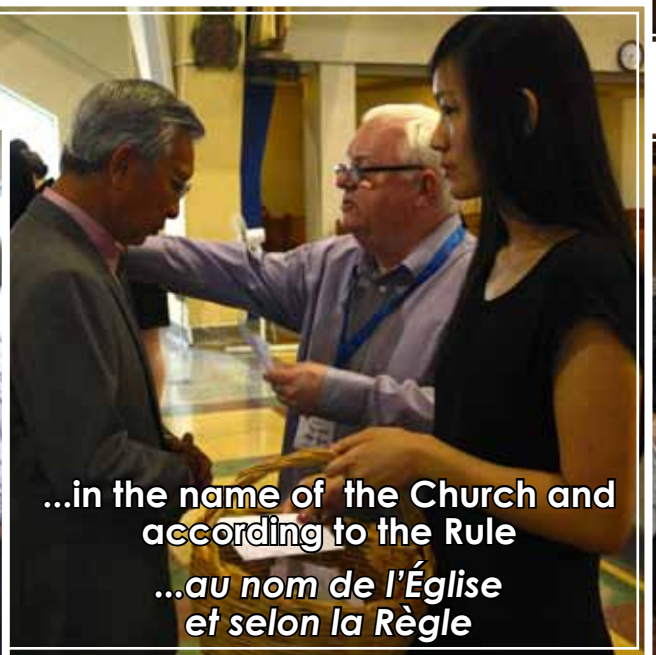
**Installation
new President
nouveau président**



**Commissioning Ceremony
Cérémonie de promesse**



**Go forth and serve the poor...
Allez servir les pauvres...**



**...in the name of the Church and
according to the Rule
...au nom de l'Église
et selon la Règle**

AGA photos from/de Josée Lemieux.

AGA 2013



**Mgr. Paul-André
Durocher
Sings Grace
chante le
bénédicté**



**The squirrel dance !
La danse de l'écureuil !**



**Thanks to the AGA 2013 Host Committee !
Merci au Comité organisateur AGA 2013!**