



**SSVP: Ministry of Food**

**Home Visits**



**SSVP: Ministry of Presence**

**Home Visits**



## The Works of the Society

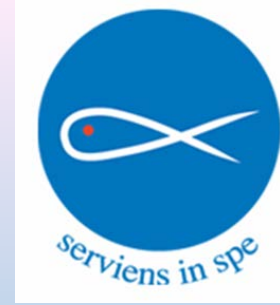
1. Sanctify our members
2. Befriend those in need as family
3. Help your friends/family

Home Visits

**The home visit is a  
unique experience  
that can only be  
learned or taught with  
the heart, and in  
response to a call  
from God to ever  
greater generosity.**







## Witness Charity

Home visits give Vincentians the opportunity to not only **provide aid and comfort** to our neighbors in need but **to better understand their circumstances and struggles.**

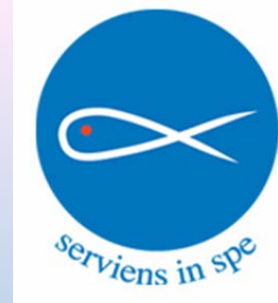
## Home Visits



## Witness Compassion

Home visits give our neighbors in need **home field advantage** so that they may feel **comfortable confiding** their stories of hardship and need with us.

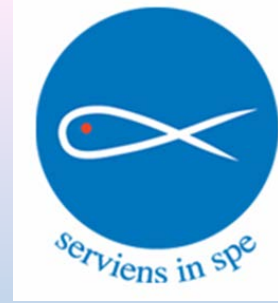
# Home Visits



## **Witness Friendship**

**Connecting with a (client) neighbour** is a powerful experience for a Vincentian – it is through those we are blessed to serve that **we witness the Face of Christ.**

**Home Visits**



## **Witness Growing in Holiness**

When we help those in need, **we ourselves are growing in holiness.** The poor are our passport to paradise

*Francis Nov 19, 2017*



One of the primary works of the society  
is to “Sanctify our Members”



That means we benefit from what we do!  
How do you feel about that?



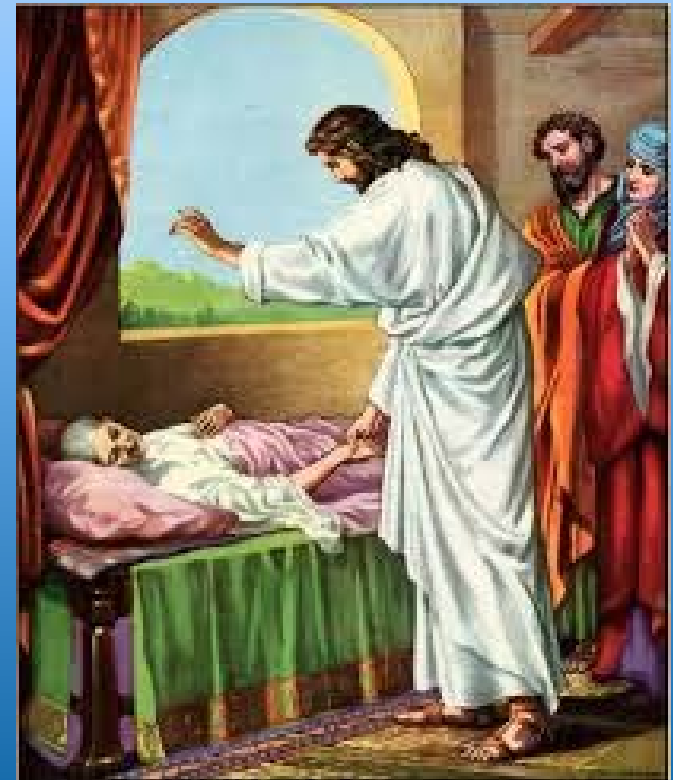
Home Visits

# Christ:

## The Model for the Visitor



- He meets each one in person
- He goes to them
- He recognizes needs
- He frees people from what troubles them
- He brings hope
- He releases, heals, and evangelizes.

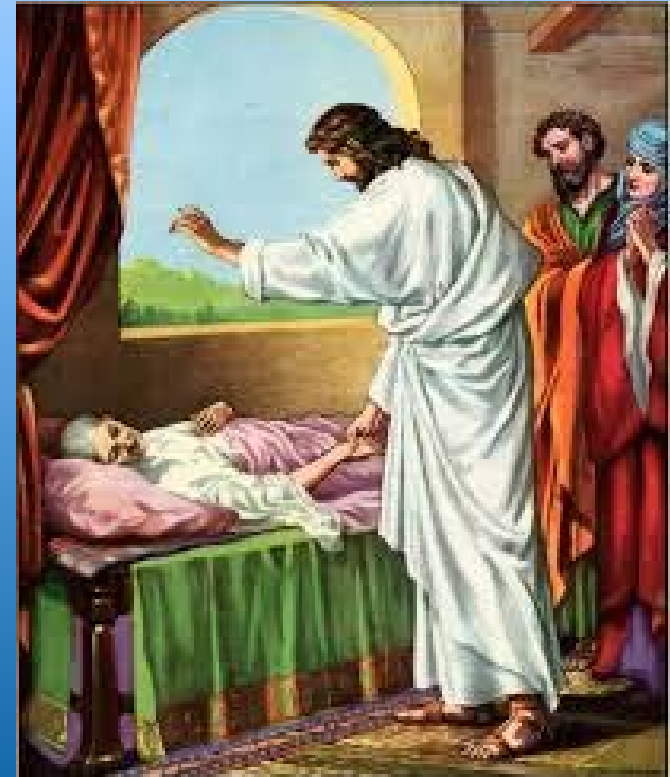


## Home Visits

# The SSVP ...



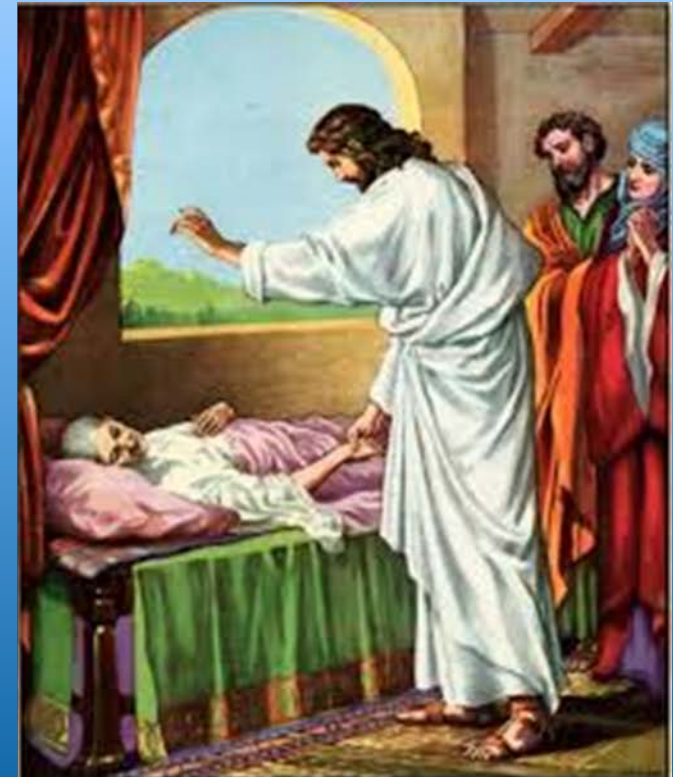
- Meets each one in person – goes to them
- Seeks, finds and visits anyone in need
- Listens with kindness
- Shares as true friends ...



Home Visits

# The SSVP ...

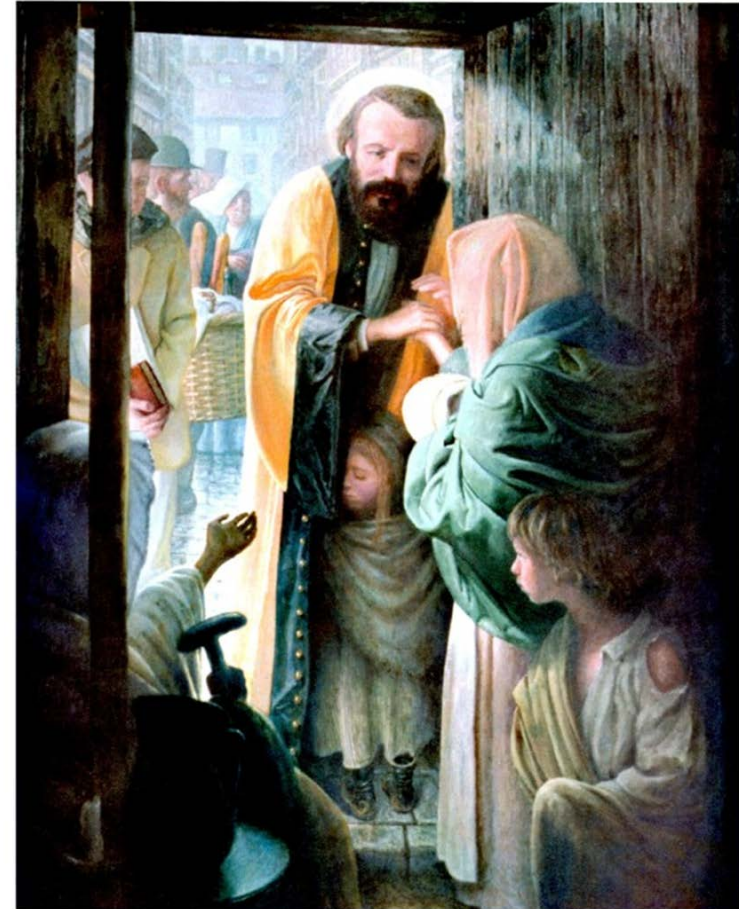
- Consoles & gives hope
- Advises without imposing solutions
- Encourages reconciliations
- Evangelizes.



## Home Visits

This painting is of Blessed **Frederic Ozanam**, the founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

When he was a 20-year old college student at the Sorbonne in Paris, he was challenged to put his faith to work.



Painting by Gary Schuler

©2004 AAM

Home Visits



He met with **Sr. Rosalie Rendu**, a local Daughter of Charity whose ministry was serving the poorest residents of the Mouffetard District.

She taught Frederic and the other early Vincentians, all of whom were young students, that **in order to offer the most practical and loving service to the poor, they must go to them and meet with them in their homes**

**Home Visits**



Painting by Gary Schrumer

©2004 AMM

## From the Rule of the SSVP:



**“From the Society’s beginning, the central and most basic activity of Conferences has been the visitation of the needy in their homes. This is the clearest symbol of our Vincentian charism, which dictates the highest respect for the dignity of the poor ...”**

# From the Rule ...



It symbolizes our Vincentian **commitment to reach out to the needy**, rather than require them to report to an outside service site. In the home, needy persons feel **most free to confide** their stories of struggle ...

## Home Visits

## From the Rule ...

In that **family setting**,  
Vincentians are asked to  
**listen, offer humble advice,  
and render assistance.”**



*Rule: Part I, Articles 1,2 and 1.7 – 1.12; Part III, Section 8*



Emmanuel Bailly (co-founder) 1842:

*“In a few Conferences, it has happened that some members, prevented by their business, have called the poor to their houses to give them, at the same time, good advice and material help, instead of going to visit them in their homes. That is less contrary to our institution than sending assistance to the poor through servants; the latter method can never be too severely reproved; nothing would more radically destroy the spirit of the Society”*

Home Visits





# In essence, what is Bailly saying?

He says that **two things can ultimately destroy the spirit** of the SSVP:

- 1) having those in need come to us instead of us going to them (home visits), &
- 2) having paid people do our works for us.

Both of these should be avoided at all costs.

## Home Visits



Having those in need come to us  
instead of us going to them (home  
visits) &

Having paid people do our works for  
us.



How might these two things  
destroy the spirit of the  
SSVP?

Home Visits



## Bailly again ...

“Indeed, by the time of Ozanam’s death, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, as it was now known, was visiting over one third of the poor in Paris.”



And Bailly once more ...

1841 ... writes “I cannot conclude this letter without this most earnest request: **never neglect visiting the poor in their homes.** The visiting of the poor in their dismal homes is the distinctive character of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.”

Home Visits



Vincentians are **invited guests** in the homes of people who need our friendship.

The Home Visit is **our signature activity** because we want to **be seen as friends, not another agency.**

**Home Visits**





**Nobody becomes an  
instant friend;  
sometimes it takes  
several encounters.  
It always requires  
that **people are  
comfortable enough  
to engage** with each  
other**

**Home Visits**

So many of our  
friends who need  
us have had  
**negative**  
**experiences with**  
**government**  
**agencies** in their  
offices.

I'M FROM THE  
GOVERNMENT,  
I'M HERE  
TO HELP





Remember how much **strength and courage** it has taken them to call us

Let us be **ready to listen**, let us be **calm and generous** as we seek to understand the difficulties and the limitations of (the person receiving our visit) **each other.**

**Home Visits**

The essence of a home visit is

**“listening ... listening ... listening!”**

Don't worry as much about what to say ...  
just be ready to listen

Don't be tempted to try and solve their  
problems ... they have a lot of people who  
will tell them what to do ... not many will  
just listen - **95% of the  
job is done just by  
being there!**

**Home Visits**



We must not be **intrusive** during our visits. We have to know how to **respect** the private life of people in need, no matter where they live. We should not confuse our role with that of an **investigator**, trying to find out everything about the person or the family in a short time.

**Home Visits**



We must always take care not to judge those we help. Our **judgements** are often based on our own reality, forgetting that the **reality and condition of each person** are different from those of anyone else.



**Home Visits**





Relationships need **time** to build. This time is necessary so that the people we visit can **feel confident to share their problems, their stresses and their dreams** with the Vincentian.

**Home Visits**

That's one of the best reasons why  
we don't call people 'clients'; rather  
**they are 'our neighbours, our  
friends'**

and why **we visit them in their own  
homes**, unless there is a compelling  
reason why we cannot do this.





# During visitations we carry a heavy burden ...

- we represent the **Society** and our **faith**.
- we too are being assessed and judged for the **authenticity of our faith**.
- Our aim is to bring the healing **presence** and power of Christ.
- **Compassion and Understanding**: listen to those we visit. Resist the urge to judge or react in any way that wounds their dignity as human beings,
- **Acceptance**: We must accept people as they really are. We will not seek to change individuals,

## Home Visits



# Toronto Central Council

## 5 guiding principles

1. **Recruit** more members to handle the call volume.
2. Plan to **engage the new Vincentians quickly** with an experienced Vincentian to do home visits
3. Have older members doing **tasks that do not require travelling** i.e. – holding poor boxes, doing bulletin notices, taking the incoming calls, providing guidance and mentoring to the newer members, etc..

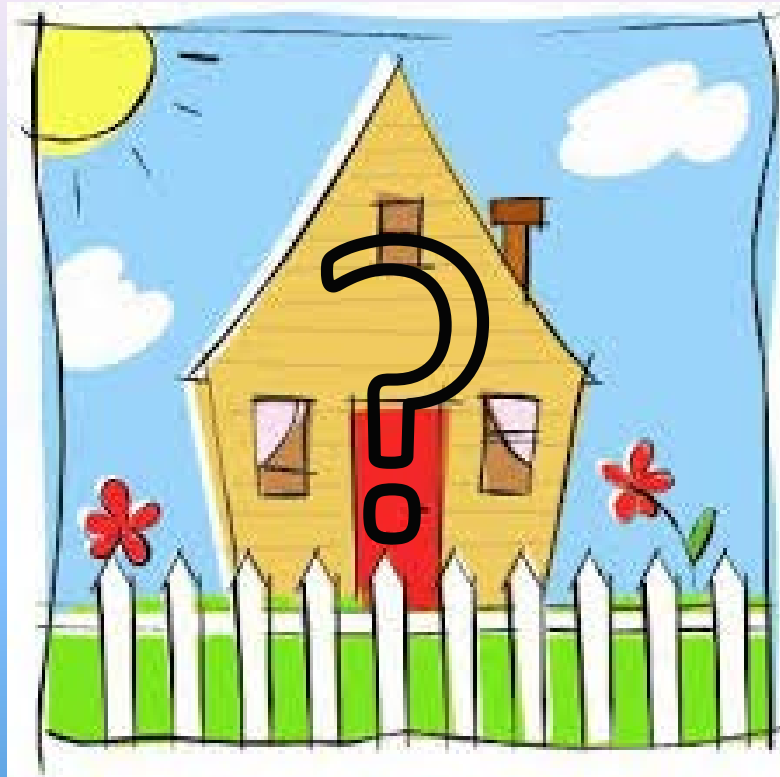
## Home Visits



# Toronto Central Council

## 5 guiding principles

4. Provide more **training** on how to address needs of the families especially longer term
5. Ensuring you have a good list of **reference resources** available to help families get the assistance they require



**So ... why the home  
visit?**

**Home Visits**





**1<sup>st</sup>** Vincentians seek to “see the face of Christ” in those we serve. **We actively seek out opportunities to spend time with the people we serve and to develop relationships with them.** The time we spend with our neighbors in need is **not transactional; rather, it is relational.** We strive not only to bring material assistance but hope to those we serve.

**Home Visits**



**2<sup>nd</sup>** We are best able to assess the needs of the people we serve in their **home environment**.

As Bl. Frederic Ozanam said, “The knowledge of social wellbeing and reform is to be learned **not** from books nor from the public platform, but by climbing the stairs to the poor man’s garret, sitting by his bedside, feeling the same cold that pierces him...”

**Home Visits**



**3<sup>rd</sup>** It is much **more comfortable** and **less embarrassing** for our neighbors to have someone come to their home as a visitor than to have to report to another site.

So many people in poverty have to accommodate multiple “helping agency’s” schedules—**we seek to come when it is convenient for them**, because, as St. Vincent de Paul said, as Vincentians, **“the poor are our masters”**.

Maintaining the dignity of the people we serve is **critical**.  
**Home Visits**

# Best Practices ...



**What do you do to make your home visits the best that they can be?**



**Home Visits**



# Best Practices ...

- Call ahead
- Consistent day/time
- Don't bring box when approaching door initially
- Re-usable boxes
- Treat them as a friend
- Ask them about their family, hobbies, the game etc.

**Home Visits**

# Best Practices ...



- Bring them a church bulletin
- Prepare by knowing about other programs
- Know about your own parish programs and be able to help them register
- Reach out – recruit ... ask families to help you pack

**Home Visits**



# Best Practices ...



- **Get to what special item you can put in a particular family's basket**
- **Christmas ... wrap box with gift paper ... include a bag of candy canes and a hand written Christmas Card**

**Home Visits**

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**And what if we can't  
visit homes?**

**Home Visits**

- Ask people their **name** and remember it
- Have a **place** where you can sit and talk with them. Avoid the “grab and go”
- Serve **coffee and snacks** ... instead of their home, they're in your home
- **Pray** with them



Home Visits Focus on helping a **friend**.

# Four questions for your friend:



1. How are you today?
2. Can we pray with you?
3. What else can we do for you?
4. Thank you for inviting us to visit?

... it's about relating not  
transacting

**... give them the gift of  
your presence ...**



**Thank you!**



**... give them the gift of  
your presence ...**



**That's the Power of the  
Home Visit!**