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In this issue:

- International Women's Day 2022
- Ukraine
- Fund Development Resources
- Reflection - Love Your Enemies
- Twinning - Colombia
- Social Justice - Social Justice News
- Question & Answer

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2022

March 8 is International Women's Day. In 2022, the United Nations' theme for this day is "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow". This theme is integral to several principles found in Catholic Social Teaching, primarily:

1. Dignity of the human person
2. Promotion of the common good
3. Rights and responsibilities
4. Stewardship of creation
5. Peace, very pertinent with the current situation in Ukraine

The roots of human rights are anchored in the dignity of every human being.

In the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (In Charity and in Truth), Pope Benedict XVI stated in no. 9:

Only in charity, illumined by the light of reason and faith, is it possible to pursue development goals that possess a more humane and humanizing value.

The sharing of goods and resources, from which authentic development proceeds, is not guaranteed by merely technical progress and relationships of utility, but by the potential of love that overcomes evil with good. (Rom 12:21)

In a context of rights and responsibilities, we must all be in solidarity. In *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (38), Pope John Paul II directed us:

It is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.

You can follow more of the work of UN Women around the International Women's Day 2022 at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/announcement/2021/12/international-womens-day-2022-gender-equality-today-for-a-sustainable-tomorrow>

*Richard Pommerville, Executive Director
National Council*



UKRAINE

In solidarity with the people of Ukraine who are being pressured to leave their beloved country to flee the war, and to assist with the exodus of people from Ukraine to neighboring countries or refugees who will be coming to Canada, the National Council of Canada has established a special appeal “Emergency Ukraine”; in conjunction with the International Confederation of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Commission for International Aid and Development (CIAD), funds will be directed where aids will be required.

Donations can be made at:

[MAKE A DONATION](#)

The SSVP and the Vincentian Family Standing Up for Peace

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Canada is twinned with two of the four SSVP conferences in Ukraine. The Simcoe North Particular Council, Ontario, is twinned with the Blessed Marta Wiecka Conference, Kiev, Ukraine and the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Conference, Sherwood Park, Alberta, is twinned with the Luisa de Mariac Conference, Murovani, Kurilovci, Ukraine.

On February 22nd, the Vincentian Family published a Statement on the current situation which is sadly unfolding in Eastern Europe. Therein, the Vincentian Family calls on all parties to reach for global peace and stands firm in their commitment to fully support the people in Ukraine.

This statement was signed by all global Vincentian Family leaders, including our 16th President General International, brother Renato Lima de Oliveira, on behalf of the whole Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Click here to read the full statement published by the Vincentian Family:

<https://famvin.org/en/2022/02/24/letter-to-the-vincentian-family-in-ukraine-and-eastern-europe/?noredirect=en-US>



FUND DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Thank you to those who attended the Fund Development webinar on February 26. If you were unable to attend, the webinar and resources created by the Fund Development Committee to date can be found at [Fund Development - Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada \(ssvp.ca\)](https://www.ssvp.ca).

Should you have successful fundraising initiatives for your SSVP community, we would love to hear about them. We can add them to our list of resources for other SSVP communities to use to raise funds to carry out our Mission of helping people in need in all possible ways.

We are still recruiting members to our Committee. Should you be interested in joining us and you have fund development expertise or experience with fund development communication strategies, donor engagement/stewardship or identifying and approaching foundations/government programs, please contact [Linda Dollard](#).

This is a great opportunity to identify ways to raise funds by the multiple levels of the Society to carry out our Mission!

*Linda Dollard, Chair
Fund Development Committee*



LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

In the gospel reading for the 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Christ gives a lesson that would have seemed strange at that time and still seems strange today. The message in Luke 6:27-38 bears repeating:

²⁷ “But I say to you that listen, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat, do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷ “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

It is a message of extreme tolerance and acceptance. God is, “kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.” and so should we be as well. “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you,” we are told. This is the world as we know it and our basic human nature being turned on its head.

It was a very challenging lesson to the disciples when they heard it and it is difficult for us now because it is so against our nature. When a corrupt politician is caught and sent to prison, it seems that justice has been served. We do not wish to forgive them and pray for them – they got what they deserved! They are guilty as charged and should be condemned. Yet Christ our Lord calls us to do the opposite. How can this be?

Through our work as Vincentians, we are quite accustomed to giving to those who request it. In our church, as is quite common, we have a box for donations at the entrance. Parishioners drop off food and other small donations for distribution to the poor. On occasion, it is brought to our attention that some people come and take things from the box, apparently for their personal consumption, without asking permission. As Vincentians, we note that the person who took those things are likely poor or they would not be taking them. They are not stealing it as Vincentians are giving it away. The items are being distributed to the poor as was the intention.

It was given to and belongs to the poor, so there is no problem with the poor taking it. The person who took it was not a thief, but a hungry sister and God, in his mercy, saw to it that food was there for them.

The message in Luke's gospel is to take that mentality a step further and ultimately, it is its own reward if you do. If you love your enemies, you will not have fewer enemies. If you bless those who curse you, you will not have fewer who curse you. If you pray for those who abuse you, you will not have fewer who abuse you.

As Saint Vincent de Paul once wrote, "Make it a practice to judge persons and things in the most favourable light at all times and in all circumstances." Is it a challenge? Absolutely. I will suggest that attempting to do so would make for a deeply personal Lenten devotion and, if we allow it to do so, may even change our lives as Vincentians, Christians, and people for the better. May God's love shine on us all, all those we love, and all our enemies, and especially the poor we serve.

Yours in the Service of the Servants of the Poor,

*John Carey, Chair
National Spirituality Committee*



Twining with Colombia

The San Fernando Rey Conference of Amaga in Colombia is twinned with our conference of St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Sidney, BC. We received their 2021 Annual Report that, along with pictures, describes what we feel is amazing work in a country facing many difficulties. The conference consists of 12 members; the young adults having joined about two years ago. The following contains some of their inspirational report.



Members made a total of 46 visits to those in need in 2021. They gave food hampers to single moms, visited the sick and elderly, and those in jail. They gave out personal hygiene kits to those most in need and toys to the children at Christmas. In total, 376 people were assisted. The members conducted fundraising activities by baking and selling 1,000 *empanadas* (pies) and held 2 raffles.



Besides the Vincentian works mentioned above, some members were also involved in **205** broadcasts at a church-run community radio station. The program, called “A moment with God”, was delivered under the direction of the parish priest. They describe the radio series as “*a space for reflection on the daily Holy Gospel, spiritual formation and prayer with the purpose of bringing a message of hope, love, joy and accompaniment in the midst of the pandemic*” Four videos and written publications on spirituality were also put on the [Conference website](#) and on a [YouTube](#)

[channel](#).

In closing, they state, “*There are many things, projects and pending plans that we would like to do in our conference in order to help our less fortunate brothers, which have been increasing due to displacements, violence and unemployment in the country. The cost of living has increased as well as violence by criminal armed groups. Despite all of the above, we consider that the year 2021 was one of great challenges, and thanks to God, we have been able to serve the poorest with love and charity.*”

They thanked us for our “valuable collaboration” and financial assistance, which helped them to carry out their amazing work. Twining was a lifeline for activities conducted last year by our Vincentian brothers and sisters of Colombia.

*Donna Thompson, Twining Rep.
St. Elizabeth of Hungary
Conference, Sidney BC*





SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS

Our Housing campaign sub-committee staged a very informative webinar on February 12th, which included presentations from St. John's NL and Victoria BC on their housing efforts. As we now enter the second year of the campaign, I would encourage our members to read over our [National action plan](#), which can be found on our website ssvp.ca/special-projects. There are several actions that any conference could undertake. Please join us in our efforts to address the many issues related to housing and homelessness.

Two newly formed sub-committees have been working on their mandates and their goals and objectives, which we shall present to the national board of directors in March for their approval. The Multi-Cultural Diversity Committee (MCDC) and the Indigenous Sharing Circle (ISC) will both follow up this step by developing actions needed to achieve our goals and objectives. It will also be important to include ways we can measure the success of any such actions.

The Advocacy Circle has developed an action plan that will also be presented to the national board for approval.

We continue our efforts towards the formation of a national prison ministry network and invite our members with an interest in the criminal justice system and related issues to consider joining us.

Each of these sub-committees also has a larger support network that will be kept updated on recent committee news. I invite anyone with an interest to contact me for further information.

There is also a need for more social justice reps and supporters across Canada. If your conference does not have a rep, why not consider becoming one? We have resource material to inform you more about the role of social justice in today's Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

If you are interested or have questions about social justice, please contact me at ssvpjp@gmail.com.

*Jim Paddon, Chair
National social justice committee*



QUESTION & ANSWER

Q: The approach in my conference is to only help persons in need get over an emergency situation, and not to offer continual ongoing support. Is this a correct approach? This is the result of not having sufficient funds to help.

A: The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul does NOT help “in emergencies only” or “only once each year.” It is the philosophy of the Society to “treat each case on its own merit.” It has nothing to do with how often a person or family requests assistance. It has everything to do with whether or not the need is real and has everything to do with compassion toward those in need and sharing God’s love with those seeking help, as reflected in Mathew 25. If a conference has any guidelines that prevent helping persons in need, please consider removing them. Instead, determine what level of financing is required to be able to support actions and programs to assist those in need in your community, and what plans need to be in place to be able to meet these needs.