



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
National Council of Canada
ISSN 2560-824X
Volume 6 no. 9 - May 11, 2022

In this issue:

- A Word that Starts with “P”!
- Annual Dues Appeal
- Reflection - Covenant Love
- Twinning - Two New Beneficiary Countries
- Question & Answer

Online version : [Volume 6 no. 9 - May 11, 2022](#)

[Subscribe here](#)

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada
2463 Innes Road Ottawa ON K1B 3K3
Tel: (613) 837-4363
Toll-free: 1-866-997-7787 (1-866-997-SSVP)
www.ssvp.ca - editor@ssvp.ca
Charitable Registration Number: 132410671 RR0001



A WORD THAT STARTS WITH “P”!

It may surprise many people to learn that the function of advertising is not to create sales, but to build or drive traffic, to raise visibility. This applies not just in a retail context but also in recruiting. In marketing terms, “Promotion” gets someone in the door. This principle is applicable to recruiting volunteers as well.

At my conference’s last meeting, we were discussing the challenges of recruiting; we discussed as well the changing demographics of parishioners attending Mass. Are the parishioners really aware of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and what the Society does, even if the priest refers persons in need to the Conference when they call the parish’s secretariat for assistance? This discussion then led to the need of stewardship of our donors, informing the parishioners of the number of families or individuals assisted - that their donations are helping the local community. This communication is performed in all humility as Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie, the National Council Spiritual Advisor, regularly reinforces in his messages. This communication is also a form of promotion, an opportunity to recruit new members who accept the basic principles and values of the Society and its Mission.

But as part of the recruiting process, are we following up with prospective members when interest is shown? What is the first impression we are leaving when meeting prospective members? How many times have parishioners come to an introductory meeting but are never seen again? Did we fail at genuinely welcoming them, giving them something meaningful to do, listening to their questions; or was it simply describing who we are and what we can offer them in our essential elements of spirituality, service, and friendship? We must not shoot the messenger of advertising and promotion; instead, we need to improve our introduction and its benefits to join the Society!

Most of this visibility, marketing, promotion, is local. Conference meetings and the works of the Society is local. Larger Councils, including the National Council, have supportive roles to play, such as advertising through media on a larger scale than what is achievable by individual conferences. Relationship building with people and groups in large numbers occurs locally. This is especially true when we seek out greater diversity in our members, whether it be through age, ethnicity, skill sets, or other distinguishing characteristics.

What’s next? We are already in May, and fall is just around the corner. Conferences should always be in a recruiting mode, but with the late spring and summer fast approaching, it may be difficult to have a large recruiting drive in the coming weeks before we start complaining it is too hot; but it is the right time to start planning the recruiting drives for September and October.

As well, just before the summer, do not forget the Annual National Formation (ANF) in Ottawa June 17-18. Come to reconnect with your fellow Vincentians, to fill that Hunger for spirituality and human contact.

*Richard Pommerville, Executive Director
National Council*



ANNUAL DUES APPEAL

We are slowly returning to “normal” after two years of following different local/regional/provincial Public Health requirements. As 2021 financial and statistics reports are being received, we have a better understanding of the impact the pandemic had on conference life, where certain conferences have managed to continue and even thrive, while others went dormant. This latter situation implies that some conferences are not in a position to cover their annual dues.

Since multiple conferences are not in a position to cover their dues, this ultimately has an impact on the National Council of Canada revenues since a significant portion of these dues cover the day-to-day operations. Based on current information received, there is a contributions gap in the order of \$35,000.

We are therefore reaching out to conferences and councils that are capable of providing some financial coverage for sister conferences who would not be in a position to pay their annual dues. Funds can be sent to National via the donation portal <https://www.imakeanonlinedonation.org/ssvp-national/CONTRIBUTIONS/> or by sending a cheque to the National office at 2463 Innes Road, Ottawa, ON, K1B 3K3.

*Dave O'Connor, Treasurer
National Council*



COVENANT LOVE

"It may not be something you consider often, but the work we do through the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has an aspect of covenant love. We care for the marginalized in our community in His name. It is a gift, a mere reflection of God's compassion for the poor freely given to those in need.

"It is a relationship of covenant love with God and with those we serve. In the work of the SSVP, you put yourself at the disposal of the person you are helping - we are the servants of the poor, the active agents of God's loving compassion for the poor. Those we help can rarely do something to help us - indeed, even repayment is discouraged. This is covenant with those we serve. The covenant of love with God is that we take on this mission of service to the poor, as a mode of self-sanctification. It's a way of bringing ourselves closer to God by acting as His tool; a method of ensuring His work. The on-going work of salvation is done. No one is worthy of doing God's work, but God's work is always done by people like us. Our one-sided covenant with the poor is like a shadow of His one-sided covenant with us. Those helped are not expected to be able to return the love given to them. It is a gift of love freely given.

"Allow me to offer my personal experience. After many years of doubt, I returned to the Catholic church. By my nature and by my training as an engineer I am a practical person so I was determined to find a practical way to live my faith in daily life, not just go to the church on Sunday. The SSVP was organizing in my parish at the time. Committing to performing the corporal acts of mercy in His name, a time-honoured devotion in our shared Catholic tradition, seemed like just the ticket. I joined to see if I would like it - 23 years ago.

"In our Parish, the SSVP has organized a food hamper system and we also provide financial assistance to those in distress. As a portion of our mission, we visit those requesting our assistance in their homes whenever possible to ensure we understand the situation and whether the requested assistance is appropriate. Many damage deposits, rents, and utility bills have been paid over the years all in His name. Many of those we assist are quite touched by our actions in His name - a tangible expression of His love for you personally. It is difficult not to be touched as a Christian when you realize that your actions in His name are literally at times the answer to the prayers of a person you are dealing with. You are an agent of God's mercy - imagine!

"As a side note, pretty much every major religious tradition agrees on two things: There is a deity worthy of deference and you show your deference by extending mercy to those in your community. Jews, Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Hindu, Jains - all these faiths have a variation on the Golden Rule - do unto others as you would have done unto you, as in our Christian tradition. Within each of us is an urge, a drive to help others in distress when we see it. This natural instinct in us is a gift from God to all mankind, a covenant among all to look after each other and through these actions bring ourselves to salvation."

Yours in the Service of the Servants of the Poor,

John Carey, Chair

National Spirituality Committee



TWINNING – TWO NEW BENEFICIARY COUNTRIES

Canada, a donor country, maintains twinning partnerships with 21 beneficiary countries, mostly from Central and South America and the Caribbean. Two new countries have been added to this list in recent months, **Barbados and Suriname**. The Society has been present in Barbados since the 60's. Suriname (located in the northeast of the South American continent) is a new Vincentian territory since 2020. The Vincentians of these two new twinning countries need our moral and financial support. I invite Canadian conferences and councils to submit a "[Twinning Application](#)" for these new countries.

*Clermont Fortin, Chair
National Twinning Committee*



QUESTION & ANSWER

Q: I am looking for some of the workshops done previously around recruitment and retention purposes; where I can find material?

A: There are several resources available under the National Formation Resources repository:

<https://ssvp.ca/members/formationresources/>

Around recruitment and retention”, please look at the January 28, 2021 webinar on “Rejuvenation”; there is also the March 1, 2021 webinar “The Four Pillars of Commitment”.

Since members or new volunteers bring different skillsets, there are other subjects of interest to explore. Under Fund Development, there is a suite of resources available at:

<https://ssvp.ca/members/committees/fund-development/>

Linked to the Seeds of Hope initiative, there is a comprehensive tool kit available at:

<https://ssvp.ca/special-projects/seeds-of-hope/>

Some people have an interest in Social Justice like safe, secure and affordable housing, and there is material linked to the campaign at:

<https://ssvp.ca/special-projects/safe-secure-and-affordable-housing-is-a-human-right/> including the February 12, 2022 webinar.

The workshops presented at previous Annual National Formations (ANFs) held in person are accessible at:

2019 <https://ssvp.ca/members/resources/anf/2019-aga/>

2018 <https://ssvp.ca/members/resources/anf/2018-aga/>