

WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

November 13, 2022



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
2022 CAMPAIGN GUIDE

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PRESENTATION OF CAMPAIGN

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul provides material help such as non-perishable food, clothing, accessories, & furniture to more than 350,000 fellow Canadians in need annually. This includes assistance to refugees, immigrants, and to residents of northern communities.

This year marks the Society's 5th World Day of the Poor (WDP) national campaign. This year's theme "***For your sakes Christ became poor***" is a summons to responsibility and commitment as men and women who are part of our one human family. In this year's Pope Francis message¹, he calls us to action. Pope Francis' sets the context with:

Several months ago, the world was emerging from the tempest of the pandemic, showing signs of an economic recovery that could benefit millions of people reduced to poverty by the loss of their jobs. A patch of blue sky was opening that, without detracting from our sorrow at the loss of our dear ones, promised to bring us back to direct interpersonal relations and to socializing with one another once more without further prohibitions or restrictions. Now, however, a new catastrophe has appeared on the horizon, destined to impose on our world a very different scenario.

Pope Francis is putting emphasis on the global forced displacement:

Millions of women, children and elderly people are being forced to brave the danger of bombs just to find safety by seeking refuge as displaced persons in neighbouring countries. How many others

¹ <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/poveri/documents/20220613-messaggio-vi-giornatamondiale-poveri-2022.html>

remain in the war zones, living each day with fear and the lack of food, water, medical care and above all human affections?

The United National Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reports:

*At the end of 2021, the **total number of people worldwide who were forced to flee** their homes due to conflicts, violence, fear of persecution and human rights violations was **89.3 million**. This is more than double the 42.7 million people who remained forcibly displaced a decade ago and the most since World War II.²*

This number does not consider the displaced Ukrainians.

Canada welcomes many refugees. The action that Pope Francis is ultimately asking:

As members of civil society, let us continue to uphold the values of freedom, responsibility, fraternity and solidarity. And as Christians, let us always make charity, faith and hope the basis of our lives and our actions.

followed by

Where the poor are concerned, it is not talk that matters; what matters is rolling up our sleeves and putting our faith into practice through a direct involvement, one that cannot be delegated.

The National action campaign on *Safe, secure and affordable housing is a human right* launched on February 7, 2021, the feast day of Blessed Rosalie Rendue, is aligned with Pope Francis' message, that everyone deserves to have safe and adequate housing for their families.

² <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends.html>



This 5th year WPD national campaign is an opportunity to collectively raise the visibility of the SSVP in Canada, and to appeal to potential benefactors, to let them share the gift of assisting persons in need. Who would be in a better position than the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) to promote the World Day of the Poor? That special day is also a great opportunity for the Society to:

- increase the visibility of SSVP activities;
- make known the mission of the SSVP and the culture of encounter;
- foster closer ties between Vincentians and other parishioners;
- recruit new members; and
- conduct campaigns to raise funds or collect non-perishable food items in support to Vincentian work.

You will find in this guide a description of the tools accessible to you, as well as a few campaign blueprints that could be useful to your conference, store or outlet.

CAMPAIGN TOOLS

The team offers you material that you may use as is, or adapt according to your needs.

Available with this guide:

- Campaign blueprints, for a conference or store/outlet;
- Text for a parish speech;
- Text for a parish bulletin;
- Prayer card;
- Press Release.

Available electronically and distributed with this guide:

- Poster:
 - letter format (8 ½" x 11")
 - legal format (8 ½" x 14")
 - tabloid format (11" x 17")

In PDF format: to print, adding your contact information, or to order from the National Council, who will add your contact information on the PDF document and send it to your selected printer. (We suggest Staples / Bureau en Gros.)

- PowerPoint presentation about the campaign with animation in a loop.
- Video of the national housing campaign objectives.

CAMPAIGN BLUEPRINTS

Adapting the campaign in each conference or council is very important, in order to reflect local realities. Following are two basic blueprints for a successful campaign.

ACTIVITIES IN A PARISH

- Determine what actions to undertake in your parish/parishes:
 - Fundraising (using envelopes placed in church pews)?
 - Collection of non-perishable food items?
- Coordinate with particular or central council to place an ad in local newspapers or on local radio;
- Organize a meeting with the pastor;
- Print the campaign poster (from National Council);
- Identify where to display campaign posters;
- Print collection envelopes for fundraising;
- Place a notice in the parish bulletin;
- Plan for an SSVP member to address parishioners after masses;
- Place envelopes on benches and/or add containers to collect non-perishable food items.

ACTIVITIES IN A STORE OR IN THE COMMUNITY

- Determine what actions to undertake in the store(s) / community:
 - Fundraising?
 - Collection of non-perishable food items?
 - Door-to-door collection
- Coordinate with particular or central council to place an ad in local newspapers or on local radio;
- Identify where to display campaign posters;
- Print the campaign poster (from National Council);
- Promotion near cash registers;
- Set up a computer with a presentation (PowerPoint in loop mode);
- Print relevant or relayed documents to customers/clients to take home (leaflet, collection envelope, etc.)

TEXT FOR PARISH SPEECH

Father _____, and my dear friends in Christ. My name is _____ and I am very pleased to be able to talk to you today, on behalf of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, for the _____ Conference. I wish to thank our priest, Father _____, for allowing us this opportunity to address you, our faith community.

At the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, on November 20, 2016, in his apostolic letter, entitled *Mercy and peace (Misericordia et misera)*, Pope Francis invited us to celebrate the World Day of the Poor on the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. This year, we celebrate that special day on November 13. According to the Canadian government, one million, nine hundred thousand Canadian families struggle every day to make ends meet – and that was before the COVID-19 crisis came on us.

It is just a few weeks before we celebrate what promises to be a Christmas like none of us have experienced – celebrated while separated from friends and family and shrouded by concern about an uncertain future. The uncertainty we all feel is magnified for the marginalized we serve for whom uncertainty is a normal condition. We must do more than usual to help the least fortunate among us. For more than 175 years, thanks to your generosity, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has been distributing Christmas hampers or organizing community meals. Such gestures of compassionate solidarity help less fortunate people to emerge from isolation, and allow them to experience wonderful moments of joy. Not only do we give food, we interact with them on an equal basis as our friends.

In the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, our tradition is to avoid judging and to serve people with love, respect, justice and joy. In response to Pope Francis' appeal, we invite you to work with us and lend a hand, either by participating in our *guignolée* or in our collection of food supplies. In this very busy period, we always need volunteers and, of course, financial help is always appreciated as well. This year, we need your help more than ever. You can obtain more information and you may donate to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul team in our community, or directly via the National website, ssvp.ca.

Thank you for your attention! I wish all of you a very nice Sunday.

TEXT FOR PARISH NEWSLETTER

November 13, the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, is the World Day of the Poor. Your Society of Saint Vincent de Paul invites you to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters, especially at this uncertain time. We encourage you to lend a hand by participating in our *guignolée* or in our collection of food supplies. In this very busy period, we always need volunteers and, of course, financial help is always appreciated. You may donate to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul team in our community, or directly to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, via the national website, at www.ssvp.ca/donation.

PRESS RELEASE

With the cold weather approaching, charities all across Canada prepare for the busiest time of the year. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) in Canada is using November 13 2022, which Pope Francis declared The World Day of the Poor, as a day in which we are encouraged to consider those less fortunate than ourselves and to give generously what we can.

Canadians in need struggle to buy their children winter clothing and afford the increased costs of heating their home. The COVID-19 response has just increased the burden on us all, but it is felt most keenly by the already marginalized. This is why even more people than usual turn to organizations like the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) for help. Some people who may be too proud to ask for help are forced to by all the added stress of winter and year's end. The desire to provide for their family causes them to humble themselves and seek help. We live in a country where a winter coat is not a luxury and where persons in need may have to choose between food or warmth.

In the coming weeks the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul invites you to consider your own good fortune and how this good fortune allows you to assist persons in need; with a donation of money, clothing, household goods, or time you can help us make a difference in the community. SSVP strives to treat the poor with dignity and respect regardless of personal creed or background; we ask you to do the same. Encourage others to donate. Take a moment to speak with a needy person. Buy a coffee for a person shivering on the streets.

In [City/Town Name] X people live in poverty and, of these people, X are children. Each year the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul: [Council/Conference] works year-round to help feed, clothe, and console these people. We hope that you will consider donating and volunteering not just in honour of the World Day of the Poor, but year-round to help your friends and neighbours in need

To make a donation, volunteer, or learn more contact [Preferred Local Contact Method].

To make an online donation directly to your local SSVP or to National, visit www.ssvp.ca/donate or call 1-866-997-7787 to learn more about donating to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

RELATING TO THE POOR AS COMPASSIONATE RECIPROCIDY

Winston Churchill famously once asserted, “We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give away.”

As we communally reflect on our ministry in the light of this statement, and the occasion of World Day of the Poor 2022, one particular passage of the message of Pope Francis for this day stands out:

“There is a paradox today that, as in the past, we find hard to accept, because it clashes with our human way of thinking: that there exists a form of poverty that can make us rich. By appealing to the ‘grace’ of Jesus Christ, Paul wants to confirm the message that he himself preached. It is the message that true wealth does not consist of ‘storing up treasures on earth, where rust and moths consume, and where thieves break in and steal’ (Mt 6:19), but rather in reciprocal love that leads us to bear one another’s burdens in such a way that no one is left behind or excluded.”

This message from our chief shepherd brings to mind one of the most striking characteristics of the early Christian community, from Acts 4:34-35: “There were no needy ones among them, because those who owned lands or houses would sell their property, bring the proceeds from the sales and lay them at the apostle’s feet for distribution to anyone as he had need.”

“No one is left behind or excluded” from Pope Francis, and “There were no needy ones among them” from the Scriptures, resonate in unison as a clarion call to us and our ministry, to rise to this ideal to the best of our ability. To reach out and care for all without discrimination, and to try to meet the needs of those we know who are struggling, is our challenge.

However, it is not just our challenge, but also our reward, as revealed by the writings of someone who has long inspired me - the late Henri Nouwen. I had the good fortune to meet him when he was visiting my predecessor, Archbishop Peter Sutton in The Pas, MB, in 1988. I was impressed then by his quiet gentle manner, his deep wisdom, and over the years, have come to appreciate him more and more for three other qualities: his humility, simplicity and utter transparency.

His influence on me is so marked that I have dedicated to him the book I hope to publish soon, written on the 25th anniversary of his death. Each chapter of this book concludes with a quote from his writings. I find that his wisdom on what it means to be a faith-filled human being applies very much to our life and ministry as Vincentians. Particularly striking was the following piece that came my way recently:

“We who want to bring about change have first of all to learn to be changed by those whom we want to help. This, of course, is exceptionally difficult for those who are undergoing their first exposure to an area of distress. They see poor houses, hungry people, dirty streets; they hear people cry in pain without medical care, they smell unwashed bodies, and in general are overwhelmed by the misery that is all around them. But none of us will be able to really give if he has not discovered that what he gives is only a small thing compared to what we have received. When Jesus says: “Happy the poor, the hungry, and the weeping” (Luke 6:21), we have to be able to see that happiness. When Jesus says: “What you did to the least of my brothers, you did to me” (Matthew 25:40), he is addressing to us a direct invitation not only to help but also to discover the beauty of God in those who are to be helped. As long as we see only distasteful poverty, we are not really entitled to give. When, however, we find people who have truly devoted themselves to work in the slums and the ghettos and who feel that their vocation is to be of service there, we find they have discovered that in the smiles of the children, the hospitality of the people, the expressions they use, the stories they tell, the wisdom they show, the goods they share - there is hidden so much richness and beauty, so much affection and human warmth, that the work they are doing is only a small return for what they have already received.”

Certainly, this wisdom from Henri resonates with the message from Pope Francis about the paradox of poverty – on the one hand, a poverty that limits, diminishes, degrades, yet on the other hand, within a faith-filled, genuine, selfless and loving response to that poverty, a source of joy and fulfillment.

I am sure all of us can resonate with Henri’s experience and sharing of that experience - that the poor, and for me the Indigenous people among whom I ministered for decades - have taught me more than I ever learned in theology classes. If that is what inspires us to get involved as Vincentians and stay committed to giving our lives away in striving to make the world a better place for at least some, then that is a healthy and holy motivation, and also, as Nouwen puts it, an experience of creative reciprocity, or as I prefer to describe it, of compassionate reciprocity.

All of which lends credence to the words of Churchill – we make a living by what we get;
but we make a life by what we give away.

*Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie, OMI, Spiritual Advisor
National Council of Canada*

PRAYER FOR THE WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

God of Abraham,
Everywhere we go we see Lazarus.
But we also see so many doors,
doors that separate us from Lazarus.

Lord, teach us to open those doors
To Lazarus, to the poor,
to help them find
a just share of your bounty.

This World Day of the Poor,
help us all turn to those outside our door,
to bless, heal and comfort them.

Help us to build a world together,
where the poor are strangers to none,
and the very chains of poverty are broken.
Amen.

(Adapted from Catholic Relief Services)

COVID-19: PREVENTION AND PRECAUTION

For any person-to-person contact, it is always preferable to err on the side of caution and ensure safety for everyone, and to not encourage any volunteers into action if they feel unsafe or have prior health conditions that could put them at risk.

Prevention and precaution are in order in this constantly changing situation, even if it may appear to be stabilizing. It is important to listen to the advice of public health experts:

- a. Wear a mask;
- b. Wash your hands often and thoroughly;
- c. Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
- d. Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- e. Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched (e.g. phone, binder, etc.)
- f. Stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill;
- g. When sick, cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and then wash your hands;
- h. Practice social distancing.