

Formation: a path to serving the Vincentian way

Marion Clorey & Pat Lenz

On behalf of National Formation Committee



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul



“Formation”

- Formation = what/why
 - (whereas training = how)
- Grounded in The Rule
- Ensures that every member, Conference, and Council is formed, sustained, and spiritually grounded in the Vincentian way.

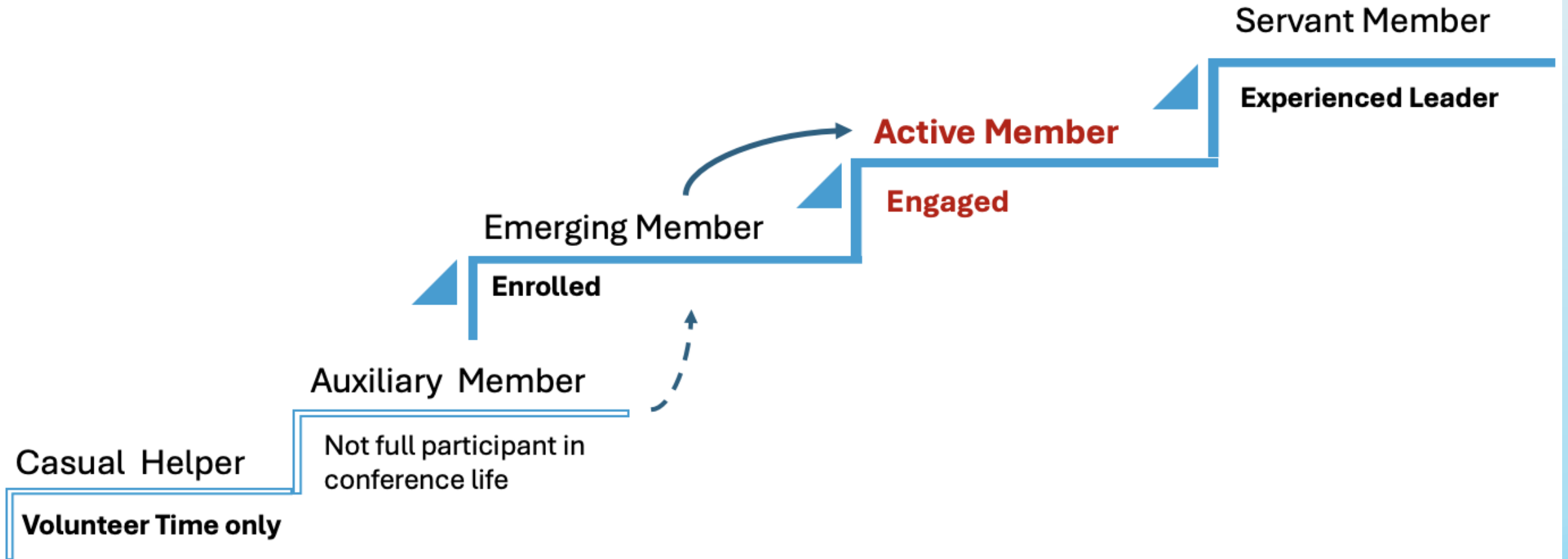
3.12 FORMATION OF MEMBERS

It is essential that the Society continually promote the formation and training of its members and officers, in order to

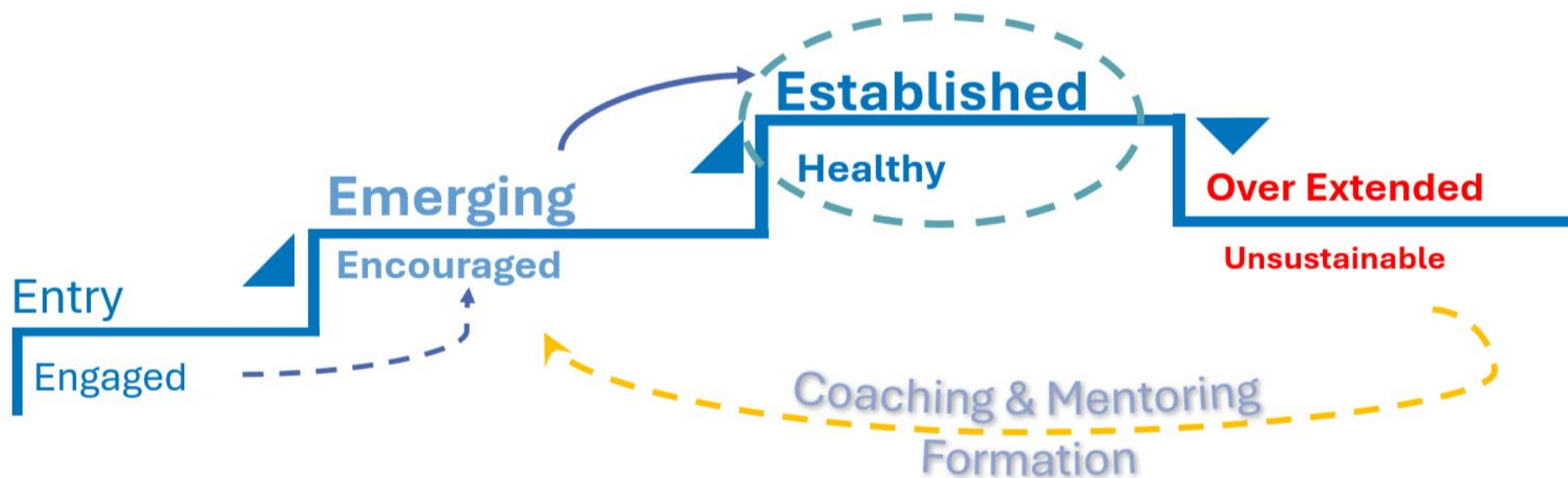
- deepen their knowledge of the Society and their spirituality,
- improve the sensitivity, quality and efficiency of their service to the poor and
- help them be aware of the benefits, resources and opportunities that are available for the poor.



Member continuum



Conference continuum



2.1 1.3 Typical Meeting Agendas

Land acknowledgement

a) Opening Prayer (formation)

b) Welcome & Roll Call

Vision, mission & values

c) Spiritual Reflection (formation)

d) Reading from The Rule (formation)

e) Conflict of Interest

f) Approval of the Agenda

g) Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting

h) Correspondence

i) Communications from Higher Councils (formation)

j) Finance Report

k) Secret Collection

l) Committee Reports e.g. (formation)

1) Social Justice

2) Home Visits Reports*

3) Training

4) Special Projects

5) Strategic Planning

m) New Business

n) Good of the Society

1) Prayer Requests

2) Deceased Members

?3) Roundtable Discussion

o) Next Meeting

p) Closing Prayer (formation)

q) Adjournment



Land Acknowledgement



Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

While we meet today on a virtual platform, we would like to take a moment to acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples of all the lands and water that we are on today and the importance of the land, which we each call home. We do this to reaffirm our commitment and responsibility in improving relationships between nations and to improving our own understanding of local Indigenous Peoples and their histories, laws, faith traditions, cultures and their concerns regarding our shared environment, including safe water. From coast to coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Metis, and First Nations people that call this nation home.



The eagle to represent First Nations
The narwhal to represent Inuit
The beaded flower to represent Métis

From National Board, March 2026

- Motion to include a localized Indigenous Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of SSVP meetings at all levels immediately before the opening prayer.
 - [2026-04-Land-Acknow-ENG.pdf](#)



Land Acknowledgement

- *Mount Saint Vincent University is located in Kjiptuk (Halifax), part of Mi'kma'ki, the unceded ancestral territory which remains the homeland of the Mi'kmaq, the First People of this land for over 13,000 years. This territory is covered by the [Covenant Chain of Treaties of Peace and Friendship](#) signed between 1725 and 1779.*
- *These treaties are affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada and recognize Aboriginal Title (which is embedded in both the 1763 Royal Proclamation and in section 35(1) of the 1982 Constitution Act). The treaties are living agreements that establish the rules for an ongoing Treaty relationship between nations.*
- *We pay respect to the knowledge embedded in the Mi'kmaw custodians of the lands and waters and to the Elders, past, present, and future.*





SOCIETY OF
SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

OPENING PRAYER

L: *In the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

All: Amen

L: *Come Holy Spirit, live within our lives.*

All: And strengthen us by your love.

L: *Send forth your spirit and new life will be created.*

All: And the whole face of the earth will be renewed.

L: *Let us reflect on the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, recalling his unity and presence among us: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them".*
(short silence)

All: Lord Jesus, deepen our Vincentian spirit of friendship during this meeting. Make us responsive to the Christian calling to seek and find the forgotten, the suffering or the deprived, so that we may bring them your love. Help us to be generous with our time, our possessions and ourselves, in this mission of charity. Perfect in us your love and teach us to share more fully in the Eucharistic sacrifice offered for all.

All: Hail Mary full of grace...

L: *Most sacred heart of Jesus.*

All: Have mercy on us.

L: *Immaculate heart of Mary.*

All: Pray for us.

L: *Saint Vincent de Paul.*

All: Pray for us.

L: *Saint Louise de Marillac.*

All: Pray for us.

L: *Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.*

All: Pray for us.

L: *Blessed Rosalie Rendu.*

All: Pray for us.

L: *Saint Marguerite d'Youville.*

All: Pray for us.



Blessed Frederic Ozanam
1813 - 1853

a) Opening Prayer

- Why do we not make the Sign of the Cross at the end of the Opening Prayer?
- Whose intercession are we seeking?





Opening Prayer

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Opening Prayer

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the
Lord is with thee.*

*Blessed art thou amongst
women and blessed is the
fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*

*Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners, now and
at the hour of our death.*

Amen



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Running an effective meeting ...

- b) Welcome & Roll Call ...
- e) Conflict of Interest
- f) Approval of the Agenda
- g) Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting
- h) Correspondence ...
- j) Finance Report ...
- m) New Business ...
- q) Adjournment

- Leadership preparation & development
 - e.g. Robert's-Frédéric's Rules of Order



c) Spiritual Reflection



Word Bearing Fruit in THE Lives OF others... AND OURS

But as for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word embrace it with a generous and good heart, and bear fruit through perseverance. (Luke 8:15)

In today's world of dark headlines, we members of the Society choose to respond to the call to alleviate the sufferings of and advocate just conditions for those around us. The lives of our neighbours in need are less immutable, and much more fragile than vast majority of humanity may pay attention to. Capable of feeling compassion at their pleas for help and sharing this value with other Vincentians across the world through time and talents, we feel the need - moral and spiritual - to help the least of our brothers and sisters, just as Jesus modelled and asked us all.

Let us re-commit ourselves to the centrality of the Mission. By generosity and patience in our joyful response to His love, and good stewardships of gifts He has entrusted, may the Word of God continue to come alive and bear fruit in our and other people's lives.

Reflection Questions

1. Halfway-through the year, what are ways you look forward to contributing more deeply to the ideals of the Society?
2. How can you much better care for and use those gifts to make them more fruitful? Has anything restrained you from giving yourself fully to the Society, including taking on leadership roles?

Let us pray... All-loving God, may Your providence renew our gift of good heart to wholly embrace and share the Word, bringing comfort and joy to those most needy. Grant our neighbours in need light, inspiration and strength to find purpose and meanings to their daily tribulations. Amen.

Jose I. Torres, National Spirituality Committee Chair

- Chosen/created by Spiritual Advisor
 - (2.7 APPOINTMENT AND ROLE OF THE SPIRITUAL ADVISOR)
- Grounded in Vincentian spirituality
- Resources:
 - [Monthly Reflections - Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada](#)
 - The Rule p.170 – words from Vincent & Louise



Vision, Mission & Values

VISION

- As a Catholic lay organization, we will embrace the world in a network of charity, serving Christ in the suffering, the poor and the marginalized, bringing them love and respect, aid and development, hope and joy, in a more just society.
- We also seek to deepen our spirituality and the mutual love and support amongst members, so that, seeing how we serve those in need with one mind and heart, people are attracted to the Society and to Christ who animates it.

MISSION

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

Note how these statements which guide our service resonate with the wisdom of other Catholic leaders through the ages.

"Go to the poor; you will find God"

Saint Vincent de Paul

"Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love."

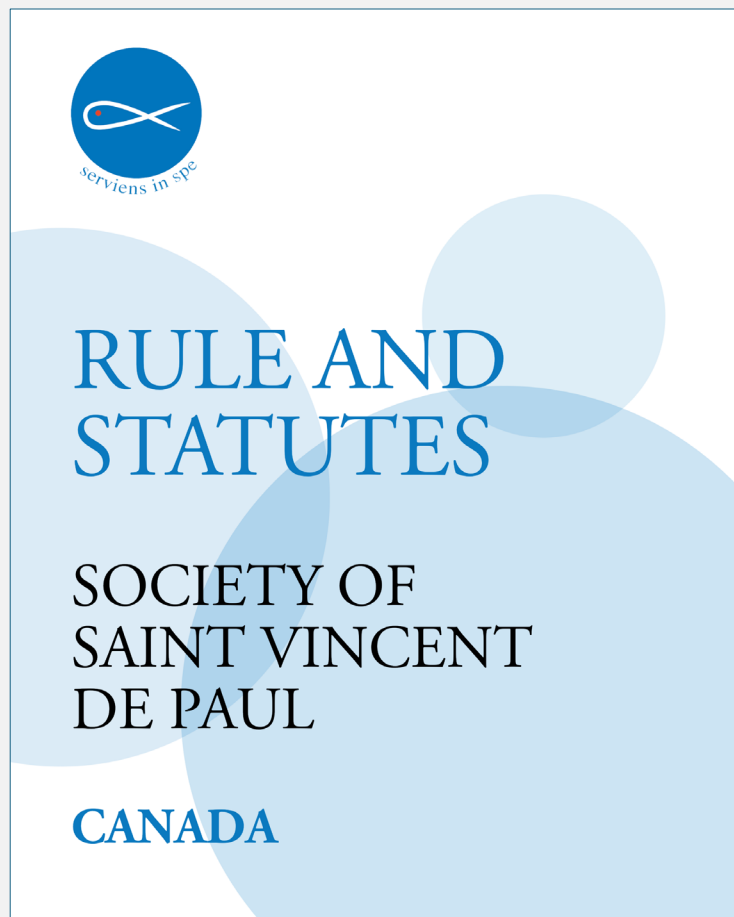
Saint Mother Teresa

"to be close to God, one must be close to the poor"

Pope Leo XIV: Dilexi Te, 2025



d) Reading from The Rule

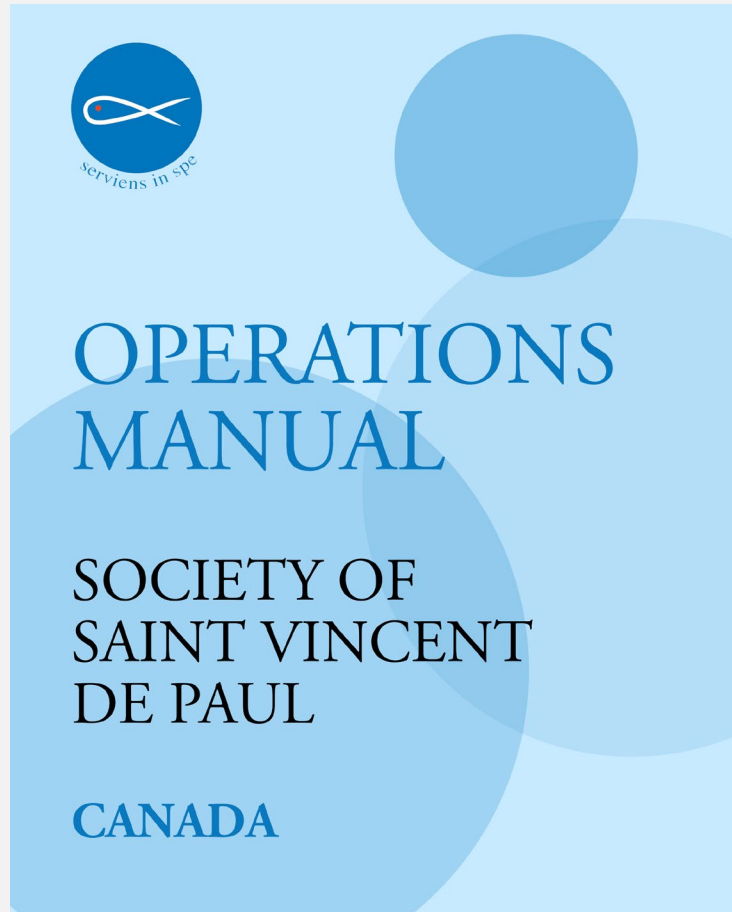


3.12 FORMATION OF MEMBERS

- It is essential that the Society continually promote the formation and training of its members and officers, in order to deepen their knowledge of the Society and their spirituality, improve the sensitivity, quality and efficiency of their service to the poor and help them be aware of the benefits, resources and opportunities that are available for the poor.
- The Society also offers members higher training in order to better help to raise the cultural and social level of those who request this support.

The Rule - Society of Saint Vincent de Paul -
National Council of Canada

Or the Operations Manual...

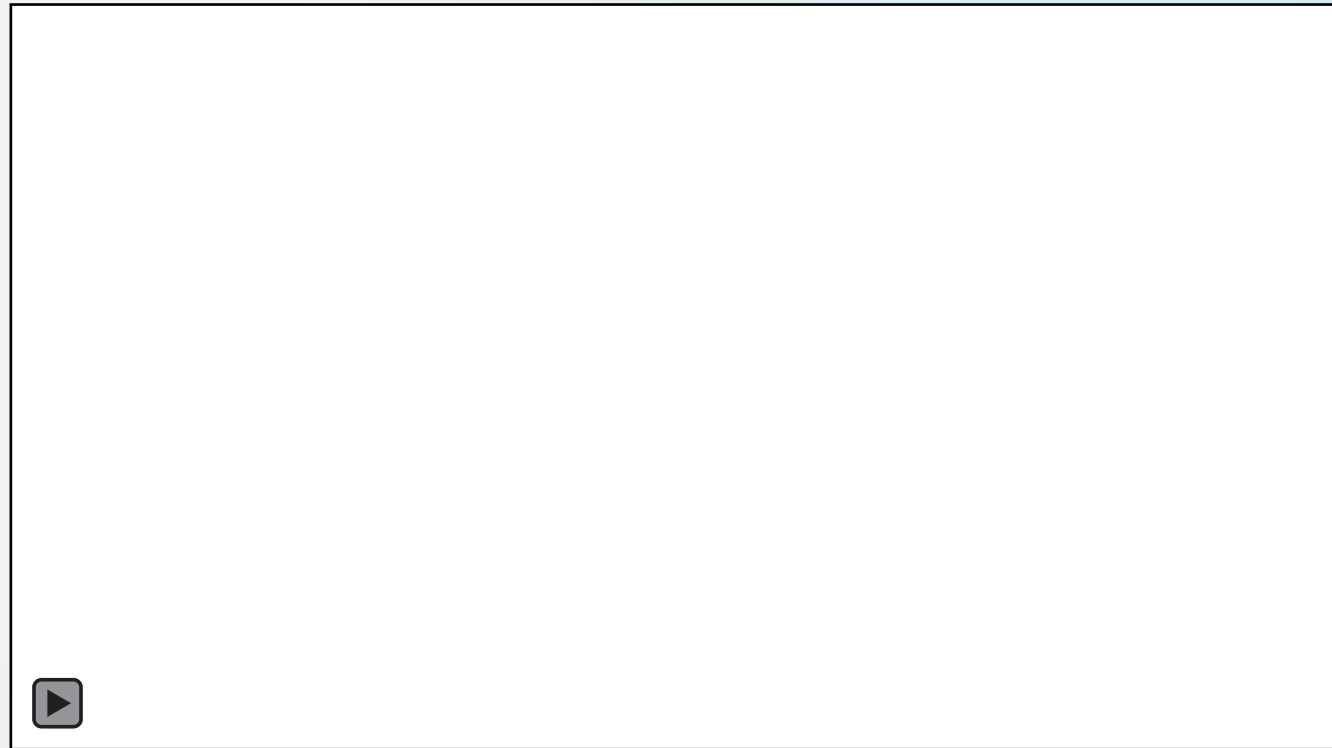


- Policies, procedures, forms
- [Operations Manual - Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada](#)
- e.g. [8.1-2024-11-GUIDELINES-Social-Justice.pdf](#)



Or other formation material... from a Vincentian POV

- Excerpts from Papal encyclicals or letters e.g. Rerum Novarum or Dilexi Te
- Catholic social teachings
- Videos from [SSVP National - Canada - YouTube](#)



i) Communication from Higher Level Council(s)

CHEZ Vincent BULLETIN

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
National Council of Canada

March 2026

Sharing the Vincentian Vision in Paris

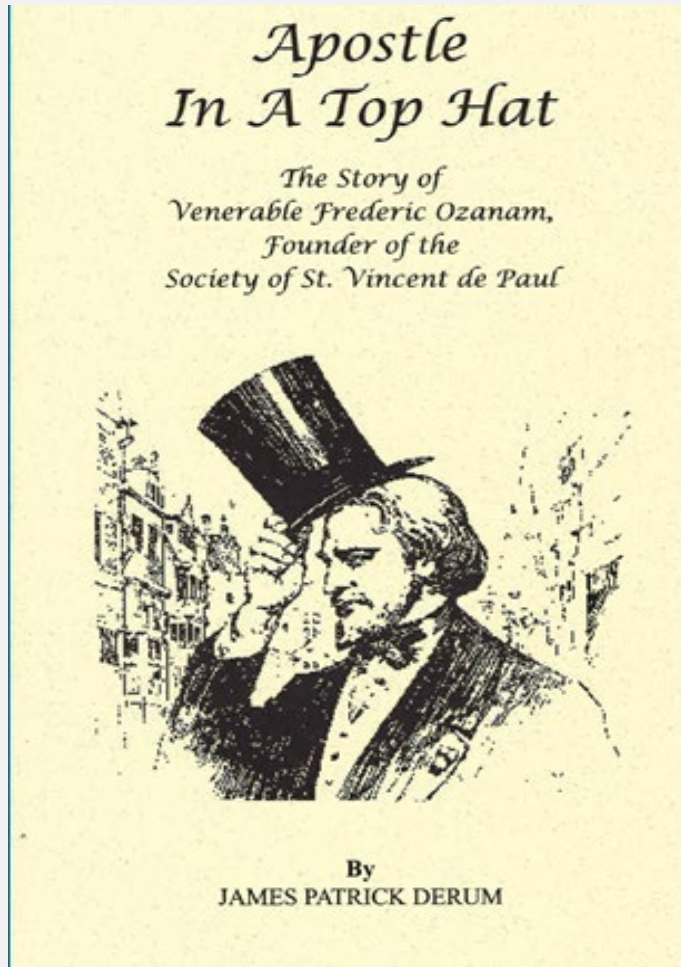
An International meeting was held in Paris, France for National Council Presidents and Executive Directors from English speaking countries. Philippe and I attended representing Canada. There was representation from Australia, England & Wales, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore and the U.S. The meeting was held at the SSVI International Office with International Council staff and Juan Manuel Gomez, SSVI's President General International, in attendance.



2.9.2 Responsibilities of the Board of Directors (of Council)...

- promote and implement effective communication up and down within the Society's structure
- Subscribe to [Chez Vincent Bulletin](#)

k) The Secret Collection



4A.3.10 THE SECRET COLLECTION

- among members present
- should be part of every conference and council meeting.
- tradition from the time of the very first conference in 1833.
- an opportunity for members, if they wish to do so, to make a personal contribution by donating money according to their financial situation, without the knowledge of other Vincentians.
- The money is usually collected, declared and deposited by the treasurer to be used to serve persons in need.



I) Committee Reports

For example:

- 1) Social Justice
- 2) Home Visits Reports*
- 3) Training
- 4) Special Projects
- 5) Strategic Planning

The Vincentian Question
« *What must be done?* »

First posed to Saint Vincent de Paul by
Madame de Gondi, his benefactor, in
response to the severe poverty and
spiritual neglect of the rural French
peasantry.





SOCIETY OF
SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

CLOSING PRAYER

All: Our Father...

L: *Saint Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

All: Pray for us.

L: *Saint Vincent de Paul.*

All: Pray for us.

L: *Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.*

All: Pray for us.

L: *For all the benefactors of the poor, that God may reward them with eternal life.*

All: Lord, hear us.

L: *For our Society and all its members, that God may renew our spirit of unity and of service.*

All: Lord, hear us.

L: *For all who are sick or suffering, that God may give them courage and consolation.*

All: Lord, hear us.

L: *For our deceased members, the deceased poor and our deceased benefactors, that God may grant them eternal rest.*

All: Lord, hear us.

L: *For the unity for which Christ prayed, that all may be one in truth and charity.*

All: Lord, hear us.

L: *For those who have no homes, that they may quickly find a place in which they can live a decent and happy life.*

All: Lord, hear us.

L: *That if it be God's will, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, our founder, may be canonized by the Church.*

All: Lord, hear us.

L: *That our Holy Father the Pope may be granted the protection, guidance, strength and consolation that he needs to discharge his duties as Christ's Vicar on earth.*

All: Lord, hear us.

L: *In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

All: Amen.

2022/24

p) Closing Prayer

For whom &
for what
do we pray?

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Closing Prayer



*Our Father, Who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth as it is
in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who
trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.*

*L: Saint Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
All: Pray for us.
L: Saint Vincent de Paul,
All: Pray for us.
L: Blessed Frédéric Ozanam,
All: Pray for us.
L: For all the benefactors of the poor, that God may
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All: Lord, hear us.

All: *In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN*





Renewed basic formation materials

- Uses: individual (POTENTIAL) members as well as conferences
- Guiding principles:
 - Brief
 - Frequent
 - Ongoing
 - Developmental
 - Interactive
 - Grounded in The Rule and Operations Manual



Learning about SSVP



Learning About SSVP

An Introduction to the
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

For introduction to the Society of
potential members, conferences, even
partners

TOPICS

- Origins of Society including:
 - Our principal founder
 - Our first spiritual advisor
 - Our patron
 - & his colleague
- Vision, mission, values & logo
- Our key activity – home visit
- What is a conference?
- Who can be a Vincentian?



Compassion in
en Action



Learning MORE about SSVP



Learning MORE About Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

For ongoing formation of established members
/conferences, ready for next steps in service

(Proposed) TOPICS

- Organizational structure – locally > internationally
- Roles of higher-level councils
- Executive structure
- Commissioning of members
- Special works
- History of Society
 - Internationally
 - in Canada
- Vincentian celebrations
- World Day of the Poor



Home visits – our distinct service (Personal Contact with Those in Need)

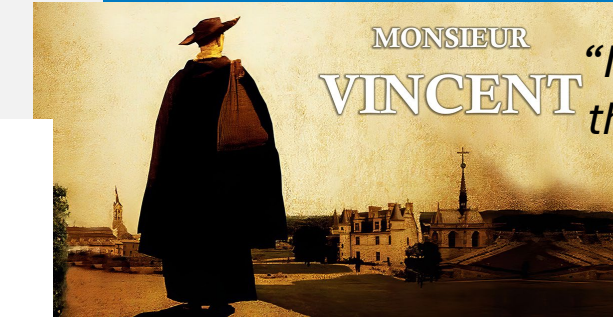


Personal Contact with those in Need

Home Visits and beyond



1



*"It is for your love alone that
the poor will forgive you the
bread you give them."*
St. Vincent de Paul

TOPICS

- Origins of home visit
- Spirituality of home visit
- Qualities of home visitor
- Relational vs Transactional
- Learning from/outcomes of home visit
- Role of prayer in home visit



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en Action





Home visits & beyond



Home Visits and Beyond

(Proposed) TOPICS

- Stages of a home visit
- Listening
- Visiting in pairs
- Home visit reports to conferences
- Considering various scenarios
- Your home, my home or ?
- Supporting in complex situations
- Both charity and (social) justice
 - moving towards advocacy



SSVP Spirituality



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Spirituality

TOPICS

- Serving in Hope
- Call to our principal founder
- Spirituality of our patron
- 5 Vincentian virtues
- SSVP Vision, Mission & Values
- Leo XIII to Leo XIV
- Connections to Catholic Social teaching



Safeguarding



> Renewed direction from SSVP International ([safeguarding-framework-2023.pdf](#))

> Updated policy from SSVP Canada (June 2026)

> Renewed material from National Formation Committee (fall 2026)





"Ongoing Formator" Program

- ❑ Who: designated members within each region
- ❑ What: webinar-based sessions
- ❑ Why: understand principles of program & of formation
- ❑ Where: web-based
- ❑ When: beginning fall 2026
- ❑ How: adult education model, interactive



Questions/Comments?



Compassion in Action



Keep in touch

National Formation Committee

formation@ssvp.ca



Compassion in en Action



Thank you, **merci**, *Wela'lioq*

**Voice your
opinion, rate
this workshop**



**Exprimez votre
opinion,
évaluez cet
atelier**



Compassion in
en Action





Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul

www.ssvp.ca