



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

Ontario Regional Council

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Happy New Year 2025



AOOL Members Sudeep Mathew, Andy Burns, Maria Roque, Darlene Melville-Cryer

A Christmas Tradition

Members of the Annunciation of Our Lord SSVP Conference in Hamilton, along with friends and fellow parishioners got together on a Saturday in December for their "Christmas Tradition" of packing and delivering food hampers to their "neighbours in need". This joyous tradition dates back to the 1980s when the parish was founded. They helped 57 families enjoy the "all of Christmas which is "Christ".

To all the Conferences and/or Councils that were involved with a dedicated Christmas program in helping the less fortunate, I extend my appreciation and congratulations on your commitment. It takes a lot of planning for its execution, but the Joy experienced by our Vincentians and the recipients is gratifying. Our celebration of Christmas, and its many traditions, stems from us recognizing and praising the birth of Our Lord, who was born among us and became man. Jesus told us that his "**reason for coming as a man**" is, "***He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor***". Jesus brought the Good News back to earth: **the desire of God to give people life (joy) and true freedom (unity), to bring healing for past and present wounds (shelter)**. St. Paul reminds us that we cannot achieve unity and be prosperous unless we bring healing, hope and freedom to all members in our communities. This also includes all members of our Conferences and our Councils. St. Paul shares that, "we are all part of ONE body and if one part of the body is suffering, eventually, the whole body will suffer".

On January 19th, in the "Second Reading", St. Paul says to the Corinthians, "there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit", then continues with, "to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good". The gifts of the Holy Spirit which we receive during the Sacrament of Confirmation are diverse, but the Holy Spirit is one. These gifts that are given to us are all different and also different

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concentrations. Most of all, they are given to us as we come together in prayer to share our talents to strengthen us in our mission. Please be mindful that when we get together for our meetings that we open our meetings with the sign of the cross and close the meeting with the sign of the cross. This then makes each meeting a prayer that should be shared with love, respect, justice and joy.

We all seek God's "Mercy" for we are all sinners. In some prayers we say, "have Mercy on us, Lord, have Mercy on us". During the celebration of Mass, we say "Lord have Mercy", also, during the Divine Mercy rosary, we say, "Have Mercy on us and on the whole world". Why? It has been said that when God responds to our plea, His Mercy releases us from sin and allows us to live in friendship with Him. A Jesuit priest once explained "Mercy": *"to be merciful is to enter into the chaos of another person's life."* This is a good thing to remember, because it's exactly what Jesus did. May we also look within ourselves and see what **gift/ability or opportunity** has been given to you by the Holy Spirit, then ask yourself how you may share/use that **gift** to help others to "see again" and find "true freedom". Once this is accomplished, all can be content that by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy, we are encompassing our SSVP mission.

My fellow Sister and Brother Vincentians, the year 2025 is a Jubilee Year for our Church. In his prayer for us, Pope Francis extends the following, ***"May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen"***. And in this Jubilee Year, we are invited to experience the power of God's mercy and forgiveness by a renewed commitment to love God and our neighbour as God has first loved us. The Jubilee Year recognizes those that care for the least fortunate among us, in many ways, are called "Heroes of Hope" and the prayer for those Heroes starts with, ***"Lord God, by the grace of our baptism, you have given us new life in Christ and called us to serve as Pilgrims of Hope"***. I ask that you use these prayers in asking our God to show us Mercy as we continue to serve His poor. Allow these "invites" to be part of your resolutions for this Jubilee Year. Allow me to extend Happy New Year 2025 greetings to the complete Vincentian family here in Ontario.

Reminders...always keep trying to attain the virtues of our patron, Saint Vincent de Paul, which are Simplicity, Humility, Gentleness, Selflessness and Zeal as we deal with not only His poor but also with each and every fellow Vincentian; please exercise my request that each and every Conference and Council include the reading of the Vision, Mission and Values at each and every meeting of the group; Please be diligent in sending to our treasurer, your "dues/fees" to Regional (\$300) and National (\$300) for the 2025 year. If you forgot to do so for 2024, you may still forward the \$250 (Regional) and (\$300) (National) to our treasurer; we encourage all Conferences and Councils to pass-up dedicated amounts as they can afford to the "North of 60" and the "Ozanam Education Fund" programs. If anyone knows of a "friend of Vincentians" who maybe interested in helping us, please have that person contact me. "Annual Reports" are now due. Please visit our website www.ssvp.on.ca for updates.

Our Spring Assembly and Annual General Meeting will take place on April 4th and 5th in Sarnia. PLEASE circle the dates on your calendar and plan to attend. News of the "happenings" for those two days will be both sent out as well as posted on our website

Wishing you a Joyous and Prosperous New Year on behalf of our ONRC Board of Directors.
In Vincent and Ozanam.

Guido Kelly,
President, SSVP Ontario Regional Council.

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