



MEMBRE DE LA SOCIETE
DE SAINTE-VINCENT DE PAUL



SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

News in Brief

April 2017 | Issue 15

Welcome to our latest e-news, which is filled with stories from around the country from hard-working volunteers and staff who are helping people in a practical way every-day. If you have a story you would like us to share, please email it to us at: national@svdp.org.nz

International President General Renato Lima de Oliveira visits NZ

On the 17th of March a beautiful Powhiri and Liturgy was held to welcome International President General Renato Lima de Oliveira. This was led by Fr Sherwin Lapaan who shared the Vincentian family were like a gentle wind that got the work done and served quietly behind the scenes.

Vincentians and Vinnies Youth from all over Auckland attended the Liturgy alongside NZ National President and members of the National Board. It was such a joyous occasion.

Renato Lima and the other dignitaries were welcomed into St Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland with a special Powhiri where Whena Maria Youth Team Leader of the Vinnies Youth and Jennifer Angela-Marie Leader of the Marist Logos Project. This was followed by the opening address and prayers by Fr Sherwin.

The peak of the celebration was special address by Renato Lima. He shared of his Vincentian journey, he sang a Portuguese song about the Charism and inspired everyone.

Delphina Soti on behalf of the Vincentians and Vinnies Youth of New Zealand presented the President General with a special 'taonga' (treasure). A Maori Tokotoko (Talking Stick) - For the Rangatira (Chief) who speaks and advocates on behalf of the Poor. He who sings the Song of Life.

This was followed by a Whaikorero by Matua Peter Charles who honoured Renato and all Vincentians gathered. It was a beautiful occasion.



*Pictured at left from L to R:
Tom Cotter, Kevin Mulcahy, NZ
National President Terry Comber,
International President General
Renato Lima de Oliveira, Fr Sherwin
Lapaan, Auckland Youth Leader
Delphina Soti.*



Above: International President General Renato Lima de Oliveira, Cardinal John Dew, NZ National President Terry Comber



Above: Vinnies Youth

President Generals visit to New Zealand

Photos from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch



Auckland Leaders

Held their first AVSSC meeting for 2017. Leaders of all the Vinnies Conferences of Secondary Schools and Tertiary attended to pray and discuss their service plans for the year. These young people are passionate and ready to lead in their communities. They also are looking forward to the visit from our President General and to the celebrations for our 150th Year celebrations.



New shop for Napier

The Napier Area President, Joan Pritchard presided at the opening of Napier's new shop and centre in Carlyle Street on 3 April and thanked local Vincentians and Volunteers who were in attendance for their support and assistance in the changeover. The current shop in Dickens St, operating at this site since 1987, had been declared earthquake prone and even redeveloped would not cater for future needs. The new location will allow all activities associated with the shop operation to be on one site.



Congratulations Hutt Valley team!

In recognition of the efforts and the delivery on the upgrade to the shop & centre to such a professional level to comply with EQ requirements.



International President General Visits Santa Maria Parish Christchurch

Welcome Address – Fr John Craddock SM

Our parish of Sancta Maria is honoured today by the visit of the President General of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Signor Renato Lima de Oliveira. Renato. Muito Bem Vindos!

In 2013, your predecessor, Michael Thio, visited here and unveiled that lovely window of the grapes and wheat donated by Pauline Daly, a member of the Society of St Vincent de Paul. In a moment, I want you to position an Icon of NZ's first Venerable. I will explain why I am inviting you to do this.

The founder of the Society of St Vincent de Paul in France was Blessed Frederic Ozanam whose family came from Lyon, and Frederic's brother was a Marist priest. The family were members of the central city parish of St Nizier. Their friends, the family Aubert, were also members of the same parish. One of the Aubert family, Suzanne, followed the Marists to NZ and founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Compassion whose work echoed that of the Society. She was recently declared Venerable by the Church and we are now permitted publicly to honour her image. There is a further French connection. Another French Marist Priest, Father Chataignier, known as the Apostle of Canterbury, established the first NZ branch of the Society of St Vincent de Paul here in Christchurch 150 years ago. So today, I ask the international president of the Society of St Vincent de Paul to position this Icon of Venerable Suzanne Aubert, family friend of the Ozanams, on this wall of our parish church.

Merci beaucoup, mon frère, Renato. Vive la societe. Vive la Foi, l'Esperance et la Charite.



Long serving volunteer retires at 96

When the Holy Name Conference, Ashburton, opened its first shop in 1987 Molly Crequer volunteered to be on the staff.

It wasn't a big step for her as for some time before the shop opened she had sorted clothes in a gardener's shed behind the presbytery. The clothes were then sent to Timaru for the shop there.

Now Molly, at the age of 96, has decided to retire. For the past 30 years she has normally worked three days a week, shunning the limelight to work in the back room sorting and pricing rather than working on the counter.

Initially she biked to work, later graduating to a mobility scooter and later still relying on friends and family to bring her to the job she loved.

Shop volunteers and conference members recently honoured Molly at a lunch. She was presented with a Vincentian Cross, a perpetual Mass offering, flowers and a certificate of appreciation.



From left, Margaret van der Krogt who was shop manager from the early 1990s to 2015, retiring volunteer Molly Crequer, conference president Evans Chibanguza and current shop manager Donna Collins.

Hamilton Area Council

A Festival Mass held in late February and celebrated by Bishop Steve Lowe was very successful. Apart from an excellent response from local conferences, the Marist Club, St Johns and Sacred Heart Colleges senior pupils and Catholic Social Services were in attendance.

The highlight of the Mass was when Bishop Steve, at the start of his Homily took off his outer garments to display his Marist Rugby jersey.

His point was to emphasise how important it is for Catholic Organisations to work together for the common good, based on the ideals of Saint Vincent de Paul.

The Society in Hamilton were chosen by the Chiefs rugby team as their charity of choice for the Chiefs/Hurricanes game.

The team visited the Frankton Centre to meet with volunteers and to give them 20 tickets. The event was videoed and will be shown on the big screen on the day.

Second van on the road in Hamilton

Hamilton Area Council have started a second food van to cover areas of Hamilton we do not cover at present. The mobile food van was blessed by Deacon Tony Frogley prior to its first 5.30pm run.



FESTIVAL MEETING

South Mid Canterbury

The Festival meeting of the South and Mid-Canterbury Area Council was hosted by the St Joseph's Conference, Temuka. Members of this Conference belong to the Opihi Parish of St Mary McKillop which includes Temuka, Pleasant Point and Geraldine. They brought the gifts and read the Prayers of the Faithful at the Mass celebrated by Parish Priest Fr Jolly in the recently re-opened St Joseph's Church Temuka. (The church sustained considerable damage in the September 2010 earthquakes).

Members came to the Festival meeting from the Holy Name Conference Ashburton, St Joseph's Temuka, St Joseph's Timaru North, Sacred Heart Timaru, and St Patrick's Waimate.



Fr Francis Jolly - Parish Priest, Opihi Parish of St Mary McKillop (Temuka, Geraldine, Pleasant Point)

Richard Mahoney - Area Council President, South & Mid-Canterbury. Frances Mulvey - St Joseph's Conference, Temuka.

Colin Scarsbrook is the past President of the Temuka Conference. On completion of his term as President he took over the administration of the Temuka Combined Churches Food Bank, which he was instrumental in setting up. Local churches take month about to operate the food bank, with the local conference representing the Catholic Church.

John Foley has been a Vincentian for over 40 years. He has served as Conference President, Area Council President and as a member of the National Board. His leadership and guidance as Chair of the committee responsible for the construction of the Society's Timaru shop was invaluable.



John continues to serve his local Waimate community as a Justice of the Peace.

John is also a distinguished local historian. His latest book 'If They All Came Back', a lively account of some great characters of the Waimate area was published in October, with the first edition now sold out.

UPDATE

Taranaki Area Council

The Area has 60 members spread over the the four conferences - in Hawera and Stratford and two in New Plymouth. We have good attendance 80% plus.

We have about 25 young Vinnie's - years 5 & 6 - in each of the catholic primary schools in Stratford and New Plymouth.

I hadn't heard of 'senior' Vinnie's before - I thought that was us.

We have shops in Hawera and Fitzroy, a suburb of New Plymouth. We have no paid employees. The two shops each have between 30 and 40 volunteers.

We have a garage in New Plymouth where we store donated furniture.

In the past 12 months we have given out \$50,000 in client assistance. But this is only part. Much is provided by the good will of our communities. For example in the past three weeks we have been using our op shop in Fitzroy and garage in New Plymouth which we have had fully furnished. This provides hard and soft furniture and whiteware.

We have created six homes for families escaping from family violence, and this is something that goes on throughout the year. It is a privilege to be able to help them and for them to know that we are there to help them. It is lovely to receive a hug as thanks.

We also provide free community meals:

- Soup kitchens in Hawera
- Stratford has monthly afternoon teas for about 100 elderly and disabled people and provide 60 plus Christmas parcels
- New Plymouth provides weekly dinners to about 50 people in need.



Whilst we have problems in recruiting younger and middle aged people to become Members we have no problem in encouraging them to join us as volunteers.

Stratford and St Joseph's New Plymouth each have about 40 volunteers assisting with Community Meals.

Last year we made 2,500 visits.

Society Bank Accounts

In 2011 the Society was formally incorporated under the name of the 'Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand'. From that date the Society was legally one body with its constituent Area Councils and Conferences forming its branches. This conferred legal protection for you its members when you act in the name of the Society.

However as most of the Society's bank accounts predated this incorporation the banks do not recognise the change which has affected the Society's legal status. This needs to change in that your signatories need to be formally recognised by the bank as stewards of the funds and the money belongs to the incorporated Society. This will also remove the current situation where your signatories are personally liable for the conduct of the Society's accounts!

To achieve this the bank authorities governing the conduct of the accounts need to be replaced; firstly the legal name must appear in the title (for example the name of Holy Cross Henderson Conference would need to be like: 'Society of

St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand - Holy Cross Henderson Conference'. Secondly, we must establish your stewardship of the accounts by executing the new signing authority. No change to who may sign is required.

We have asked your local bank branch to invite you to change the authority and they will advise you what documentation has to be signed and sighted to effect the change.

If your bank or National Office does not contact you before the end of April could you please contact Gavin Kennedy on 021 472 290 for help.

Gavin Kennedy - National Treasurer



The Vincentian Pledge

As far as we are able:

We PROMISE to do all we can to make Christ's Law of Love prevalent among all men and women, practicing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

We PROMISE to sanctify ourselves through prayer attendance at mass and frequent reception of the Sacraments in order to fulfill better our duties as Vincentians.

We PROMISE to visit the Poor and the Sick in their homes, and institutions in order to provide their needs both spiritually and materially.

We PROMISE to impart knowledge of our Faith to our friends in need and those we come into contact by sharing our Faith and the Good News with them by our actions.

We PROMISE to participate in the annual retreat and the 2 feast days of the Society so that our zeal for souls may be rekindled.

We PROMISE to help advance the works of mercy by our offering in the secret bag collection within our means.

We PROMISE to increase the influence of the Society by convincing qualified people, especially young men and women to join the Society and to guide them with our experience.

We PROMISE to pray for each other, so that we may be strengthened in our vocation as Vincentians.

Bringing Stories to Life

Bringing stories to life for both adult and youth members of the Nelson Blind Foundation has been the task of three Nelson St. Vincent de Paul Area Council Vinnies youth groups for the past four years.

The work for the Nelson Blind Foundation first began in 2013 when the Vinnies group at St. Joseph's school in Nelson made up of Year 7 and 8 students recorded on to CD a number of "Chicken Soup for the Soul" stories read by them personally. The CD which was designed to be played on the Daisy Playback Device used for talking books by members of the Blind Foundation was enjoyed by a number of Blind Foundation members who were distributed a copy in our local community.

This work soon moved on to also encompass the creation of tactile books when in 2014 as part of a study into disabilities.

The St. Paul's Vinnies became inspired by the tactile books members of the Blind Foundation can borrow from the National Blind Foundation Library.

The St. Paul's Vinnies soon set about creating a tactile book of their own for use by Nelson Blind Foundation members. The story they chose to recreate was 'Whirly the Helicopter' by Ian Pillinger.

The Royal New Zealand Blind Foundation national office were happy to put together the braille for this book to assist us and the Vinnies had great fun assembling the accompanying pictures for this story including blades that were able to be spun around on the helicopters and a mechanism to slide the helicopter up and down.

Paul Richardson, Rehabilitation Instructor for the Blind Foundation in Nelson very kindly commented that the book the St. Paul's Vinnies had created was one of the best he had seen in his twenty years of working for the Blind Foundation here in New Zealand and overseas.

Spurred on by this success the opportunity of creating a tactile book for the Nelson Blind Foundation was offered to the St. Peter Chanel Vinnies group in Motueka in 2015.

After researching a number of story options the St. Peter Chanel Vinnies decided they would create their tactile book based around the book, 'Where Are My Socks?' by Miriam MacDonald. A variety of materials were once again used for this book including drawers cut from lino that were able to be opened in order to feel the different textures inside each drawer. As with the last book, the National Blind Foundation office was once again happy to assist us by providing braille to accompany the text.

By 2016 both 'Whirly the Helicopter' and 'Where Are My Socks?' had been loaned to a number of Blind Foundation members in the local area when the opportunity for these tactile books to feature in an art exhibition arose. The art exhibition which ran alongside the Nelson Arts Festival in October of last year at the Refinery ArtSpace was a special exhibition event directed at visually impaired members of the community as well as fully-sighted members wishing to gain an empathetic insight into this disability.

For one member of the Nelson Blind Foundation, the usefulness of these tactile books was captured when a child visited who had a high level of special needs including being both blind and deaf.



The child although at first perturbed at being in this new environment calmly settled when given the tactile books to explore.

Through given the opportunity to understand the book with the help of the loving attention of his caregiver who let the child feel pictures in the book such as the face and then relate that to the parts of his own face a world of learning was opened up.

The member of the Blind Foundation who saw this unfold was able to relay this story to the St. Joseph Vinnies when at the end of 2016 they too were also able to present the Nelson Blind Foundation with a tactile book they had created - a jungle counting book exploring the numbers one to ten through a variety of jungle animals.

What started out as a simple Vinnies project in 2013 has opened up a world of opportunities and learning for the Nelson St. Vincent de Paul Vinnies.

The tactile books which are not only ideal for children with impaired sight but also parents who are blind and wish to have books they can read to their children has helped to make a positive difference in our local community. Who knows now that we have the ball rolling, we hope this may open doors for more tactile books to be created in our local area so that the Nelson Blind Foundation members have a library of tactile books they can tap into locally.





Paul Mervyn Peter Norris

22 April 1956 - 10 March 2017

Paul passed away suddenly and unexpectedly leaving the members manning the shop as well as his colleagues at the St Vincent de Paul Centre totally in shock.

Paul, after a short illness some 9 or 10 years ago while recuperating, assisted his father in the Centres truck before eventually taking over the driving duties full time.

Paul, while never a member was a true Vincentian. Every day he would help his mother open the shop and get it ready before heading for the Centre. Help was not confined to what his daily chores were. He would help with the transit of items being moved from Christchurch to the various Pacific Islands ensuring that this operation ran smoothly.

Forever a smile or a few kind words he always did his best to help anyone who needed help, often going out of his way to make sure the person was helped even to the point of helping with money when he himself was not cash rich.

Paul will be sorely missed, not just by his family but by his colleagues and the many people he daily came in to contact with, this was confirmed by the large gathering at the funeral service and the many calls received by the family from those unable to attend.

May Paul Rest in Peace and reap the rewards for all your good work.



Mary Frank

Mary Frank, a very loyal Vincentian of St Joseph's Conference, Hawera who passed away 24 December 2016.

For 26 years Mary was a loved and valued member of our Conference. She was still actively working until October.

Seven years ago she had major surgery from which she seemed to make a good recovery. Regretfully, that same condition emerged again and progressed quite rapidly. Mary died peacefully on Christmas Eve morning.

Mary made a full contribution to the work of the Society. In addition, she was one of the "Friday Girls" working in the shop. She was fun to be with, a great friend and companion, a sympathetic ear, cheerful in dealing with our clients and meticulous in maintaining standards of presentation in the shop. She will be greatly missed.

When her sons were preparing for Mary's funeral, they found a hand written note for the 'Friday Girls' which reads -

"The Friday Girls - loved every moment of my time with you. Keep up the good work - especially for those less fortunate than you - do not stand in judgement. Loved working with you all."

Mary, was predeceased by her husband, Edwin (Eddie) in 2015 and is survived by her three very fine sons Kevin, Bernard and Leo and their families.

Thank you for the example and love you generously shared with us all.

May you be at peace, Mary.

Patrick (Pat) Hewson

Pat passed away peacefully at the Home of Compassion, Heretaunga, on the 19th October aged 89. Those who knew him could not speak more highly of this humble man who gave so generously of his time in the care of the poor. A true Vincentian for 25 years finally at rest.



Laying Robert to rest



Robert was a window cleaner in Petone, a few bob here and there helped him to get through. Every day he would arrive with a box to sit on and a bucket with cloths, and wonder whose windows he would get to clean today. He lived on his own and as age crept up it was harder for him to manage, so food parcels we helped with.

Christmas 2 years ago, delivering our parcels, no Robert to be found, we asked the neighbour and they said he had recently died. He had a pauper funeral as he had no money, and a brother with no money and no interest in what happens to Robert.

We found his brother and asked about Robert, he was cremated and his remains would stay at the funeral home. His brother told us their parents were buried at Taita, so at our next meeting we decided to try and put Robert to rest with them. We went to the cemetery and found where the parents were buried, and then to the Funeral Director to see what we could do to put Roberts ashes with his parents. We had to check with the brother and he wanted no part in it, so we agreed to pay and bury Robert.

At the funeral home, the lovely people agreed to help organise it for us. They talked to the Sexton at the Taita Cemetery and he prepared a place in Roberts parents grave to lay ashes after we set a date.

The funeral home put Robert in a beautiful white casket, which we picked up from them after Sr Kate had organised a service with prayers and hymns.

All our group came with flowers to the cemetery and there we had a lovely service and laid Robert to rest in a very loving and payerful way. The funeral home wouldn't let us pay, so it was many thanks for their kindness.

Sacred Heart Conference - Petone

This year we are celebrating our
150th Anniversary as a Society
in New Zealand and we need
your help!

If you have any old photos, newspaper clippings
or any archival material that we could use in our
celebrations then please contact:

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News in Brief

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We'd Love to Read your Stories:

If you have any news items that you would like us to put
in our next 'News in Brief' e-newsletter, please send us a
short article and a photo (if you have one) to Anne-Marie
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