

News in Brief

May 2018 | Issue 18

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@sudp.org.nz



MEMBRE DE LA SOCIETE
DE SAINT-VINCENT DE PAUL



St Patricks Palmerston North Assists Asylum Seekers



Rose and Joseph were originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo where French is the official language. Their separate journeys started years earlier after both witnessed terrible violence and abuse by government and armed forces.

Both moved to South Africa where they met and married. Joseph was a victim in an armed robbery when the supermarket he was working for was held up. Plans were made to emigrate to New Zealand which was viewed as a safe haven. In May 2015 they arrived as asylum seekers and were granted temporary NZ residence and Congolese in NZ brought them to Palmerston North.

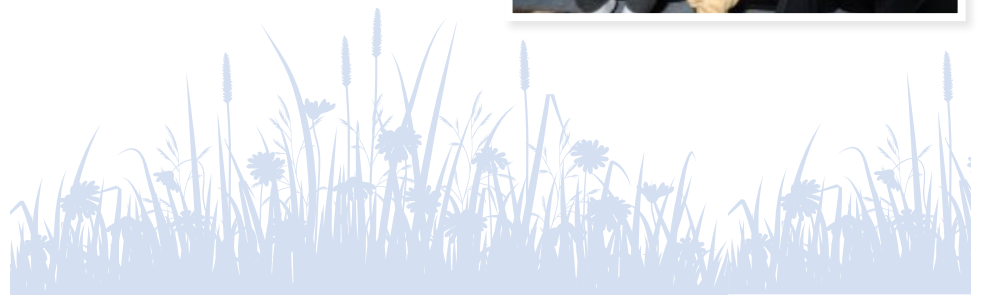
When Rose visited the Society's shop in May 2015 assistance started by supplying basics for living in a converted cold garage and WINZ helped with finance. Society's volunteers often provided transport to their work.

By mid 2016 new employment presented and they moved into an elevated warm house. This was achieved with help from Society. The new positions were casual on call with variable days and hours but life became more bearable. At this time as well as working they were visiting an Auckland law firm preparing applications for NZ Residency. A Society member drove them to Auckland in October 2016 for their residency applications which was presented over 2 days to the New Zealand Immigration and Protection Tribunal, sadly these applications

were declined but two appeals were allowed, one to be based on humanitarian grounds and had to be lodged in very short time.

Preparation for the humanitarian appeal began in earnest. The appeal evidence was submitted by end of November 2016 and at the end of January 2017 Rose and Joseph received great news, the appeals were successful with both granted New Zealand residency.

In January 2017 a Society member gave driving lessons, Rose passed the learners stage and is ready to be tested for her restricted licence, Joseph made rapid progress and already has qualified for a full car licence. Their lives are now settled and both have been 2 years working the same casual on-call employment, they would love to be offered permanent positions. Their English has greatly improved. Society members from the Palmerston North St Patricks Conference have become good friends with Rose and Joseph and continue to give them support.



Tonga & Samoa

Twinning Report April 2018

With Cyclone Gita passing through Tonga and Samoa in February we had to try and meet the immediate needs of both areas as requested through their National Councils.

Samoa got off relatively lightly with most of the damage being flooding and some roofs ripped off mostly at the western end of the main island, Upolu. There was also considerable damage to crops, breadfruit and bananas. It will be 6 months before crops will be reproducing. Damage to a drinking water supply on the island of Savaii also occurred.

Tonga as we have seen suffered considerable long term damage to property and crops on the main island of Tongatapu and neighbouring Eua.

Our aid to date has been both financial and material. In total we have to date forwarded NZ\$10,000 to Tonga and NZ\$3000 to Samoa. Through the generosity of our Area Councils and Conferences in our recent appeal \$75,618.00 was donated. We thank you all for contribution. In discussion with both the National Councils we will prioritise projects and forward funding for these projects. We will advise as to where this will be directed. All aid is directed through the National Councils who have the responsibility to Project manage. We have received regular reports from both countries.

We have shipped to Tonga on 3 occasions this year clothing and food and household goods and to Samoa a recent shipment of clothing and food. Our thanks go to Del Soti and her team in Auckland for co-ordinating this. A pallet of goods have been sent to Samoa in recent days.

One of the requests from Tonga was vegetable seeds and we have ready to ship a large donation from Yates NZ. We are also working with NZ schools who are replacing desks and chairs and we will hopefully send to Tonga.

I have had contact with the NZ Embassies in both countries to try and establish as to what assistance we can get.

The recovery in Tonga is the most challenging and we will continue to work closely with the National Council.

We also need to acknowledge the funding, AUD\$10,000, that we received from the National Council of Australia to assist with needs in Tonga. This will be directed to educational requirements as schools and their equipment was destroyed.

Our own Young Vinnies need to be congratulated on their "Gold Coin" and canned food project contribution.

Maurice Yeung, International Vice President Special Projects, Frank Brassil ITVP Oceania and Tony Muir International Twinning Co-ordinator have also been kept informed.



The Memorare

“Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided ...”

The opening words of the centuries-old Memorare profess a powerful belief and truth about our Blessed Mother’s aid — of which devotees, like St. Teresa of Calcutta, can attest.

“The Memorare is a prayer that effectively expressed Mother Teresa’s trust in the power of Mary’s intercession as the mediatrix of all graces,” explained Father Brian Kolodiejchuk of the Missionaries of Charity, who was postulator for Mother Teresa’s sainthood cause. “It flowed from the love and confidence she had in Mary and was a simple way to present her petitions to her.”

Mother Teresa saw it as an effective prayer because of her own experiences. “On numerous occasions she prayed the Memorare for various needs,” he said, “and the speedy response she received inspired her with ever greater confidence to have recourse to Mary with the words of the Memorare.”

She often resorted to what’s called her “Flying Novena.” Father Kolodiejchuk explained, “It consisted of nine Memorares, which she would pray as the need arose or a difficulty presented itself. She definitely inspired the same devotion in her sisters, but also in others.”

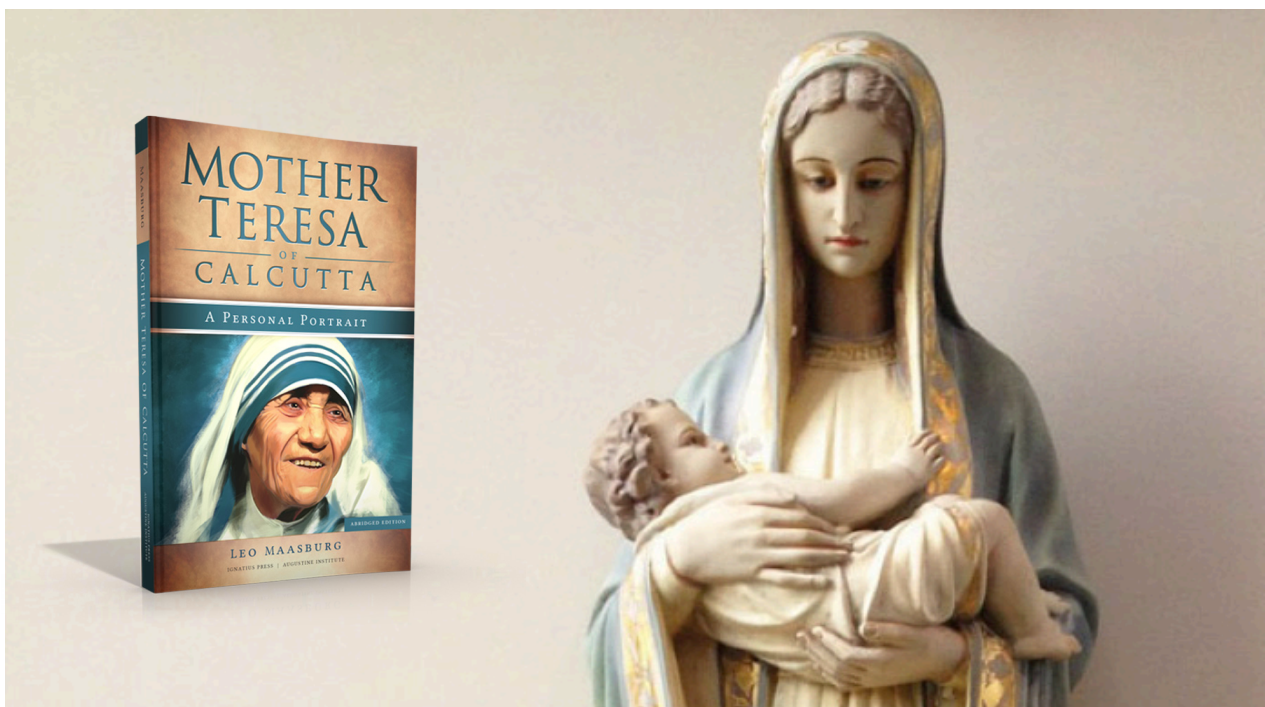
He quoted Mother Teresa herself describing one of scores of Memorare novenas: “In Rome during the Holy Year

(1984), the Holy Father was going to celebrate Mass in the open, and crowds of people were gathered. It was pouring rain, so I told the sisters, ‘Let us say a flying novena of nine Memorares to Our Lady in thanksgiving for beautiful weather.’ As we said two Memorares, it started to pour more rain. We said the third ... sixth ... seventh ... and at the eighth one, all the umbrellas were closing, and when we finished the ninth one, we found all the umbrellas were closed ...” The weather had turned beautiful.

Mother Teresa’s friend and spiritual adviser, Msgr. Leo Maasburg, described her confidence in the Memorare in his book *Mother Teresa of Calcutta: A Personal Portrait*. He called her “Flying Novena” her “spiritual rapid-fire weapon”: “She took the collaboration of heaven so much for granted that she always added a 10th Memorare immediately, in thanksgiving for the favor received.”

“This is the most beautiful prayer,” Mother Teresa would say, as quoted by Father Kolodiejchuk. “When we wanted to get a motherhouse, I promised Our Lady 85,000 Memorares. We were just very few sisters, and how to say so many Memorares? So we gathered all our poor children and all the people and taught them to say the Memorare — and soon we got this house.”

Joseph Proneche



Dunedin

The Dunedin Area has been busy with cook-ups recently. This year they have already had a combined conference cook-up, two university conference cook-ups and three primary school Young Vinnies soup cook-ups.

Keeping the freezers stocked with nutritious, wholesome food for our busy foodbank can be a challenge, and we're grateful for the support from our conferences and youth.

Also, St Joseph's Cathedral Conference are sponsoring hair cut vouchers for people in need (pic attached) and these have been gratefully received by people who can't easily afford to go to a hairdresser.



Christchurch Firewood Project

It started with a notice in the Parish Bulletin, and finished with a group of comrades and a large pile of firewood.

Christchurch suffered a huge windstorm and Allwood Trees Nursery suffered the loss of a windbreak. The logs were stockpiled and offered "for Charity" in the bulletin notice. Of course SVdP locally were in boots and all without knowing what would be involved.

The donor has been extremely generous, not only the wood, but also areas to cut, split and store have been provided as well as use of trucks and tractors with trailers around the nursery. More recently more trees in another windbreak felled by a local Arborist company and all donated.

Parish Mass time requests for assistance, as well as the local Conference, provided the manpower, and a core group cut, split and stacked the way for winter warmth for many Christchurch and district families in the last few years.



Greymouth Conference

The Conference in collaboration with two Mercy Sisters, Sr Theresa Scott and Sr Anne McLaughlin assist those who live in a low socio-economic suburbs of Greymouth in a meaningful way:

- For over 20 years Cobden Mercy Outreach has been a home for the homeless on the West Coast, hosting families from Karamea to Haast for periods from a few days to a number of months. Those seeking accommodation are not homeless by choice, they are often casualties of domestic violence or of insufficient government services and benefits. Families are assisted to transition into more secure accommodation.
- Food, clothing and other basics are provided to many people who are struggling.
- Power disconnection is prevented
- Underprivileged families are given the opportunity to celebrate birthdays and achievements
- New sports shoes were provided for a teenager to enable her to participate in netball
- Petrol vouchers are available for parents to encourage them to spend time with their children
- Assistance with Doctors visits/prescriptions
- Wood is supplied for fires
- Assistance with dental expenses.

Behind each statistic are real people often with a heartbreaking story. They learn so much from these people as they take steps to meet the challenges life throws at them.



Anne McLaughlin



Theresa Scott

What Ever it Takes Service W.I.T.S. - Napier

Napier Area Council, St Patrick's and St Mary's Conferences of St Vincent de Paul Napier help the marginalized people in Napier, through their interaction with W.I.T.S. which is What Ever It Takes Service in conjunction with the Napier City Council and Department of Social Welfare.

People who are helped are the homeless, those who have mental health and addiction issues.

W.I.T.S. runs an Outreach centre on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday where about 20 people gather for breakfast, get help with their issues and get together to talk and discuss things with others in similar situations. Both Conferences have given food and other equipment e.g. a washing machine for the homeless to wash their clothes.

Vinnies has played a great role in the short while we have been associated with W.I.T.S. by giving clothes to those who need them free of charge. Also to those people that have been rehoused by W.I.T.S. bedlinen, curtains etc. at no charge.

W.I.T.S. also looks at getting people into jobs and homes.

It has become a pleasurable experience going to the Outreach Centre and getting a little understanding of what these people may be going through



Spiritual Reflection

Since Barrie's spiritual reflection at our last conference, when he drew out attention to the Papal initiation of the first World day of the Poor, plus a recent sermon regarding using the talents we have been given, I have been pondering if as a Vincentian I am really following the principals of the wonderful founders of the Society.

I thank God that due to modern science, medicine and a dedicated team of eye specialists, I am now able to read again without difficulty, and have been prayerfully studying the book about Blessed Fredric Azanam. Perhaps because I was raised a Methodist in a rural area of New Zealand and did not become a Catholic until I was middle aged, I knew little of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, until I stopped working five years ago; and until we joined this Conference, I had no idea of it's origins or wonderful work.

As I slowly read about the founders (and then went back and read the page again) I was struggling with the position of the Vincentian helping hand, as it sits within the structure of the present society in which we live, where political decisions can create more and more problems for those without power. The founders of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, lived in a time of revolution, and I feel that there is another revolution going on now, throughout most democracies, including New Zealand, where our Christian values are being seriously challenged, as they were in France at the time the Society began.

As we deliver our parcels we hear of the frustrations of those we visit, who often when they are trying to get ahead, find bureaucratic blocks, and a lack of interest in what they would like to do to help themselves. They have a grateful attitude toward the Society and the help they are being given. Their cheerfulness despite their problems is refreshing, and their love and hope for their families, reminds us of how rewarding it is for us to help them. I therefore have no problems with the helping hand with the cup, of a Vincentian but I am concerned about the situations in which they find themselves, where often they do not receive the type of help they need.

When I first began social work in the 1970's, a listening ear was essential, but seems to be missing nowadays in certain Government Departments. Jesus said the poor will always be with us. However we were also urged by Jesus to go out, use our talents that God gave us and help them with his love. As Jesus said, "Whatever you do to these little ones, you do to me" but my worry was, "am I doing enough and is it the right way?"

The answer was of course in prayer and being led by the spirit to seek the answers. I take great comfort from the fact that the Society is greater than ever, and the last page of the booklet on Blessed Brother Ozanam, addresses this feeling and says to remember the words of Pope John-Paul the second which are...

"Jesus will accept you and bless you and make use of your lives as will be beyond your greatest expectations."

The booklet has been of great help to me and reminded me that it is through prayer that we are shown the way, and I do not need to have all the answers, especially when it comes to what I see as destructive political decisions. The Mediation on page 14 in the book is "Jesus, help us to always follow the Truth, by letting us continue to see it, not as the world sometimes sees it, but as you alone have revealed it." I am sure that the spirit will guide me and fellow Vincentians to where God sees the greatest need.



Holy Name Conference Ashburton

The Ashburton Conference is responsible for helping the needy across a huge area of about 6000 square kilometres. Much of the work is in Ashburton itself and the conference has a membership of about 28 to do the work there. Some years ago, to lessen the travelling, 'satellite conferences' of three or four members were established in the outlying towns of Methven and Rakaia.

Through people leaving the area and getting older the time has come to strengthen these two groups. An information evening is soon to be held at Rakaia in an effort to re-establish the group there, and earlier in the year the conference held one of its fortnightly meetings in Methven.

We have found the demand from the rural districts and townships is growing and find these small groups an ideal way to keep the 'in the home' personal contact going without too much travelling.





Morris O'Callaghan

8 September 1926 – 25 November 2017

As written by Ron Peters on behalf of the Society of St Vincent de Paul in Picton.



Morris O'Callaghan – a good man. No, on reflection he was better than good.

A con man? Well in my case I think he was. I had only been back in Picton a few days after retirement in 1989, when this fella came up to me after Church and introduced himself as Morris O'Callaghan and conned me into attending a St Vincent de Paul meeting the following week, and I have been a member ever since. And we became instant mates.

Morris is by far the longest serving member of the Society of St Vincent de Paul in Picton. He was always on call to help out, advise, making sure people in need were catered for with transport, food, accommodation – even taking people into his own home overnight, then on to the ferry the next day.

There were many, many other deeds that Morris carried out for the Picton SVdP. Deeds that he loved doing as your representative, for you the people of Picton, who without your generosity and support of our SVdP shop we could not operate.

We all loved Morris and I know he loved all of us.



P O E M

eating in poverty

by Jim Consedine

face taunt, slither thin
pale in the fading light
she sits across the table
devouring a pie, warm only now
washed down with yet another coffee
four o'clock, the first meal of the day

stained newsprint covers the table
the fridge stands near empty
stale milk, a few cracked plates
leftovers, half-open cans
their contents now suspect
fit only for the trash

as winter erodes her benefit
she worries incessantly
phone, rent, power, school bills
yet remains ever hopeful
a job, a fresh start
things will get better

the face of urban poverty
stark, not pretty

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 McCarten, email: national@svdp.org.nz



Rest in Peace

Ian Walker

Passed away on Friday 4th May, 2018

Ian was a faithful, hardworking Vincentian from the Hornby Conference. He also was a member of the Area Board when Keith Norton was President. Ian's Daughter, Glenda Barnes is the immediate past President of the Hornby Conference.

