



MEMBRE DE LA SOCIETE
DE SAINTE-VINCENT DE PAUL



SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

News in Brief

March 2016 | Issue 11

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 an event coming up or a story you would like us to share, please email it to us at: national@svdp.org.nz

From Bishop Owen's Desk - Jubilee Year of Mercy



We are well into this spiritual year - the Jubilee of Mercy.

We are well into the season of Lent - the Church calling us to a

renewed commitment to Faith - with prayer, self-denial and almsgiving.

Pope Francis tell us *"the Father is rich in Mercy"* and *"Jesus is the Face of the Fathers Mercy"*.

How can we be more effective signs of the Mercy of God?

How can we be more effective signs of God's action in our lives?

And, obviously, the Pope turns to the life of the Son of God in our world - everything that Jesus said and did was channelled in the direction of serving human kind. So, the Pope reminds us again of Jesus, healing the sick, consoling the sad and bereaved, feeding the hungry, forgiving the sinners,

seeking out the lonely and so on, and so on.

All this, Francis reminds us, is MERCY.

Vincentians will easily relate to the Popes words. It all describes so well the witness of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, of Blessed Frederic Ozanam. It describes so clearly what is found in their saintly example, what is set out in the Rule of the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

We are invited to enter our Church, Cathedral, through the Holy Door there to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation - be touched, filled with the Mercy of God and then to come out through the same door ever more committed to being witnesses of God's Mercy in our Apostolate as Vincentians to human kind.

"Blessed are the Merciful for they shall receive Mercy"

Bishop Owen Dolan

Well those two months went by in a flash!



The Jubilee Year of Mercy encourages us as Christians to perform the Corporal Works of Mercy. As Vincentians we carry out those works in our

daily vocation. Let us be even more joyful and purposeful in our performance of those works for those we serve.

Please keep in your prayers, firstly, those now homeless and suffering in Fiji in the aftermath of Hurricane Winston and secondly, for your fellow Vincentians in

Areas where election for President is underway or about to commence.

Thanks to each of you for your generosity of time and talents in your respective role in our beloved Society.

God bless

Terry Comber - National President SVdP

SOCIETY'S APPEAL LAUNCHED FOR FIJI

Appeal Now Open Until 31 May, 2016

The Society has launched an appeal for Fiji in the aftermath of Cyclone Winstone.

The major effort will be focused on the massive rehabilitation required in resettling the lives and homes of people. Some immediate considerations are clean water, medication, shelter, food and access to those who live in remote areas that are still cut-off.

BNZ - Society of St Vincent de Paul National Council
Bank Account Number: 02-0528-0208598-27
Reference: FIJI



THE PEOPLE
OF FIJI NEED
OUR HELP!

Christchurch Vinnies Immediately Offer Help to Fiji



Christchurch Vinnies were able to provide four pallets of tarpaulins to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Defence department. The tarpaulins, were loaded onto HMNZ Canterbury which has now arrived in Fiji filled with emergency supplies for the victims of cyclone Winston. MFAT and the Defence department were grateful to receive assistance from the Society.

Earthquake Brings Two Communities Closer Together

St Vincent de Paul St Joseph's Conference, Papanui recently helped out at the opening of the new Methodist Church in Papanui, Christchurch.

Like St Josephs Catholic Church, the Papanui Methodist Church was damaged, condemned and demolished after the Christchurch earthquakes five years ago.

While St Joseph's Parish moved Sunday Masses to St Gregory's Church Bishopdale, the Methodists moved their Sunday services into the undamaged St Joseph's Parish Centre next to the damaged St Joseph's Church until their new Church was completed in December, 2015.

Papanui Conference President, Michael Collins, said that as the conference meetings on Sunday mornings had coincided with the end of the Methodist Service, conference members had got to know their local Methodist neighbours and felt it would be a gesture of charity to offer the conference services in supporting the opening of their new church.

As a result, the Papanui Conference attended to the kitchen duties at the official opening of the new Methodist Church on Saturday 30th of January so that all the parishioners could attend the opening service and function.

What an opening it turned out to be, with the presence of the NZ Methodist moderator, local Christchurch Methodists, and Methodists from the Samoan Methodist Community of South Auckland making for a huge crowd attending the blessing of the new church.

Following the blessing, all attendees were catered for with a large pot luck dinner, desert, tea, coffee and entertainment.

A small step in the rebuilding of our community but conference members all agreed that it was an excellent way to help our neighbours.



St Joseph's Conference members and supporters. Left to right: Andre, Terry, Mike Collins (President), Sol, Maureen, and Jo.

Vinnies - St Thomas's School, Winton

In 2004 a group of young people from St Thomas's school, Winton in Southland volunteered to form the first Young Vinnies Group in the school's long history. Bishop Boyle, Hon. Bill English and others received their primary education from the Sisters of Mercy and teachers at St Thomas's, who continued the tradition of Mercy imbued with a wonderful education.

Since then the Young Vinnies group has gone from strength to strength, and at their last meeting for the year they elected their leaders.

The teams, led by four students, Ella Crowe, Caleb Dudin, Kirstey Manalo and Thomas Henderson, representing the four houses in the school, give up a lunch time each term for a group meeting and then in their own time organize a Social Justice activity for their house. They were proud of last term's collection of the most boxes of non-perishable food presented to the Southland Food Bank from a Southland school! As the Young Vinnies said, "we only have seventy-two students and having such a successful activity is even more worthy of praise".

As the school includes some Filipino families, Caleb proposed to support rehabilitation in the Philippines after the recent cyclone. The group decided to raise money by having a gold coin trail.

Members of the Holy Name Conference, Ashburton



What better way to mark the end of a busy 2015 year by those present at the final meeting for the year having a group photo taken after their meeting.

Standing, from left, Kevin O'Brien (furniture & firewood convenor), Kylie Nicol (youth co-ordinator), Michael Hanrahan, Marie O'Neill, Arnold Rushton (treasurer), Helen Hanrahan, Trevor Wall, Gerald Dolan, Bev Daly, Paul Thomas, Trevor Clark, Michael Hanham, Elaine Rushton, Diane Hanham, Annette Fletcher, Brian Lawn, Lindsey McDonnell.

Seated: Father Geoff Gray (spiritual advisor), Maureen Thomas (secretary), Evans Chibanguza (president), Donna Collins (shop manager), Pat Moylan, Gillian McCloy-Lon

New Northland Area Council

Formally the Te Tai Tokerau Area Council, the new Northland Area Council voted on a name change to capture the importance of its work not only Whangarei but the Far North as well.

Members of the conferences make a personal commitment to meet together regularly. Despite the diversity of tasks and the local circumstances, Conferences are always busy working to meet various needs within the region.

Transporting the Sick

Patients from Kaikohe and Kaitaia are currently flown by helicopter to Whangarei hospital, especially children with high fevers and strep throats. The Society assists these children with the fare to return home as this is not currently funded by the DHB.

Lunches for low decile schools

Every Monday of the school term volunteers make lunches for lower decile schools, five on a weekly basis and three schools on an irregular basis. The lunches are left at the various school offices. Teachers are aware of those that require lunch and these are supplied without causing any embarrassment to the pupil.

Food Parcels

An average of 35 Food Parcels per month are made up from donated and purchased food. Approximately \$600 of food per month is donated from the local Whangarei Parish. All food parcels are delivered personally to enable members to provide additional help if required. A number assist with budget advice and work with families on a regular basis.

Vinnies

At Pompallier Catholic College there is a small but keen group of students headed up by Amelia Greenway who meet regularly to contribute to the work of the Society. They have been involved in the Easter Bunny Run, Christmas toy collection, service day projects, collecting clothes for children in need in the city. They also make biscuits etc. for 'Lunches in Schools'.

Christmas Parcels

Each year the Society provides approximately 100 families with gifts and food to help them celebrate Christmas. Most of the gifts are generously given by parishioners. The Society is very grateful for the support they receive from their Parish family, especially the purchasing of items from the stall that is run every third Sunday. All profits from the stall go directly back into the Society's work.



Christmas Wrap-up

Prior to Christmas, many conferences were involved with special projects to help struggling families and individuals have a special Christmas.



Mick Alder of Nelson preparing Christmas food parcels.

South Auckland Conference, Christmas Parcels



Above from left to right: Roseanne Willis, Papakura President, Mary Smith, Noeline Westley, President Papakura Rotary donating \$1050.00 towards our Christmas Hampers.

Our Lady of Fatima, Young Vinnies Christchurch

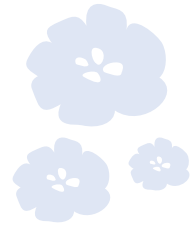
The Young Vinnies from Our Lady of Fatima were very busy before Christmas. They purchased presents for those who received Communion for the sick through the parish, and also six children they were asked to support.



The Young Vinnies also did a big shop of over \$1,000, which was donated to the parish. Some of the helpers wrapped the Christmas gifts.



Mattakkuliya Vincentians Celebrate 75th Jubilee, Sri Lanka



On Saturday the 24th October, 2015, a thanks-giving service was held to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, which was established at Mattakkuliya Parish by the late Rev Fr Boniface Peiris OMI in 1940. The celebrations commenced with Mass concelebrated by the chief celebrant Rev Fr Leo Perera, SVP National Council Spiritual Director, accompanied by Rev Fr Jude Raj Fernando, former Spiritual Director of the Archdiocesan, Central Council and Rev Fr Christopher Madurawela, Parish Priest of St Mary's Matakuliya and Spiritual Director of the Colombo North Deanery.

Rev Fr Jude Raj delivered an inspiring homily appreciating the charitable activities towards lifting living standards of the underprivileged in the society, while highlighting the necessity to lead the marginalized to enrich their spiritual life as well. The oath of Allegiance to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was taken by all Vincentians of St Mary's Conference, after which they all received the blessings from Rev Fr Jude Raj.

Immediately after Mass, eighty elders and widows were given a dole of Rs 500/- each and a packet of milk rice. Invited donors, benefactors and the guests including Ms Leoni Fernando, Ms Visaka Welivita and Mr P L Jayathilleke, Presidents of the National Council, Archdiocesan Central Council and the Colombo North Deanery, then shared breakfast together at the St. Mary's school auditorium.

The ceremonial session began with Ms Nesta Gunasekera, President of St. Mary's Conference Mattakkuliya in the chair and Rev Fr Leo, Rev Fr Madurawela and council Presidents at the head table. After introductions and a welcome speech were made, traditional oil lamps were lit by three dancers who performed the Pooja dance with the lit candles. A documentary was then screened highlighting all the activities of the conference.

A Jubilee souvenir, describing the lives of St Vincent de Paul, Blessed Frederick Ozanam and the Founder Parish Priest Rev Fr Boniface Peiris, in addition to brief descriptions of charitable activities, was presented to everyone. After this, all Vincentians who were in the hall were presented with a badge containing the 75th Jubilee Logo.

The ceremonial session ended with a vote of thanks given by the Conference Secretary, Ms Krishanthi Fernando in English and a closing prayer in Sinhala by Mrs Shirani Perera.

Many thanks to Nesta Gunasekera, President, St. Mary's Conference, Mattakkuliya S.V.P who supplied this article.



The priests concelebrating Holy Mass (Left to right: Rev Fr Madurawela, Rev Fr Leo Perera, Rev Fr Jude Raj Fernando).



Candles held by the dancers in place of the traditional oil lamp.



Bob Giddy (3.7.1936 – 20.10.2015)

Bob, a foundation member of the St Joseph's conference in Picton, passed away in October, 2015.

His work, as a Vincentian, would have pleased Blessed Frederic Ozanam immensely. For those in need, Bob was a welcoming person with a ready smile and a warm gift of compassion. He was a friend to all.

Bob was also a practical man and did a huge amount of work in maintaining and upgrading the conference's holiday house. He was in charge of collecting gifted furniture and bedding. When requirements in Picton were satisfied, he would take excess items to the conference in Blenheim.

Bob was a regular attendee of conference committee meetings, held twice a month, and over the years filled most official positions.

He will be remembered as a kind, caring and capable man always looking to help anyone in need.

Rest in Peace

Mary Lampen Smith, long serving member and supporter of the Society of St Vincent de Paul Palmerston North

Kathy Wood, St Thomas More Conference, Mt Maunganui

Arthur Mann, Past Area Council President and long serving conference member

Arthur Barakat, Foundation member of St Vincent de Paul, Morrinsville

Ronald George King, Our Lady of Kapiti Conference

John William Prichard, Our Lady of Kapiti Conference

Mrs Patricia (Pat) Fahey, Long serving member of Otaki Conference for 30 years

Brian Fennessey (31.01.1948 – 15.12.2015)

Sacred Heart, Hastings Conference



The Requiem Mass honoured the memory of a very fine husband, father, grandfather and treasured member of St Vincent de Paul. Brian had many talents and as his family mentioned through the stories of his life, his greatest was the love of his family and the Lord. The Mass reminded us of the very strong link between faith and family.

At SVdP, Brian was a tireless worker for the Society. He was the electrical repairman, a social advocate for those needing help, the organiser of good deals for the Christmas parcels from suppliers, as well as the leader at local and Hawkes Bay council level.

The loss of his talents is being felt deeply as the conference comes to terms with his death. His friendship and banter, sometimes controversial, is greatly missed by his fellow Vincentian family.

Our prayers go out to his widow Krystyna and his extended family.

Trevor Samuel Knuckey (30.03.1931 – 7.11.2015)



Trevor was a long-serving member of the St Joseph's Conference in New Plymouth and past Taranaki Area Council President and local Conference President.

He responded to those in need and provided comfort and practical help to many – a man of prayer, patience and action, generous with his time and concern. He was blessed with an inner-peace founded on an unbounded trust in God, which was expressed in all his actions, whilst at the same time he was capable of critical thinking, so necessary in an organisation which needs to apply unchanging Gospel values to contemporary challenges. He did not simply talk about what should be done but would be upfront to be part of what could be done to meet the need.

Trevor delivered food parcels for many years along with responding to calls for furniture deliveries. Priests answering the parish house doorbell to those who were stranded or otherwise distressed have said how reassuring it was to have Trevor as the first phone number to call and to know he would respond promptly to help sort out immediate needs. Trevor also had the knack of recruiting members to the Society who may well have not have thought of becoming involved, and he was always encouraging of other members in their initiatives and service. He had been delighted with the commitment of the membership and the more recent leadership of his St Joseph's New Plymouth Conference.

Only those who worked alongside Trevor over the years will know of the tireless contribution he gave to those in need – in the true spirit of Blessed Frederic Ozanam and St Vincent de Paul.

Trevor was a devoted husband, father and grandfather and friend. May he rest in peace.

News in Brief

Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand

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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