

# News in Brief

E-news February 2024 | Issue 32

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](mailto:national@svdp.org.nz)



MEMBRE DE LA SOCIETE  
DE SAINT-VINCENT DE PAUL



## Tribute to Terry Jordan

– Fr Alan Roberts & Gerry Stevens

**Terry became involved with the society of St Vincent de Paul at the request of his twin brother, Mark, who on his death bed, more or less commanded Terry to join the Society.**

Our first involvement with Terry and his family was in the 1980's in the parish of St Patrick's, Wainuiomata. In those years he and his wife Julie were raising their family, and they joined a host of couples that made up a vibrant community of faith. He was a family man and a working man and his faith was obvious. This made him a suitable candidate for the role of President.

He took on the Call ready to explore new ways, ready to update and ensure the Society was adapting to the needs of the country in which we live. He spoke of the need to ensure those involved are growing spiritually, because that ultimately is the aim of the Society". He knew that without prayer as the foundation of our work, all will be futile.

Even before he became National President, Terry's passion for the Society was evident in the long conversations about what the Society was meant to be and where it was going into today's world. He fully understood what Blessed Frederic Ozanam, and his companions were trying to achieve when they founded the Society. For him, "Faith" and "Good Works" were not two separate virtues, they went hand in hand. Good Works without faith is merely welfare, but welfare with Faith is real Christian love as demonstrated by Jesus Christ. Terry would say, "when you look the Poor in the face, you see the face of Jesus".

When he became National President, he embarked on a program of updating and revitalizing the Society. He knew that change was needed and a statement of "but we have always done it that way" was guaranteed to spur him on even more.

However, at the same time, he understood that the Vincentian spirituality was most important. In a Report to the Board he wrote, "I want to emphasize that although the commercial aspects of the strategic review may be more prominent, the order of importance is, first the spiritual review and then the commercial review." He said,

*"we must remember that the point which distinguishes us from other welfare agencies is our emphasis on Christ and our focus on growing our personal holiness through this work."*

Rest in peace, Terry. Not only do you deserve it, but you have also really earned it.



Terry Jordan



**It is now nearly two months since our President Terry passed away. He had a wonderful, old fashioned Catholic funeral. The church was packed with hundreds as we sang, prayed, laughed and cried with his family and fellow Vincentians. In his life he touched many and gave much to our Society.**

Once again, my thanks to all of you for your prayers and support for his wife, Julie, and all his family. They are eternally grateful.

My thanks also for the prayers of support and encouragement to myself in what was a very difficult time. My own family, National Office staff, Board members, all Vincentians, particularly Kapi Mana members, made the last months just so much easier.

Terry's term as National President, was due to end in October this year. The National Council has agreed that I continue as National President until that time when an election will be held.

I wish to thank them for their confidence in me and I assure you all of my best efforts for you and our Society.

Recently, I have noticed many people (not just Vincentians) saying that 2024 is going to be a difficult year. They cite funding cuts from Government, other funding sources drying up, increasing demand for food parcels and more people struggling to make ends meet including those who are employed. There is a temptation, in all this gloom, to be overwhelmed and sink in to a state of worry and despair.

Sometimes, I think that Frederic Ozanam would have been tempted in the same way when he looked at the social and religious conditions of his time. He too would have seen pain, poverty and hardship made worse by the lack of any form of "official assistance" for people in need. The fact that he and his companions did not despair was due to faith and trust in Jesus Christ. His relationship with Christ was such that he was driven to go and share his faith with personal, practical help for those in need. He could hear Jesus saying to him and his friends, "be not afraid". He knew the truth of, "God will provide" as mentioned in our Rule.

I remember a Vincentian telling me of a time when she promised to provide furniture for a homeless family who were being moved to her town. Later, when she went to check their storage shed, there was nothing suitable. She said to me, "somehow I knew we would cope". The next day she had two phone calls offering her the contents of family homes where elderly parents were been moved into fulltime care. God was providing!

So then, like Frederic and all the other Vincentians, we have no reason for gloom and despair in 2024. We can "be not afraid", confident that God and Blessed Frederic are with us as we seek to serve "those in need" showing them God's love through our practical and personal help.

*With every blessing*

**Gerry Stevens**



## Our National Treasure

**Frank Heffernan celebrated his 90th birthday with family, friends, fellow Vincentians, his parish family, and the Irish community.**

He chose to have his celebration at the Auckland Irish Society where for many decades he and his late wife Marie and their family attended many functions and events.

Frank was a Vincentian for over 40 years in a variety of roles as National Board member, Council President, Conference President and singer and entertainer at all national meeting.

Frank, a proud Cork man, thanked everyone who attended and performed for joining him in celebrating his birthday.

In lieu of presents, donations were received for a one year scholarship for a student at De La Salle College in Mangere East, Auckland.



# Farewell to a passionate supporter

**The Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand lost a long-time supporter and friend with the passing of Cardinal Thomas Williams. Cardinal Williams died on 22 December, 2023, aged 93.**

The Cardinal was Patron of Honour for the Society in New Zealand for over 30 years. When he finally relinquished the position in 2017, he wrote to the Society:

“It has been a privilege to be Patron of Honour for over three decades since in common with generations of New Zealand Catholics, as well as many outside the Catholic Faith, I hold the Society in great esteem.”

In March 2023 he again wrote to the Society after reading the 2022 Annual Report, which reported on the Society’s activities through a demanding Covid year.

“Congratulations on its splendid presentation. Reading it has deepened my admiration and gratitude for the Society’s work in what must have been a difficult and distressing year. May God richly bless all St Vincent de Paul members throughout the year ahead.

Cardinal Williams always had a strong interest in the wellbeing of his fellow men and women and was a passionate advocate for the local churches he served. He himself was deeply involved in the Catholic Youth Movement (CYM) in his youth which had a strong commitment to social action in support of the disadvantaged in society. As with St Vincent de Paul Society, the focus of the Catholic Youth Movement was on doing rather than just expressing good intentions.

‘It [CYM] gave me my vocation,’ he said in a 2020 interview. ‘I wouldn’t have become a priest if had I not had the background in the formation in the Catholic Youth Movement.’

Cardinal Williams was made an archbishop on 20 December 1979, the 20th anniversary of his priestly ordination and was archbishop of Wellington until he retired in 2005. He was made a cardinal by Pope John Paul II on 2 February, 1983. He was appointed a member of the Order of New Zealand, New Zealand’s highest civilian honour, in the 2000 Queen’s Birthday Honours list. Only 20 living people can hold this honour at any one time.

The Society is extremely grateful for the long-term support and unfailing advocacy of Cardinal Williams. We were blessed to have him as Patron for such a long time. Our deepest sympathy to his family. May he rest in peace.



Cardinal Thomas Williams

## NORTHLAND AREA COUNCIL

**Number of Active Conference Members:** 13 all in; 8 who attend meetings & visit when able. 5 who volunteer in food bank, make meals, deliver meals on wheels, they do not all attend meetings but I take what I can.

**Number of Associate Members:** 20+ mostly visiting to different places for instance we have 2 budgeters who we refer clients to, a person in Moerewa another in Paihia, another in Punaruku who collect food parcels and deliver in there area. 2 students who take food parcels in the school bus to Dargaville

**Number of Youth Members:** 25+ these students meet at school once a week during lunchtime, they regularly have activities that they get the school involved in, raising money for causes such as Alzheimer’s, cancer society, or can run to get food for the foodbank, collecting presents for students in need.

Weather and road works permitting the main areas we work in are Whangarei, Hikurangi, Paihia, Moerewa / Kawakawa, and Ruakaka. We have Associate members in these areas who deliver food for us and advise if there are other problems and this has been very helpful as it cuts down the cost of petrol and our travelling time. We also assist people who are new in the area with food parcels.

We are working more and more with families, especially young families, who are finding it difficult to purchase the basics in their everyday shopping, this is especially so with fresh food. Many of these people are on basic wage which only just covers the rent/mortgage.

We are also more and more getting requests for food parcels from the schools through their social workers.

Currently our biggest project, in liaison and with support from the schools is the gathering of food for the families we work with. The local primary school have had 6 bring a can days benefitting both the Society and those we assist.

– Anna Williams, Northland Area Council President





# Young Vinnies Launched in Hihifo Parish, Tonga

**Fr Mateo Kivalu (Parish Priest) and Sakopo Lolohea (SSVP President) along with parishioners launched a new Young Vinnies conference at the Hihifo Parish on Sunday evening 24 September 2023.**

This new Conference is based at the Fatai Village of St Teresa Parish (west of the Capital Nukualofa). More than 15 Young Vinnies took part with its new President 'Akata Moimoi along with support from the National Executive Committee members lead by its President Ana Malia Falemaka and reps from the Lapaha Young Vinnies and Apifoou College Young Vinnies. This will be the third Young Vincentian group to be inaugurated in Tonga. A Historic moment for the Society in Tonga but more so for these young people who seeks to follow the example of the Blessed Federic Ozanam. The Young Vinnies was pioneered in Lapaha St Michael parish/Takuilau College about 15 years ago followed by Apifoou College in 2020. We expect a few more to start this year, said the President of the Society in Tonga.

This came as the Society was about to celebrate its 50th Anniversary on the 30th of September 2023 with a Thanksgiving Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at Maufanga which will be led by His Eminence Soane Patita Paini Cardinal Mafi and members of the Society. The Mass will be followed by a lunch and cultural celebration. Representatives of the SSVP New Zealand and Australian will be in Tonga to witness this historic event.

Tonga has 17 Conferences and one National Council and is a member of the Oceania Territories and CGI. The SSVP was started in Tonga by the late Bishop Patelisio Finau in 1973.



## GISBORNE CONFERENCE

After a well-deserved holiday break, which was badly needed, we participated in a wonderful Mass in which the second reading fitted in perfectly with Father Alan's February 2024 Spiritual Reflection.

One parishioner spontaneously turned up at the start of our Conference meeting to thank us for all the work we do in our community and for "just being there". Her final comment "I just wanted to come and thank you personally because you don't get to see THE TEARS OF GRATITUDE FROM THE PEOPLE YOU HELP". This woman had just taken in a Filipino Mother and her two children who needed help to get away from a bad relationship and she asked us for assistance. We took her a bed, bedding and a food parcel. (They had all been sleeping on a squab on the floor. She is one of those people who has a wonderful gift of searching out people who desperately need help but won't ask for it. A real asset to us and indirectly part of Terry's spiritual legacy to us all.

We recently delivered a truckload of fridge freezers to Civil Defence in flood hit Te Karaka as well as a truckload each of washing machines and electric stoves.

– Kathy Langer, President

## YEAR OF JUBILEE 2025

# Pilgrims of Hope

**The Holy Father has decided that 2025 will be a year of Jubilee, something which happens every 25 years.**

The theme is "Pilgrims of Hope", and it will be a year of hope for a world suffering the impacts of war, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 pandemic, and a climate crisis.

Following the extraordinary 2015 Holy Year of Mercy instigated by Pope Francis, the forthcoming Jubilee will take place in line with the norm of leaving a 25-year gap between each one. The most recent ordinary jubilee took place in the year 2000, as the world and the Catholic Church prepared to enter the new millennium.

The Jubilee Year is a special year of grace, in which the Church offers the faithful the possibility of obtaining a plenary indulgence. Traditionally, it begins just before Christmas and ends on the Epiphany of the following year.



## PLIMMERTON CONFERENCE

**We are blessed with a good number of Members and some Volunteers, although age and agility is becoming problematic with the physical requirements of our commitments. This year we have gained a small number of new members who are finding their way within the activities we are involved in.**

- Prayer support is strongly encouraged – especially our senior Members who have retired from “active duties”
- Visits to parishioners and local residents is always happening: either at home or in hospitals
- Food Parcel requests have increased over the year, and the size of families have too
- Meals have been provided to individual families as the need is identified
- Our commitment to Ribbonwood (a MASH Residential Home for 20 residents) continues with a weekly “Church” service of prayer / hymns / Bible or Saints stories / inspirational poems. Two members / volunteers lead this service which we have been involved with for over 30 years. The year culminates with a Christmas Party to coincide with a visit from Fr Christmas and his sack of surprises. Always very well attended, fun and games are the order of the day after we’ve read the Nativity story and sung Carols
- A Financial contribution is gifted to our 3 local Catholic Schools – for the Principal to utilise where needed
- We maintain a Fund at a Pharmacy to cover costs of Prescriptions where necessary
- Some members volunteer at the Vinnies Shop on Mungavin Avenue
- Supporting our bereaved families by providing a Hospitality Basket of basic Pantry items within 24hrs of their loss
- Providing practical assistance in the Hall after a Parish Funeral – setting up / serving food and refreshments / cleaning up afterwards. This can involve up to 10 members over 3 or 4 hrs (or more depending on the numbers attending, recently we had over 300 at one funeral then the next day only 80)
- We are grateful for the support of 2 local supermarkets now collecting donated food in their onsite charity bins; also weekly bread donated and distributed to our primary schools
- Te Kohanga Reo o Horouta at the Horouta Marae gives us left over food at the end of each term – straight into our Food Bank
- Fr Maurice’s congregation at Summerset Aotea regularly provide foodstuffs and money for our Food Bank
- Parishioners regularly donate foodstuffs in our basket in the Church foyer
- Christmas 2023 we delivered 83 Christmas Hampers of general pantry items and treats – an enormous undertaking with Parishioners making the deliveries throughout eastern suburbs of Porirua; a Hamper consisting of 3 cartons isn’t unusual as they are packed according to the size of the family

Plimmerton is a very active Conference, just quietly going about our Mission as we walk in Frederic Ozanam’s footsteps.

– Margaret Baker, President

## Young Vinnies Napier



**Young Adults Vinnies, The Ark, MC’ed the Annual Youth Christmas Concert in Hastings on Saturday 2 December.**

It was an event that brought the parish community together as one big family.

Those long nights of practices came to fruition with cultural performances, singing dancing and food stalls. Along with raffles of donated items. The event raised money for them to attend summer youth events, such as Life Teen and Festival One. Well over 100 enjoying this special evening.

# Wairoa Assistance

At our Area Council meeting in November, Fr John Craddock, our Spiritual Advisor, told us that he had a visit from Fr Karaitiana Kingi from Wairoa who passed onto him details of the plight and difficulties that the Wairoa community were still experiencing following the devastation caused by Cyclone Gabrielle.

It was decided that Dan Sussmilch of our Area Council initially travel to Wairoa to meet with Fr Kingi who is closely involved with this project and a team of volunteers who were

assisting devastated families by managing and administering the activities there. Dan reported back that in spite of the generous funding made to date by various organizations an incredible amount of work still needed to be carried out and financed.

At another meeting Dan had in Wairoa, along with Fr John, a number of options were discussed as to how we could provide assistance to alleviate the plight and stress that the Wairoa Community were and still are currently undergoing.

The outcome of the discussion resolved that the most appropriate way for our Area Council to assist would be to:

1

Immediately allocate an amount to be divided among the 320 families identified for the purpose of buying a Christmas hamper for each family. Because a number of small businesses were also badly affected by the cyclone, it was agreed that hamper items be purchased from some of these businesses.

2

Allocate an amount to assist the ongoing repair and restoration process, this allocation would be used for: digger fuel, oil and fluids, carpentry consumables, carpentry tools, buildings materials, second hand truck repairs and maintenance, truck fuel, electrician and plumbing costs, work not able to be carried out by volunteers.

3

Identify homes and initially help to support the stripping of 25 homes using silt crews to assist with this task.



Our Napier Area Council is pleased to be able to substantially assist with funds for the Wairoa community with the help they so badly need. Our Council's involvement is ongoing with regular visits to Wairoa to monitor how progress is going.

The Wairoa project volunteers we have been working with have kindly submitted photos of some of the families who were delighted to receive their hampers (see photos at left).

Our Napier Conferences also assisted those affected by the devastation Cyclone Gabrielle caused last year. We were extremely grateful for the Funds Appeal launched throughout New Zealand by our St Vincent de Paul Society's National Office and the wonderful generosity shown during this extremely difficult time.

– Christine Tong, Napier Area President

More photos over page...

## Christmas hampers for Wairoa families affected by Cyclone Gabrielle



# Wealth's Measure

– Terry Jordan, 5 May 2018

The Wise Man asked, "how do you measure"?  
The mob clamoured to reply  
Some owned the earth, some the stars  
And others owned the sky

With the net worth battle raging on  
Each trying to outdo  
The Wise Man sought the quiet one  
And asked, "but how do you"?

The quiet one said pensively  
My wealth it has no measure  
I have no coin, I have no cash  
I set no store in pleasure

My wealth it can't be written down  
In balance sheets and books  
It's in music notes and memories  
And wrapped in loving looks

My wealth is in a playful hug  
Or in a child's laugh  
And sometimes in my lover's cry  
That breaks my soul in half

I set my store in satin nights  
Spent gazing at the stars  
In love's caress, in holding hands  
In meeting friends in bars

My worth's in plums and blackberries  
And the taste of wild honey  
All my wealth is in those things  
You can't exchange for money

The Wise Man scanned the quietened mob  
And smiled at their distress  
And then they clamoured once again  
How much to purchase this?



# Christ the addict

– Jim Considine

the shrill of the phone  
shatters early morning dreams  
'I'm desperate,' he says  
'I'm coming over.'  
my heart sinks  
the last thing I need  
at this unearthly hou  
an addict on my doorstep

many, like my friend  
want food and money  
others seek only a friendly face  
someone stable to touch base with

a scourge in today's world  
affecting every age, class, social setting  
addictions are everywhere  
taking many forms besides drugs, alcohol  
power, wealth, control, technology  
some deadlier than others

even half awake, I'm conscious that  
the embattled Christ  
calls wherever whenever  
regardless of timing  
trusting me to bring a generous heart  
to any knock at the door

I pop the jug on

Feast of St Vincent de Paul,  
27 September 2023



Advocating for  
people in vulnerable  
situations

Running Vinnies Shops

Providing Emergency  
Relief

Organising Foodbanks

Visiting people in  
home, hospital and in  
prison

Assisting people in  
need

Supporting migrants

Supporting families  
under stress

Community outreach

Mobilising Vinnies  
Youth to care for  
others



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand

Level 1, 35 Victoria Street, Wellington 6011

Postal: P.O. Box 10-815, Freepost 992,

Wellington Central 6140

Phone: +64 4 499 5070

[www.svdp.org.nz](http://www.svdp.org.nz)

## 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](mailto:national@svdp.org.nz)