



MEMBRE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ
DE SAINTE-VINCENT DE PAUL



SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

News in Brief

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Message from Bishop Owen Dolan



Hundreds of thousands; millions of young people gathered in Rio de Janeiro for World Youth Day. Pope Francis gathered with them, inspired them with his words, his warmth, and his encouragement for them to be faithful Disciples of Christ.

He urged them to know the scriptures and to be at home with the gospel, especially two of the messages of our Lord: 'that we must try to make your own'.

The two gospel messages are The Beatitudes (Matthew 5) and Matthew 25. The Beatitudes tell us 'Blessed are the poor, the meek, the gentle, the peacemakers ...'

And Matthew 25 tells us 'I was hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless ... and when you came to their aid, you came to mine.'

Jesus identified with the poor. As Vincentians, let us also make these gospel messages our own.

Our November newsletter is an 'inspirational issue' – with stories of legacies from a life-time of Vincentian work, to the inspiration from our Young Vinnies who are connecting with their communities and exploring their place in the Vincentian world, to inspirational poems that draw from two of life's greatest miracles – new life and faith.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their stories with us. We look forward to hearing more inspirational stories for our next e-newsletter for 2014. Please send them to Ann-Marie Parker at jamparker@xtra.co.nz

Thomas Frances Purcell – The Story of a Great Vincentian

Thomas Frances Purcell, the son of a local baker, was born in Ashburton on the 2th of December 1935, the youngest child of seven boys and one girl. Tom moved to Christchurch for most of his secondary school at the Minor Seminary (early priesthood training) and then in his final year, moved to St Bede's College in Christchurch.

As a young man of 21 Tom contracted polio. Despite this early set-back, he became a solicitor, and in 1958 married his wife, Billie. They had nine children together.

Tom moved to Hamilton to join Tanner Fitzgerald and Co where he spent his working life, mostly in litigation and resolution work (criminal, negligence, ACC - to name a few main areas).

Tom practised as a lawyer for many years before retiring about a decade ago. He had a long and active involvement in public speaking and the public service-functions of the Jaycees Association in Hamilton in the 1960's.

Since moving to Hamilton over five decades ago, Tom devoted much of his time, knowledge and skills to help others within the community. He also overcame personal addiction and turned his life around. Over the years, he has also helped several others do the same.

Tom often provided pro-bono legal advice to people of modest means very quietly through his involvement with the Catholic Church. His motivation was his strong Christian compassion and genuine concern for those less fortunate than himself.

Tom has been active in the St Vincent de Paul Society as President of the Frankton conferences and as a conference member for many years. During this time, Tom has played

a big part in the management of many projects.

Tom always advocated the importance of maintaining a person's dignity. He maintained that helping others was more than just about the food and acknowledged the need of spiritual guidance.

"There are no restrictions on colour or creed; if you are in need, you are in need," he said.

'Fullfill' Van – the 'Vinnie's Van':

It was due to Tom's creative thinking that the concept of the mobile van 'Fullfill' became a reality.

The mobile van 'FullFill' visits suburbs in Hamilton, handing out free nutritious snacks and drinks to help recipients' budgets stretch a little further. As well as providing assistance in the short term, it's a 'way in' to help make contact with people, build relationships and trust and, if required, help put people in touch with the right social service.

For the volunteers there's the opportunity to mix with other sectors of society to help those less fortunate than themselves.

In 2014, it is expected that around 54,000 sandwiches will be made for distribution via the 'FullFill' van.

Loaves and Fishes Programme

Tom Purcell was also involved in the 'Loaves and Fishes' programme which provides lunch for needy children in our city's primary and secondary schools.

Joint Venture of Care Programme

In August 2005, together with Heidi Fransen, Tom established the Joint Venture of Care between the Passionist Family Groups / and the Society of St Vincent de Paul in St Columba's Parish, Frankton.

This service was set up in the Parish to help meet the needs of others. Parishioners were asked to contribute their time/skill on a one-off basis to anyone who needed assistance in any way. It was felt that from time to time there are many people in the parish who are not necessarily in need of constant help or visitation, but who for one reason or another, need assistance in the short term, or even just as a one-off. Even though SVDP make many visits when required, there was still a need within the community for help in ways such as providing meals or baking when needed; doing a bit of light gardening or lawn mowing; offering rides to the doctor, supermarket or church, etc.

Tom helped to encourage parishioners, particularly those belonging to Family Groups, to offer their name and phone number so that they could go on a list of people who could be called on to help when a need arose. This service has now been extended to the school community, with two grants having been received from the Catholic Care Foundation. The grants have been used to purchase food so that Big River Catering, members of our school and parish community, could help provide meals so as to ease the burden on parishioners. As a result of this initiative, many families from the parish and school community have received help when they needed it and were shown love in times of need.

Service Awards

Tom's faithful service within his church was recognised on the 9th June, 2010 with the awarding of the Benemerenti Medal by Pope Benedict XVI. This medal is conferred upon those who have exhibited long and exceptional service to the Catholic Church, their families and community.

Tom's commitment to the community was also recognised in December 2010 with the awarding of a Hamilton Civic Award.

On August 29, 2014 the St Vincent de Paul Society National President, Des Mulhern awarded Tom with a Vincentian certificate for his wonderful contribution to the Society.



Tom Purcell receiving his Vincentian award from Des Mulhern, Society President.

In memory of Thomas Frances Purcell

By Patinya Kunkulvoranunn

Rest in Peace

Since the writing of this e-newsletter, it is with great sadness that we have learnt of the death of Thomas Frances Purcell. He has returned peacefully to his maker on September 28th, 2014 at the age of 78.

Tom will be remembered for his tireless and generous support of the Conference. His legal expertise has been sought and greatly valued on many occasions.

Tom was a man of innate warmth, modesty and integrity and was blessed with an irreverent sense of humour which he shared abundantly.

Tom Purcell was an honourable man, committed to serving his community.

Faith in Action – Young Vinnies in Christchurch

A great group of Young Vinnies from different schools and parishes around Christchurch gave up some of their September holiday time to come together to help others.

The 'Faith in Action' afternoon focussed on preparing food parcels, planting a vegetable garden and helping out in the Vinnies shop.

The Vinnies were divided into three groups and given the chance to have a go at each activity. Each station was supported by conference members, volunteers and the operations manager.

At the shared afternoon tea everyone had the chance to talk about the society and how they could help people.



The Faith in Action Team from Christchurch parishes and schools.

Spotlight on Hawke's Bay - St Johns, Young Vinnies

The number of Young Vinnies has expanded with the amount of work required running a breakfast club on Tuesday mornings for 50 students. Many of the teachers have commended the boys on meeting a huge need in this community. Some of the teachers would like us to come on Mondays as well as this is the day of the week with many absences. It is believed that this is the case because there is not enough food for breakfast or lunch in many households.

On Thursday the core group of Vinnies still meet during break one. We use this time for planning any other projects, which at this time is some succession planning and getting some year 10 boys to come on board so we can continue to grow next year.



St Joseph's Conference, Otahuhu

Seeing a need to reach out to many in their community, St Joseph Conference in Otahuhu set up a regular soup and roll lunch at the SVDP Otahuhu facilities. Conference member Frank Heffernan said, "We saw that there was a growing number of residents in Otahuhu who lived in boarding houses that were required to leave during the day. Finding somewhere to go was a challenge for many of them. We also came across others who were lonely or were living in poor housing conditions. We wanted to provide them with a warm place to have a hot lunch on a weekend and a chance to meet other people."

At first it was hard to convince people that there was a free lunch available, but over the months the numbers attending have increased, due in part to volunteers door knocking around the community to personally invite residents to the lunch.

One woman who came to the lunch had been living in a caravan for the last five years and had only just moved into a small flat.

Local students from McAuley High School, the Catholic girl's college in Otahuhu, De La Salle College, the Catholic boy's college in Mangere, and Otahuhu College volunteered to help at the lunch, even taking soup to those living in the street who were unable to be there. The students have had the chance to see first-hand how SVDP can help those in need in their community. They have now joined the St Joseph's Conference, increasing numbers to 18.



St Joseph's Conference, Otahuhu serving lunch to their community.

Picton House

Do you know of a family or someone in your conference who could benefit from a holiday in Picton? The Picton conference manage a holiday home that is open to all conferences to provide a place for those who might never afford a holiday. As summer fast approaches, now might be the right time for your conference to think about who you could support to make the best of this wonderful asset. Hire is very reasonable and in most cases conferences also assist with travel expenses, as many cannot afford to get there. If you would like further information, please contact Don Peters on 03 573 7472.

RIP – *Larry Pritchard*

A tribute to Lawrence (Larry) Pritchard, Vincentian, delivered at Larry's funeral mass, St Josephs' Church, Pine Ave, Upper Hutt 9th September 2014 by Mike Driscoll, President, Hutt Valley and Wairapapa.

Larry was a greatly loved and respected member of the Society of St Vincent de Paul Hutt Valley and Wairarapa.

I first met Larry in the mid 1980's when he was a member of Our Lady of Grace SVDP Conference. Larry went on to become the Area Council President for the Hutt Valley and Wairarapa. In this capacity, Larry attended many National AGMs and National Council meetings.

Larry was soon recognised as someone with immense wisdom and compassion. He was a very spiritual man and most of all he was a great listener.

People were drawn to Larry's warm personality, his warm smile and sense of humour.

In the early 2000's, Larry was granted a Papal Blessing for his contribution to the St Vincent de Paul Society, signed by Pope John Paul.

While residing at the Mercy Villas, Larry continued his Vincentian works. He was a great friend and companion to fellow residents.

Larry kept a modest-sized vegetable patch adjacent to his villa, with a seemingly endless supply of produce which Larry distributed to fellow residents. June and Elva, our members, recall Larry regularly delivering surplus vegetables, especially bundles of beans to the Upper Hutt Food Bank.

Larry was the consummate salesman. Utilising his endless charm, he single-handedly sold dozens of packs of St Vincent de Paul Christmas cards every Christmas.

May God bless you and remain with you Larry.

Later in the Mass members of the St Vincent de Paul Society gathered around Larry's casket to recite a special prayer reserved for the final farewell of Vincentians. A copy of the prayer was placed in Larry's casket to ensure members' prayers and love accompany Larry on his journey home.



3 December 1923 - 5 September 2014

Prayer of Blessed Frederic on Divine Providence

Let us go in simplicity
where merciful
Providence leads us,
content to see the
stone on which we
should step without
wanting to discover all
at once and
completely the
winding road.



(Dirvin, trans and ed., letters P.93)



Thanks for Volunteers

A Homily by Father Phil King-Turner SM (RIP), Reefton Parish

'Thank you to all our volunteers. You give so much of your time but life is short. In the scheme of things this often quoted saying must be true. Our planet has been here for millions of years and we have lived our lives. But on our headstones will be the etching of when we were born and the date we died.

For example 1960-2050

What matters to me are not the two blocks of years mentioned; it is the dash. That little dash - in between the two blocks.

That's our life. That represents to me the short time we have, here, to make a difference, or not.

And making a difference means so many different things to so many people.

But for you, the helper, what you do during that dash is most significant.

You can give money for a cause. Sure, say you give a dollar a month. It is appreciated without a doubt. It is your dollar. But your biggest gift to our community is 'Time'. But how do we give back time?

As a volunteer you give time. Time. The most precious resource in our lives.

Look at the dash between the years on the gravestone. How many hours are in there? It's not billions. It's not infinite.

Money can be printed. Time cannot.

Once you give an hour of your time, it is gone forever. That hour you just gave volunteering will never be replicated.

Your time volunteering must be valued, but we can never put a value on that time. It is not how long the space is between the block of years, but how we spent it.

How can you value something that is priceless?

As a volunteer in any generous work of kindness, you bring so much to this community of ours. Skills, advice, experience, friendship, vision, leadership, inspiration, comfort, wellbeing, security, safety...

Today we want to say thank you for your strength and kindness. You have always been there to meet the needs. This is to tell you that you are all really appreciated volunteers paid and unpaid. Thank you for being with us on the journey at this time...May God bless you all.'



Your Mother's Faith

You mock her gently in a...loving way
This beautiful woman who bore you
Patronising wouldn't be too strong
But not a callous superior attitude
More one of gentle, patient tut-tutting
She really should know better!

Blind belief in things so vague
So naive, so childish almost
How embarrassing to have a mother
Who can't see the modern way...The truth!!
An addict...high on the people's opiate
Oblivious to the sneers of your peers...The shame!!

Ahh...but do you really know her
Have you seen with eyes like mine?

Exhausted, she picks you up
To silence your demanding cry
Cries go silent...feeding urgently
Gifting life and love to you
You...mewling, stretching, so helpless, small
Held firm in the arms of love

In the gloom I look at you
Snuffling, nuzzling...dozing
She looks at me... sparkling eyes,
Glittering gems lighting up the room
Her one word...whispered..."b e a u t i f u l"
Tinkles like tiny bells...perfection!

Even in my dozing state
Where the fog of night cloaks reason
I see a truth larger than life itself
In a mother's love...distilled...so pure
Mirrored, a reflection of the greatest love.

To have seen... is never to doubt!!

Terry Jordan

19 July 2011

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 Ann-Marie Parker, Communications Officer. Email: jamparker@xtra.co.nz