



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Greater Toronto Central Council

In the Loop

October 2024

From the Chair:

From the Old Testament to the New, from Deuteronomy, to the Psalms, from Proverbs and Isaiah, to John, the bible is filled with comforting news that we are not alone. “And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the Age”. Matthew 28:20.

From a spiritual perspective that’s great to know; it can give us hope, comfort and courage. These are all attributes critical to our mission as Vincentians. Unfortunately, we sometimes get so caught up in the moment that we forget that we are not alone and that can lead to some dark places.

This month, I wanted to remind you that, you are not alone. I mean this in several ways; let me list just a few of them:

- You have colleagues in the Conference
- You have a partner for home visits
- You have donors
- You have parishioners
- You have Neighbours in Need (they support you in their feedback and gratitude)
- You have a Conference President and executive
- You have adjacent Conferences and their executives
- You have a Particular Council President and Executive
- You have Central Council, the Board of Directors, the Head office staff, (especially Liza and Louise)
- Through GTCC you have insurance coverage, legal assistance, IT assistance, experienced advice, materials and so much more.

So, you are not alone and that’s the good news. When you stop to think about it, which of us, alone, could feed just one or two families in need? Which of us, even as a group of 8 or 10 people could feed hundreds of families every month? Which of us, acting alone or in a small group could afford the technical infrastructure, the expensive insurance, the food vouchers, the legal expenses, the cost of buying and maintaining property for camps, stores, special works?

So that’s the flip side to this and it is, surprise, ***you are not alone***. In this context it means you are not an island unto yourself or yourselves. You don’t operate in a vacuum, and you are not free to do whatever you please with donated money.

Your Conference lacks the legal capacity to do certain things which only GTCC can do. This is partly because as an unincorporated entity you lack the legal standing to do some things and partly because as an unincorporated entity the legal and financial responsibility for any actions would fall on you as individuals. You and your Conference may not have the experience or expertise to deal with complex issues, especially legal ones. And even if a few of your Vincentians are lawyers or bankers, that doesn’t make them experts in all facets of a legal or

financial issue and more importantly, they lack the legal authority to bind the organization. Very few Vincentians want to find themselves alone when trying to deal with the Archdiocese or a reluctant parish priest.

As I have said and written many times, none of this is intended to convey the idea that Greater Toronto Central Council and its board are, as my children used to say, “the boss of you”. But GTCC is the legal entity that has the responsibility and the authority to do the legal and practical things that allow us all to carry out our daily mission as Vincentians. GTCC is truly here to serve you. We can’t do that if you don’t tell us what’s going on in your Conference. We can’t do that if we don’t know who your new President or Treasurer are. We can’t do that if you are signing contracts, releases, leases or other legal documents which, because you lack the authority to sign, may cost you or the organization dearly either in time or financially or both.

Most of us have seen the little signs that say, “Call before you dig”. No one wants to see what happens to a neighbourhood when a gas line is ruptured. That’s really all we are saying to you; call before you dig (yourself or your conference into a hole you can’t get out of). There’s an old legal maxim that says, there’s no harm in asking. I’d add to that there’s a lot of potential benefit and there’s no shame in not knowing, or in seeking the help that is right there for you.

I’ll end on a lighter note with a relevant quote from one of my favourite writers, Rudyard Kipling,

*“Now this is the Law of the Jungle -- as old and as true as the sky;
And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the Wolf that shall break it must die.
As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law runneth forward and back --
For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.”*

Bro. Gary Valcour, Chair of the Board

World Day of the Poor – November 17th.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is first thought of as the agency most closely aligned with this Catholic initiative. Everything we do is a call to serve, to recognize, and to respond respectfully to fellow humans in need. Please let your pastor know you have material to support the message of World Day of the Poor in your parish, and you and your Conference would be more than happy to work alongside him in sharing the day. Please see available materials in the last part of this newsletter.

Thank you for your Input

The GTCC Engagement Committee is helping the Society plan for the future. Our recent survey initiative was a successful venture. We gratefully received your input through the surveys that were issued just before the summer. Important areas of concern were identified and will shape the efforts of the Committee and the Board going forward. Thank you to those who offered to share further, and to those who offered to assist with gathering more information. We will be reaching out to you within the month, to establish these connections. Watch for an invitation to participate in visioning sessions.

*Happy Thanksgiving to you, your loved ones,
and all whom we serve*

Learning Sessions

Orientation for New Members

Please join us for this semi annual virtual session – held in two parts for all persons who are new Vincentians. Orientation to the Society is a mandatory part of screening – learn further about the history, structure, Special Works and the Rule. The dates of the sessions are:

Part 1 – **Monday, October 28th** – 6:30 pm until 8:00pm ([click here to register for Part One](#)) and;

Part 2 – **Monday, November 4th** – 6:30 pm until 8:00pm ([click here to register for Part Two](#)).

New and returning Vincentians are all welcome.

Treasurers Sessions

As year end approaches, please to attend the annual virtual Treasurers Workshops, for new and current Treasurer's, these sessions are a review of the role and responsibilities.

Thursday, November 14th – 6:30 – 7:30 pm [Click here to join the Treasurers Workshop](#)

Wednesday, November 20th – 6:30 – 7:30 pm [Click here to join the Completing the T3010 Workshop](#)

Conference Presidents Session

All new and aspiring Presidents are requested to attend a one-hour virtual session to review the responsibilities of the role, supports available and initiatives underway. The date of the session is

Monday, November 25th – 6:30 pm until 7:30 pm

[Click here to join the Conference President Session](#)

Recruitment Session

A review of best practices for recruiting new members

Thursday, November 7th – 6:30 pm until 7:30 pm

[Click here to join the Recruitment Session](#)

Serving Persons living in Hotels/Motels:

We are working on coordinating a presentation with specialists who will share details of the complexity of housing persons in need including refugees, in hotels and motels throughout the GTA. Once the presentation details are firm, we will circulate the virtual meeting coordinates.

From the desk of Head Office

Sharing what other Vincentians are asking through info@ssvptoronto.ca; hopefully this information will assist you in your efforts.

- Is now the time to order collection envelopes? Yes, please do! We have Christmas and Regular Collection envelopes in stock. Please include your Conference and mailing address with your order: info@ssvptoronto.ca
- When are new member applications being processed? We will be processing new members this month; ID cards and pins will be sent to Conference Presidents for distribution.
- Do all members need Vulnerable Sector Checks? Yes, all members of the Society must complete a Vulnerable Sector Check; please visit the website, members tab - screening for [new member's information](#) which include requirements for each police jurisdiction.
- Can we order copies of the Rule? Yes, please reach out, hard copies are available, and [online copies](#) are available on our website.
- Do Pastors have to participate in World Day of the Poor? Pastors work at the encouragement and guidance of the Archdiocese. We serve at the pleasure of the pastor. Please let your pastor know that the Society has material available to support this initiative and to assist him in bringing real life commitment and experience to this campaign.

World Day of the Poor – November 17th

The Greater Toronto Central Council's Engagement Committee is excited to share with you resources for our new campaign: an initiative to mark World Day of the Poor (November 17) in your parishes.

As Vincentians, we have a special responsibility to educate our fellow parishioners about the challenges facing our Neighbours in Need, and invite them to help by supporting the Society or doing other works of mercy. For a similar purpose, Pope Francis instituted World Day of the Poor in the Catholic Church in 2016, and every year since, it has served as an opportunity for Catholics to go deeper into our Gospel calling to love and serve our most vulnerable neighbours.

This campaign is an initiative to draw greater attention to World Day of the Poor in our parishes, and to use the opportunity to enhance support for the Society and recruitment in your local conferences. The resources included here are meant to equip you to mark World Day of the Poor at the parish level. These resources include:

- A [campaign poster](#) (Central Council will be sending two printed copies of the attached poster to all conferences; if you would like more, please send us an email!)
- Our new [conference recruitment brochure](#) (already circulated in previous correspondence, but please let us know if you would like/need more copies in advance of World Day of the Poor)
- [Conference Package](#) which includes
 - A template pulpit announcement
 - A template bulletin insert
 - A fact sheet about poverty in the GTA and the impact of the Society, to equip you in conversations with parishioners

Thank you and please let us know if you have any questions, or if any other resources would be helpful to you.

Thank you also for all of your good work on behalf of our Neighbours in Need. Please keep them in your prayers in a special way on World Day of the Poor, and please pray that this new campaign is a powerful opportunity for inviting more people to join our mission!

Sincerely,

The Engagement Committee
Greater Toronto Central Council
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul