

Faith in Action



A Message from your Servant Leader

Dear Vincentians,

Fr. Thomas Landry, Pastor of Blessed Sacrament in Worcester, opened his heart and the church center to house 60 homeless men and women this winter. During the months of December through March, the Phelan Center was transformed into a home for 60 souls. Open Sky, a non-profit organization, ran the shelter, and in addition to three meals a day, provided long-term services to help the residents transition to a better life.

The SVDP conference of Blessed Sacrament and St. Mark's, Sutton joined the Diocesan Council to provide and serve hot meals to our friends in need. Engaging with the residents was, without a doubt, a humbling experience. Conference perspectives from our service in the following articles are as unique as we are. Our service to those 60 souls, touches us all in different ways but binds us in Him, and Him in us. Our faith journey is designed by God for each of us. By saying 'yes' to Him, our journey unfolds, and we are blessed.

The Diocesan Council's perspective is knowing that there is no mountain that we cannot climb with our Lord by our side. Our beautiful Society acts on behalf of Jesus by helping our brothers and sisters in need and gives Vincentians new perspectives in their faith by bringing them closer to God.

"Give me a person of prayer, and such a one will be capable of accomplishing anything."
___ St. Vincent de Paul

A special thank you to Pat Nedorosik, our South District President for partnering with me and to Bev Cochran and Mark Chapleau from Our Lady of Hope Conference, Grafton, for picking up and serving the meal when Pat and I were unable.

In Vincentian friendship,

Susan Treveloni

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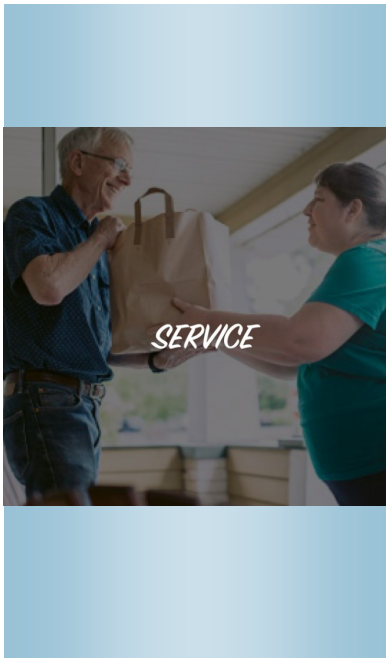
Spirituality, Friendship and Service

Since its founding in 1833, the Essential Elements of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul have been Spirituality, Friendship and Service.

In this and future issues, we will explore those three Essential Elements and provide stories, profiles, information, and examples of how we can practice all three and grow in our shared Vincentian journey.

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St. Joseph's Pop Up Pantry—Fitchburg

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul at St. Joseph's Church Fitchburg has been in existence since 1955. Over the years it has evolved into a food pantry serving 225 unduplicated families per month in the city. Approximately 125 families receive home visits, mostly the elderly in low - income housing units. Until recently they all received the same predetermined menu of food. Several months ago we initiated a program to start a "Pop Up" pantry concept, where we set up a pantry once a month at three locations. This allows our guests to choose the foods that they prefer and contributes to less waste. We are currently in the process of introducing this concept to other locations in the city. This



program is made possible through food donations received from the WCFB and a vehicle grant from the United Way, the North Worcester County Community Foundation, and of course our volunteers.

No work of charity is foreign to the society. It includes any form of help that alleviates suffering or deprivation and promotes human dignity and personal integrity in all their dimensions.

Rule I: 1.3

Open Sky Community Services

Open Sky Community Services, headquartered in Worcester, Massachusetts, was created through the affiliation of two of Central Massachusetts' human service organizations: Alternatives Unlimited, Inc. and The Bridge of Central Massachusetts.

Through their efforts with the Seeds of Hope Shelter, 30 people, including 5 veterans, were able to find permanent housing. Another 28 people have agreed to seek treatment for substance abuse.

In 2023, they will be celebrating 50 years of service to the community.

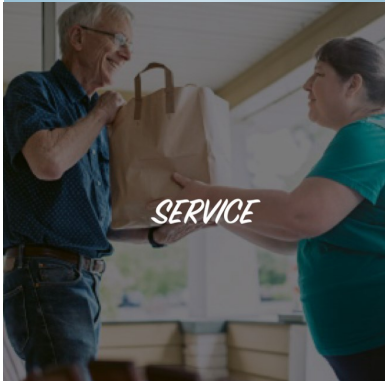
Serving at the Seeds of Hope Shelter

Matthew 25: For I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was a stranger and you took me in.

The St. Vincent de Paul conferences at St. Mark's and Blessed Sacrament and the Worcester Diocesan SVDP council had the privilege of providing meals to the guests at the temporary and seasonal Seeds of Hope Shelter at Bethlehem Hall, located at Blessed Sacrament Church in Worcester. With room for 60 people, the shelter filled up quickly and remained full for the entire time that it was open. Six members of St. Mark's conference served at the shelter at various times. Their words best express the privilege of bringing and serving food.

"The shelter at Blessed Sacrament Parish was a rewarding experience for all who helped. As Father Thomas Landry, pastor of Blessed Sacrament, said in a recent bulletin "Open Sky created and utilized a model of service that did so much more than offer people a safe, warm place to stay. Many guests were assisted with social and legal hurdles as well as treatment programs. God calls us to be ever more certain that his Mercy has a home in our hearts "

Serving at the Seeds of Hope Shelter—continued



Community

“There wasn’t much space to congregate at Seeds of Hope Shelter. Residents stood inside the doors or sat on the stairs leading up to the gym (which was converted into part sleeping area, and part dining room). Or they stood along the wall just inside the gym or sat at long folding dining tables to eat their meal. It was a nice day weatherwise, so others grouped together outside the front doors of the shelter, while others sat on the concrete stairs, similar to how city homeowners or apartment dwellers might sit on the stoop on a nice day.”

“What struck me was the community, community between residents, staff, and volunteers. It was hard to tell who was who because there was a sense of helping others, for the greater good. People were appreciative of us as volunteers, providing a meal, even just one time. People helped others out, by making and bringing a plate to another resident. Kitchen staff, security, and residents, some who were volunteers, made a point to express their gratitude and perhaps share in some conversation.”

“Homeless situations vary... some choose it, and others have no options. We saw how appreciative they were for the people who fed them and the people trying to help them adjust to better conditions. Seeds of Hope brought more than food, shelter from the cold. I saw fellow residents being friendly, offering what they had to help each other. The basis for community.”

Enlightened and Humbled

“The experience at the shelter was enlightening as well as humbling for me.”

“It put in perspective all the little things in life which have seemed so problematic to me. Most of the people expressed their gratitude for the food and for us being there.”

“The people staying at the shelter, as well as the staff, volunteers and police officers were most appreciative of the food and our presence to help serve them. All were polite with please and thank you continually heard. Residents were kind and helpful to each other and seemed to look out for one another. Food was put aside for some who were working late as staff cared for and watched out for them.

One couldn’t help but notice the cramped sleeping quarters for the men in the gym, which was also used as the eating area on one side. It made me think of how blessed I am to have not only a bedroom but a whole house with space to come and go as I please, not worrying where my next meal comes from or who is sleeping next to me each night.

At the shelter, people are dependent on what foods are given them each day rather than allowed choices. The staff tried to accommodate some who had dietary difficulties, providing cereal or extra salad. There was a caring and concern for individual needs. Everyone was treated with kindness and compassion.”

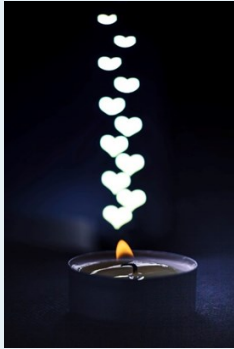
“One of the staff shared that she worked with homeless people for 38 years, most of that time with families. Surprisingly, she liked working with the residents like those in this shelter because she said there were more services available to assist them than families. Unfortunately, housing/shelter for families is very difficult to find.”

“Surely the phrase, “But for the grace of God go I” sums up my feelings.”

No Judgements

“Most importantly, ‘no judgements’. There likely are a multitude of circumstances present, with each of us as volunteers, with the paid staff and other volunteers, and the residents of the temporary shelter. There was no sense of attitude or judgement. Just people present, in the way they and we were able to be present on that particular evening.”

Seeds of Hope Shelter, operated by Open Sky, closed on March 31st.



In Memoriam

George Bousquet—Divine Mercy of Saint Paul, Blackstone

Norman Lorange—Divine Mercy of Saint Paul, Blackstone

Connie & George Marrier—Sacred Heart of Jesus, Webster

Deacon Mongeau—Sacred Heart of Jesus, Webster

Deb Daniels—Sacred Heart of Jesus, Webster

Fran Roy—Sacred Heart of Jesus, Webster

Donna Hohler—Sacred Heart of Jesus, Webster

Pauline Ludwig—Sacred Heart of Jesus, Webster

Let us remember all our past members whom God has called home.

Names of deceased Vincentians may be submitted to:

FIANewsWDC@gmail.com for inclusion in future editions.



Lampposts along the way...

Written by Betty George

In December 2022, Fr. Tom Landry said “Yes” to hosting a homeless shelter at Blessed Sacrament Parish for a three month period ending on March 31, 2023. Parishioners responded by supplying blankets, clothing and muffins in the first few weeks of operation. Parishioners were also part of a cadre of volunteers who provided and served a hot dinner to shelter clients each night.

As our St. Vincent de Paul Conference and Open Sky Case Managers worked with our clients, we learned that most people are homeless, not by choice, but by unfortunate circumstances in their lives. With a warm bed, three meals a day and intensive work by the Social Services staff, a large number of clients entered rehab, accessed Section Eight housing and took steps to reenter society feeling better about themselves and the contributions they now felt empowered to make.

We rejoiced with our new found friends as they looked forward to having their own kitchens in which to cook. We watched their eyes shine as they discussed employment possibilities. Our lives were touched by our friends as we had touched theirs. For them we were lampposts along their journey. For us, they were a blessing as we continue to look at each day with a greater appreciation for God’s gifts.

“For leadership there is only one road: service. There is no other way. If you have many qualities, the ability to communicate, etc., but you are not a servant, your leadership will fail, it is useless, it has not power to gather [people] together... Leadership must enter into service, but with a personal love for the people.” – Pope Francis

Vincentian Profile

Kimberly Lambert

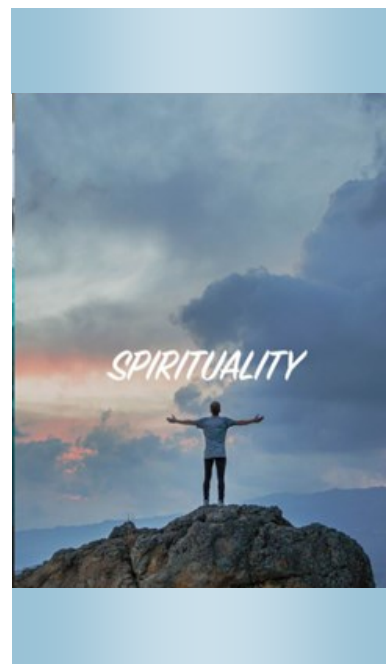
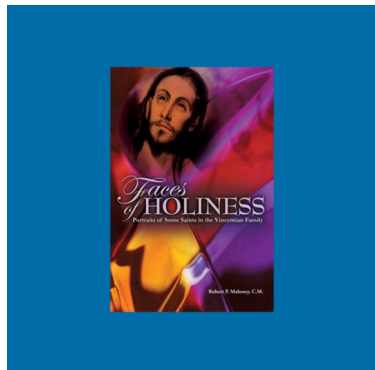
My name is Kimberly Lambert, and I have been a Vincentian for over 20 years at St. Leo's Conference in Leominster. My parents and grandparents have been role models for the importance of faith, family, and service. I follow in the footsteps of my grandfather, Stephen Kimball, who was one of St. Leo's original Vincentians. Helping at our food pantry is one way that I can actively show my appreciation for the blessings in my life.



Even though I was aware of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, I did not become involved until I was asked to help at our food pantry, and I have been involved ever since. Over the years, I have met so many great people from not only the North District, but Central and South, as well. I am continually inspired by their tireless dedication to improving the lives of whom they help, their innovative ideas such as having a “pop up” food pantry, their willingness to share ideas such as using a translation app on your phone to help communicate with non-English speaking individuals, their use of discernment and listening to the Holy Spirit for guidance when making a hard decision, and their humility in their service. Being a part of the Vincentian Family is a true blessing.

SVdP Spirituality Resources

“Faces of Holiness, Portraits of Some Saints in the Vincentian Family”, by Robert P. Maloney, C.M., is available from the National Council of St. Vincent de Paul. This book contains portraits of Jesus, Mary, St. Vincent de Paul, and other selected Vincentian Saints and Blessed. It invites us to contemplate how we may be inspired by their lives and their works.



“Live simply, so that all may simply live.” - Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton was born Elizabeth Ann Bayley in August of 1774 in New York. She is the first native born American to be canonized by the Catholic Church. She is also the founder of the Sisters of Charity, the first American religious society and founder of the first Catholic parochial system in the United States.

Elizabeth Bayley was the daughter of a distinguished physician. She devoted a good deal of time working among the poor and, in 1797, joined others in founding the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children, the first charitable organization in New York. She married William Seton, someone whose family was politically connected to George Washington and Alexander Hamilton. Together they had five children. William Seton died of tuberculosis in December of 1803, leaving his wife Elizabeth a widow at the age of 29.

Even though she was raised Episcopalian, she converted to Catholicism in 1805. She later accepted an invitation from a priest to open a school for Catholic girls in Baltimore, Maryland and in 1809, her long-held hope of founding a religious community came to fruition when she and her companions took vows to become the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, the first American based Catholic sisterhood. That order later became the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton is the patron saint of Catholic schools, widows, and seafarers. She was canonized on September 14, 1975.



Vincentian Saints, Blesseds and Venerables

Since the foundation of the society in 1833, thousands upon thousands of men and women throughout the world have become holy through the practice of Vincentian Spirituality. Some of these persons have been recognized by the Church and raised to the altar. More will be so honored in the future. The Vincentian Family of St. Vincent de Paul includes a large number of saints, blessed and venerables.

- excerpt from National Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Inc. Manual, page 89.

For a deeper understanding of our Catholic and Vincentian history, we will feature a Saint, Blessed or Venerable in each edition of our newsletter.

VOICE
of the POOR

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

INVITES YOU TO SIGN UP FOR

VOTER VOICE



The Voice of the Poor's mission is based on Catholic social teaching.

Our mission is to break the cycle of poverty by inspiring Vincentians to be effective servants of the poor and voices for just policies and systems. We put our mission into action by supporting legislation that will help our neighbors in need and proactively opposing legislation that will make life harder for them.

What is Voter Voice?

- Voter Voice is an online website that allows members and supporters of the society to reach out to lawmakers regarding legislation and other issues that affect those living in poverty.
- After signing up, you will receive action alerts via e-mail which will contain a link that will allow you to send an email to your federal or state legislators.

Why Sign Up for Voter Voice?

- The National Voice of the Poor Committee believes our Vincentian voice can make a difference. Elected officials in Washington, D.C., in our state capitols and in our city and county governments are there because of voters like us. Their central focus is to respond to voter concerns, and they need to hear from us.
- The more interest generated by constituents, the more likely they will respond!

How do you sign up for Voter Voice?

- Go to [Action Center \(votervoice.net\)](http://Action Center (votervoice.net)) to sign up for Action Alerts and find out how to look up and find your elected officials.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Toni Raczowski, NE Regional Representative to the National Voice of the Poor Committee atla@charter.net

Ozanam Orientation

On Saturday, May 20th we held another successful Ozanam Orientation. 45 members, both new and old, attended the session.

Thank you to Irene Frechette, VP of the northeast region for facilitating the Orientation along with co-facilitators, Sue Treveloni and Colleen Resca.

Additional thanks goes to Pat Nedoroscik, our Southern District President and to the members of St. Mary's Conference in Uxbridge for all their help with preparation, day of operations, and coordination of breakfast and lunch. The home baked goodies and SVdP cake were a wonderful touch.

Last but not least, a special thank you to Deacon John Dugan, whose AV and technical skills allowed our presenters to focus on their presentations without worry.

Our next Ozanam Orientation will be held in the Central District, date and location to be determined. Come join us!

“Be kind and love, for love is your first gift to the poor. They will appreciate your kindness and love more than all else you can bring them.” - Blessed Rosalie Rendu

Upcoming Webinars

July 26th 7:30 PM 5 Goals of a Conference President

Presented by the Leadership Task Force, this session is designed for all Conference Presidents, new or experienced, as well as Members who may be considering becoming Conference Presidents. With references to guidelines and publications, such as the Conference President Handbook, this presentation will help you prepare to be a more effective Servant Leader, focusing on the Five Goals of a Conference President:

- Formation
- Work for your Conference as a servant leader
- Your Team
- Your Spiritual Advisor
- Your Members

You'll have opportunities to interact and ask questions during this live session!

September 27th at 7:30 PM Effective Conference Meetings

What makes effective conference meetings? Balancing spiritual growth, friendship, and service. Handling conflicts and making decisions. You'll have opportunities to interact and ask questions during this live session!

Registration for these webinars can be found at <https://members.ssvpusa.org/>

Feast of Corpus Christi

Bishop McManus has cordially invited all Vincentians to join him for a Mass and Procession in celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi taking place at St. Paul Cathedral on June 11, 2023. Mass will begin at 10:00 am followed by a Procession of the Holy Eucharist.



Save the Date!

This year's SVdP Annual Commitment Mass will be held at Our Lady of Hope Parish in Grafton on September 17, 2023 at 12:30 pm. Invitations will be sent out later this summer.

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Faith in Action

St. Vincent de Paul Conferences of the Worcester Diocesan Council

North District

Parish	City/Town	Website
Annunciation Parish	Gardner	www.annunciatingardner.org
St. Cecilia Parish	Leominster	www.stceciliachurch.net
St. Denis Parish	Ashburnham	www.saintdenisashburnham.org
St. Francis of Assisi Parish	Fitchburg	www.saintfrancis-fitchburg.com
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish	Winchendon	www.heartofmary.net
St. Joseph Parish	Fitchburg	www.stjosephfitchburg.org
St. Leo Parish	Leominster	www.stleoparish.org

Central District

St. Brigid Parish	Millbury	www.stbrigidparish.org
Blessed Sacrament Parish	Worcester	www.blessedsacrament.us
Immaculate Conception Parish	Worcester	www.icworc.com
St. George Parish	Worcester	www.saintgeorgeparish.org
St. John the Guardian of Our Lady Parish	Clinton	www.stjohnsclinton.org
Our Lady of Good Counsel	West Boylston	www.goodcounselma.com
Our Lady of Hope Parish	Grafton	www.stmarysgrafton.org

South District

St. Anne—St. Patrick Parish	Fiskdale	www.stannestpatrickparish.com
St. Augustine Parish	Millville	www.staugustinesmillville.com
St. John Paul II Parish	Southbridge	www.stjp2parish.org
St. Mark's Parish	Sutton	www.saintmarkparish.org
St. Mary of the Assumption	Milford	www.stmarymilford.org
St. Mary Parish	Uxbridge	www.stmaryuxbridge.org
Divine Mercy of Saint Paul	Blackstone	www.stpaulblackstone.org www.sttheresablackstone.org
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish	Webster	www.sacredheartwebster.org

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