

September 2017

# Ozanam

## News



Society of St Vincent  
de Paul, Scotland



**LOVE &  
CHARITY**

**MARKING 400 YEARS OF  
THE VINCENTIAN CHARISM**





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The Society of St Vincent de Paul

National office:  
2nd floor,  
113 West Regent Street  
Glasgow  
G2 2RU  
Tel: 0141 226 8833  
email: [admin@ssvpscotland.com](mailto:admin@ssvpscotland.com)

Ozanam News Editor: Matt Meade  
[communication@ssvpscotland.com](mailto:communication@ssvpscotland.com)



## Vinnies are tin-bin-tastic!

See page 6

**GET INVOLVED!** We want to know what your conference is up to. If you have a story, share it. The *Ozanam News* relies on your contributions. Send articles and images (jpg or png format only, no PDFs) to [communication@ssvpscotland.com](mailto:communication@ssvpscotland.com). Put the name of your conference in the subject

bar and your full contact details. Please provide full caption details for photos. We do not accept paper submissions. Articles should be written by email or attached as a Word document.

If you need help please contact our editor Matt Meade on 07985 592920.

### Publishing Policy

1. The objective is to publish a new *Ozanam News*, which will be issued three times per year, May, September and November. To facilitate this, a publications committee has been formed and a member of the National Council has been made responsible for its operation. The publications committee will normally meet two months before going to the printer. As at present, the actual putting together of the magazine will be the responsibility of the National Office staff, who will select the printer and liaise and coordinate with all preproduction functions. 2. In accordance with National Council requirements, the intention will be not to feature 'editorial' pieces. Any material deemed to detract from the Society's broader aims will be approved by the National Council prior to publication. Hopefully these arrangements will help the new *Ozanam News* develop into a more humorous, educational and spiritual publication which will concentrate on bringing the Society, its Members and Associates closer together. With this Togetherness in mind, National Council Agenda business could well become a regular feature in the magazine. In the main, letters for publication will normally be from twinning parties - regarded as reports. Other letters will be accepted for publication with an added footnote or returned for discussion by the respective council and/or president if thought to be more appropriate.

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# To welcome the stranger is to welcome Christ

Reflection by Jim McKendrick,  
SSVP National President

**DURING his homily on Holy Thursday last year, Pope Francis said: “To welcome the stranger is to welcome Christ”.**

The Vincentian family worldwide celebrates the 400th Anniversary of Vincentian spirituality and our charism so this is a good theme for reflection and action.

We are accustomed to think of Frederic Ozanam as living in middle-class comfort.

He was the son of a doctor and a shopkeeper. One of his brothers was a priest and the other was a doctor. He was happily married to a loving wife and had a daughter he adored.

His writings won acclaim and his work on Catholic Social Teaching is increasingly recognised today as seminal. Yet it was not always so. Frederic and his family were on occasions strangers themselves in need of welcoming.

His family moved from Milan to re-settle in Lyon and were readily accepted into the local community and church.

Aged fifteen, he entered a dark period of intense doubt which challenged his faith.

Finding no comfort in books, he was able to unburden his sad heart to his religion and philosophy tutor,

Father Abbe Noirot, a Dominican priest. He patiently and lovingly helped Frederic to address and conquer his doubts and uncertainties. Years later, Ozanam wrote: *“He reopened the windows of my soul to the day. I believed thereafter with a faith reassured.”*

On completing his secondary education in Lyon, Frederic moved to Paris to study Law. Paris at the time was a city in turmoil: scepticism and secularism predominated in the city and university.

Frederic, isolated and disheartened, wrote to his old school friend (and cousin), Falconnet: *“Paris distresses me for there is no life, no faith, no love...its coldness chills me and its corruption is killing me”.*

Providentially, before he left Lyon Frederic had been advised to call on Andre-Marie Ampere, the famous scientist, who was a native of the city. In Ampere, Frederic found a second father who took him from his lonely lodging house into his family and household.

For two formative years, Frederic was privileged to watch the great genius at

work. Often, when they were in the laboratory together, Ampere would stop and mutter *“Que Dieu est grand, Ozanam”* (How great God is). Frederic overcame his dislike of Paris, regained his confidence and began to hope in a better future: *“Learning and Catholicism, these are my consolations!”*

Before he left the Ampere household, he would add a third:

**“It is your duty to study the things of this world, but only look on them with one eye. Let the other eye always be fixed on the light of eternity.”**

charity and love of the poor. During the course of one of their many long evening conversations, Ampere advised Frederic: *“It is your duty as a human being to study the things of this world, but only look on them with one eye: let your other eye be always fixed on the light of eternity. I was lazy*

*about the things of heaven, it took me ten years to find that light again, Frederic.”* Later Frederic mused, *“Those poor families I saw begging outside the church last Sunday: how do we convince them Christianity has a message?”*

Ampere led him gently towards the answer, until Frederic exclaimed: *“They can only judge good Christians...by their charity.”*

*“Charity. Yes there you have it, Frederic,”* Ampere replied. This conversation helped to crystallise many of the thoughts that had been worrying Frederic of late.

How could he, a penniless student, help those more in need than he was?

Soon he met Francois Lallier, who was to become Frederic's dear and lifelong friend, who in turn introduced him to Emmanuel Bailly. From here, the president and founder members of Frederic's 'little society' were to emerge.

From the loving support of three saintly men - Noirot, Ampere and Bailly - and the zeal, enthusiasm and camaraderie of a few young men, Frederic's dream of a worldwide network of charity was realised.



# The beating heart of the church



Members venerate the relic of St Vincent de Paul after Holy Mass.

**THE Society of St Vincent de Paul is the “beating heart” of the Catholic Church, says Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews & Edinburgh.**

“Along with the men and women religious across the country the people who volunteer in the SSVP are the beating heart of the church,” said the Archbishop “You are at the centre of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.”

His comments came during his homily given at the annual Mass for members, held at St Margaret’s Chapel, Gillis Centre, Edinburgh.

At the conclusion of Holy Mass, those present consecrated the SSVP to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. There then followed an opportunity to venerate a relic of St Vincent de Paul.

“This was a great opportunity for members from across Scotland to come together, make friends and strengthen ties between our many conferences,” said event organiser Richard Steinbach, SSVP President within the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh.



Archbishop Leo Cushley, left, highlighted the work of the SSVP.

## Mini Vinnies for St Jo’s

ST Joseph’s Conference in Kilmarnock has launched a Mini Vinnies group. **It’s the youth arm of SSVP, giving youngsters the chance to help those in their community struggling or in crisis.**

The enthusiastic group is working closely with members in the church conference and is one of only two parish-based groups in Scotland!



Members get busy collecting food from Tesco.

Kim Wallace, of St Jo’s SSVP said: “The children have been busy organising a food collection which will be distributed by the St Joseph’s

Conference. They are bursting with ideas and enthusiasm for their work with the SSVP.”

*See page 9 to find out more.*

## Kids enjoy fresh Ayr

**CHILDREN enjoyed a great day out on the west coast, thanks to a conference in Motherwell.**

St Bernadette’s held its annual bus trip to Ayr. Pat Carr from the conference said: “Every year we hire two buses paid for by a council grant.

“Each child is given £5 to spend. We invited 22 members of the local Church of Scotland, thanks to their minister the Rev Derek Pope.

“This is our 35th trip, which is one of our conference’s annual activities and it was another very successful and sunny day.”

# The centrality of social justice

By Joe MacEachen

**WE are all aware of the forces in the world today who want to sideline the Christian voice and keep us silent.**

How should we respond? By speaking out more by our practical love for the poor and by striving to alleviate the many injustices which exist.

Pope Francis has asked us to be a church for the poor. Speaking out and acting on social justice issues is indeed central

to our work.

Friends sometimes say: "What has the SSVP got to do with social justice? That's surely political and you should not be involved in politics."

I would agree that we should not be involved in party politics. Our society is apolitical in that sense. But I would argue that social justice is central to the entire Vincentian family.

It goes deeper than politics because we are striving to represent

gospel values in our work with the poor. This has been the case since the formation of the Vincentian family. Saint Vincent De Paul devoted his life to serving the poor whom he described as "our masters". He once said: *"There is no act of charity that is not accompanied by justice or that permits us to do more than we reasonably can."*

We should also remember that Blessed Frederic Ozanam was a leading social reformer in his time. The SSVP strives to alleviate need and to redress the situations which cause it. SSVP Scotland has a statement on charity based on the Gospel of Saint Matthew (25: 35-40): *"For I was hungry and you gave me food..."*. We strive to respond to the call of the Church to remove the injustices which cause poverty.

How in practical terms do we achieve this? We are doing so by carrying out our visits to the poor in their homes or in hospitals. We also have 'Vincentians in Partnership', an umbrella organisation which includes clergy and lay organisations.

It has campaigned on topics such as fairer taxes, welcoming

refugees, and combatting people trafficking. These are examples of the Vincentian family in campaigning on social justice issues.

I feel it is important to collaborate with like-minded organisations

**“We strive to respond to the call of the church to remove the injustices which cause poverty.”**

in social justice issues.

To this end, the SSVP has worked or will be working with organisations such as Scottish Churches Action on Housing, Child Poverty Action Group and Justice and Peace Scotland.

So, Social Justice is central to the Vincentian family.

In doing this work we strive to live out gospel values in our lives through love and concern for the poor.

● Joe MacEachen is SSVP diocesan president for Motherwell and representative on Vincentians in Partnership.



Pat Carr, right, presents the certificate to Frank Sweeney.

## Thanks, Frank

PAT Carr presented a certificate of appreciation for the "valuable help" that Frank Sweeney has given to the SSVP's Motherwell Diocesan Furniture project. Frank is a parishioner of St Ignatius in Wishaw.



# Tributes paid to Fr Martin Xavier



Father Martin's coffin was received in India by his family.

## TRIBUTES have been paid to Father Martin Xavier Vazhachira CMI.

The 33-year-old Carmelite priest was found dead on a beach at Dunbar, East Lothian. The cause of death is, as yet, unknown.

Hundreds of mourners gathered at St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh for his Requiem Mass, along with around 50 fellow priests.

The popular Indian-born priest was a postgraduate student at the University of Edinburgh

and first served in parishes in Falkirk. He was the former administrator of St John the Baptist's in Corstorphine, where he was a spiritual leader for the SSVP. Conference secretary Margaret Mawdsley said: "He was a regular at our conference meetings. We had a beautiful concelebrated Mass in the Indian Rite and the church was filled to capacity.

"We pray for him and his

loving family in Kerala, India."

Fr Vazhachira's body was repatriated to his family for burial.

Heartbreaking scenes were seen at the Vazhachira family home when the late priest's father and siblings received the coffin.



## A day out to Peebles

### OUR Lady of Lourdes conference in Dunfermline treated its senior citizen parishioners to a day out in Peebles.

They also enjoyed a stop-off at Butterfly World near Dalkeith. The conference is busy involving

Mini Vinnies in a variety of projects to help the poor and homeless.

Margaret Wallace from the conference said: "We continue to collect and deliver warm clothing and non perishable food weekly to the homeless."





# It's a win for the Vin Tin Bin



Mario Marzella take delivery of the Vin Tin Bin. Below, the Mass at St Matthew's and scenes from the event.



## **VINCENTIANS in Midlothian went tin-tastic to celebrate 400 years of the society's spirituality.**

They managed to gather an impressive 400 tins of food for the anniversary year.

A 'Vin Tin Bin' was created to collect the items for distribution to various conferences to give to those in need.

A Mass was then held in St Matthew's, Rosewell, celebrated by Father Paul Roche, spiritual director to the Daughters of Charity, and concelebrated with local clergy. Patricia Reid, president of the Sacred Heart

Conference in Penicuik, said: "The challenge to gather 400 tins led to members going into local schools to give an assembly on the life of St Vincent, the Vincentian family and the importance of helping people.

"This was a simple family celebration through which we realised the joy of our shared heritage and the strength of collaboration."

The project also involved St David's Dalkieth and the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul and their affiliates.



“This was a simple family celebration through which we realised the joy of our shared heritage.

## Need to know:

# Crisis grants

SSVP members should be clued-up on practical welfare issues so we can advise those we visit about what help is available to them. **Crisis grants** help people cope with unexpected expenses arising out of an emergency or a disaster. Here's the basics...



### Who CAN get a crisis grant?

People who are aged 16 or over, on a low income and are unable to get financial help from any other source. They do not have to be getting a welfare benefit to be eligible. They can get a crisis grant if they are subject to a DWP sanction or disallowance which has reduced their benefit.

### Who CAN'T get a crisis grant?

People cannot normally get a crisis grant if they have made repeat applications for a grant, have resources of their own or are in a situation which the grant cannot be made for. If they have family who can help out financially, they are unlikely to get one.

### What expenses can it be made for?

The grant must be needed to prevent serious damage or risk to your health or safety or to that of your family. Examples: where money has been lost/stolen and the person has no money for living expenses, where there has been a breakdown of relationships or you have nowhere to stay and may have to sleep rough.

### How to apply for a grant

Check how your local authority accepts applications for crisis grants. It may accept applications by post, online, by phone or in a face to face interview. You can find details of how your local authority accepts applications, as well as its contact details, on the Scottish Government website at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot).

### Examples of 'disasters'

A serious flood, fire or gas explosion which leads to serious damage to a person's property.

### Grants for Living expenses

Examples of living expenses that may awarded following an emergency include food, heating costs, nappies and toiletries, travel costs and costs for accommodation in a hostel.

### Crisis Grant awards

Examples of the types of items that might be awarded following a disaster are furniture, household equipment, travel costs, removal expenses, storage charges and connection charges for gas and electricity.



You cannot get a crisis grant for rent in advance. Rent is one of a number of excluded needs that a crisis grant cannot be paid for.



Amélie and Joseph Davidson with an overflowing foodbank after a successful food collection.



# Killie's Mini Vinnies

*Amélie Davidson explains the first project of the new Mini-Vinnies group at St Joseph's, Kilmarnock - a church food bank.*

**“MOST people believe that the time of year when food banks suffer from shortages is Christmas, whereas in reality it is during the Summer holidays.**

As the end of term approaches – so does the end of daily school dinners, putting as many as three million children at risk of hunger and malnutrition.

A shocking one in five British parents skip at least one meal in the summer holidays so that there will be enough food for their children to eat.

Families who rely on free school meals can find themselves facing hunger during the school holidays, when there is an extra financial pressure to provide main meals.

Some children will not eat a hot meal until they return to school in August.

No-one knows the full scale of hunger in the school holidays, but these figures make one thing clear: many families are closer to crisis than we think. It should be a wake-up call to all of us that so many children will have a parent expecting to skip a meal.

“Families who rely on free school meals can find themselves hungry during the school holidays.

My brother Joseph and I, members of St Joseph's Church in Kilmarnock, founded a Mini-Vinnies Group. We organised a food collection throughout July for our church food bank.

We were overwhelmed by everyone's generosity, kindness and support towards our first project.

A fantastic 1,400 items were collected - including 158 tins of beans - as well as £200 cash.

It was wonderful to see how everyone in our church came together to help us - whether it was by donating, carrying bags of food to the church hall or helping us to unpack and fill the shelves.

We also met with some of the recipients of the food parcels

who were very grateful for the service provided by St Joseph's church food bank and the greater variety of foods now available to them.

We also had the opportunity to work with Alistair Thomson, our SSVP president, and other members of our conference, who are delighted to see their cupboards overflowing with food!

Sadly, we can't help everyone who is hungry - but everyone can help someone. Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much. The SSVP was started by young people back in 1833 and that's why I think it's so important to have young people in our church involved. Giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a difference.

After all, as Pope Francis said, “None of us is an island, autonomous and dependent from others. We can only build the future by standing together, including everyone.”

Together, we can make a difference and that is what we have done at St Joseph's.”

# May they rest in peace | obituaries

- **Charlie Bradley**, former member, Our Lady of Good Aid, Motherwell.
- **Lawrence Connaghan**, former president, St Andrew's, Livingston.
- **William Dalton**, former president, Our Lady & St Anne's, Hamilton.
- **Gerald Donaldson**, treasurer, St Andrew's, Airdrie.
- **Vera Gill**, former member, Holy Name, Mansewood.
- **Sam Green**, former member, Immaculate Conception, Bathgate.
- **Michael Harkins**, vice president/former treasurer, St Aidan's, Wishaw.
- **Thomas Heneghan**, former president, St Catherine Laboure, Balornock.
- **Phillip Haverstock**, former member, St Athanasius, Carluke.
- **Jim Kane**, President, St Luke's, Banknock.
- **Patrick Lagan**, treasurer, St James', Paisley.
- **Willie Lappin**, President, St Patrick's Greenock.
- **Allan Lennon**, active member, St Joseph's, Kilmarnock.
- **Joe Logan**, former president, Immaculate Conception, Bathgate.
- **Alec McHugh**, former treasurer, St John the Baptist, Uddingston.
- **Caroline McInnes**, active member, St Columba's, Edinburgh.
- **Harry McKelvie**, active member, St John's, Barrhead.
- **Hugh McNish**, active member, St Charles', Paisley.
- **Danny Mail**, former member, St Peter in Chains, Ardrossan.
- **Peter Meldrum**, former treasurer, St Ninian's, Dundee.
- **Patrick Miller**, former president, St Aidan's, Wishaw.
- **Isaac Mitchell**, active member, St Bartholemew's, Coatbridge.
- **Josie Moran**, former member, St Vincent's Dundee.
- **John Nugent**, active member, St Mary's, Larkhall.
- **John O'Brien**, former treasurer, Holy Trinity & All Saints, Coatdyke.
- **Eddie O'Hara**, former president, St Leonard's, East Kilbride.
- **Gerry Pacitti**, treasurer, St John the Baptist, Uddingston.
- **Richard Reilly**, former president, St James', Kirkshaws.
- **James Robertson**, former member (died January '17), Immaculate Conception, Bathgate.
- **Ernest Salveta**, former secretary, OL Perpetual Succour, Glasgow.
- **Elizabeth Stewart**, former member, St Margaret's, Dunfermline.
- **John Thomas**, active member, St Brigid's, Newmains.
- **Angela Weir**, active member, St Bartholemew's, Coatbridge.
- **Stan Wilson**, secretary, St Winin's, Kilwinning.
- **Joan Wright**, active member, St Bernadette's, Tullibody.
- **Sean Wynne**, active member, St Ambrose', Baillieston.
- **Fr Martin Xavier**, spiritual leader, St John the Baptist, Edinburgh.



Conference president Margaret Neish, *left*, and member Candice McKenzie.



## Talk was a hit with kids!

KIDS at St Paul's Primary in Glenrothers enjoyed a talk on the life of St Vincent de Paul.

St Paul's & St Mary's president Margaret Neish, along with member Candice McKenzie produced a poster depicting historical information throughout his life to illustrate their talk.

A conference spokesperson said: "The children took a great interest in the project, asking questions and putting our president and Candice to the test!

"The children particularly wanted to hear about the Minnie Vinnies. It was great to have the opportunity to speak to the schools and everyone enjoyed the day."

## Tributes after 50 years' service

TRIBUTES have been paid to an SSVP member who passed away after 50 years' service. William Lappin was president of St Patrick's Conference in Greenock.

Conference secretary Liz Ayliffe said: "Willie was a very talented man - he was a piper as well as a sign writer to trade and many of his plaques are still visible here in St Patrick's. We were blessed to have brother Willie as our president and friend and he is sorely missed by all who knew him."

## Bibles for Shotts prisoners

MEMBERS of St Ignatius of Loyola SSVP in Wishaw approved an application by a parishioner for 15 Bibles for HM Prison at Shotts.

Conference member Ken Watt said: "The Conference felt that assistance in the promotion of God's word within the prison would be beneficial."

The request was unanimously approve and the conference also sponsored a Mass for the sick of the parish which was well attended.

## Tributes to Fife's first female

TRIBUTES have been paid to the first female member of the SSVP in Fife.

Elizabeth Stewart joined St Margaret's Conference, Dunfermline, in 1982 and was a member until 2015.

Conference President Moira McCrae said: "Elizabeth was a graduate of the Royal Music Academy in Glasgow and later served as a lay person at Dysart Convent. She was a real asset to us."

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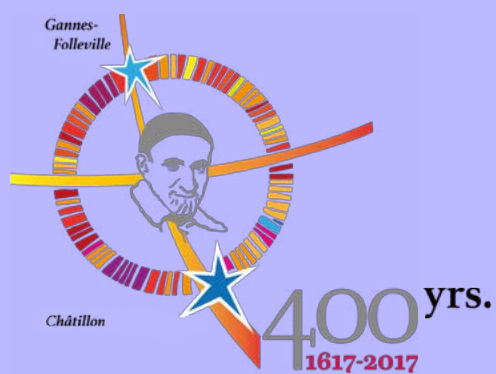
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**The Society of St Vincent de Paul**

National office:  
2nd floor,  
113 West Regent Street  
Glasgow  
G2 2RU  
Tel: 0141 226 8833  
email: [admin@ssvpscotland.com](mailto:admin@ssvpscotland.com)