

Annual Report 2020

1845



2020

175th Anniversary Year



Letter from National President

Dear Brothers, Sisters, Volunteers and Friends of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Scotland,



I am pleased to take this opportunity to acknowledge and express my sincere gratitude to those who have participated in the delivery of the services and acts of charity provided to people in need during the past year.

The 2020 Annual Report, which covers the period from April 2019 to March 2020, contains specific reference to activities carried out throughout the various dioceses in Scotland and I am confident that everyone will be encouraged by the efforts of those involved.

In February, the Communications Working Group and the National Council agreed to an Events Programme for the Celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the first SSVP Conference in Scotland, however owing to the tragic Coronavirus Pandemic the various events understandably had to be cancelled. It is hopeful that the SSVP will acknowledge the 175th historical achievements when circumstances permit.

Yours in St Vincent de Paul and Blessed Frederic Ozanam

Danny Collins

National President

National Council News

The National Council of Scotland is made up of Arch/Diocesan Presidents from across seven Dioceses. In addition, there are two Conferences in Argyll & the Isles, with a possibility of a new one being formed. Diocesan Presidents are elected by Members from their Diocese. The National President leads the Council, and is elected by its Members. The National President may then appoint additional office bearers. They meet 6 times per year.

New Faces



This year we are privileged to welcome Sister Maria Robb as our new Spiritual Director and look forward to working closely with her. We have bid farewell to Sister Agnes McGarvie as Spiritual Director and thank her graciously for her commitment and guidance in her term of office.

Kate Kelley has now taken up the position of National Twinning Officer and has had great success in building new relationships with the National Council in India.



Servicing the administrative, financial & youth aspects of the national charity, the office team includes: staff, Pauline Bonnar, Jim Gibson, Margaret Thomson & Jacqueline Laird, and volunteers, Liz Strachan, Esther Hutcheson & Caroline O'Neil.

How We Help

The aim of the Society is to provide help and support to anyone in need. This is done in the spirit of our Patron, St Vincent de Paul. His mission was to go to the poor and provide what they lacked.

Vincentians show this love, compassion and understanding by giving their empathy, friendship, time, and talents to those in need.

Groups of helpers form together in a Conference. They meet regularly to pray, plan and act in order to serve the needs of their local community.

Help may be in the form of company, moral support, or in referring people to specialist organisations. Most often they provide food, clothing, furniture: real and practical support. People are visited wherever they are – in their homes, hospitals or in prison.

Special Works Conferences

We have collaborative Conferences which allow members from different areas to come together to work on a special project. These include:

Ozanam Clubs -These are social groups for people of all ages with disabilities and special needs. They are held in Viewpark, Carfin, Dundee, Paisley and Hamilton.

Ozanam Centres -These operate at Briggait in Glasgow and Holy Trinity and St Barnabas Church in Paisley to provide meals, clothing and toiletries to the homeless.

Jericho Project -The SSVP Holy Spirit Special Works Conference is a major supporter and contributor to Jericho House in Greenock which supports people with addiction rehabilitation.

Furniture Projects - Across Scotland, members and volunteers collect and store donated furniture then deliver it to those in need.

Adaptation To A Changing World

Faithful to the spirit of it's founders, the Society constantly strives for renewal, adapting to changing world conditions. It seeks to be ever aware of the changes that occur in human society and the new types of poverty that may be identified or anticipated. It gives priority to the poorest of the poor and those who are most rejected by society. **SSVP Manual & Rule Book**

It's Now that Matters

The "Now" moment is the moment of destiny. Not the past, not the future, but the **here and now**. Fulfil it well with all your strength and you will be accumulating great rewards. **Society of St. Vincent de Paul (Scotland) Prayerbook**



175 Years of SSVP in Scotland!

News of new book to celebrate landmark anniversary

By Former National President Jim McKendrick

Over the last ten years, several of the early Scottish conferences have celebrated 150 years of service to the poor. Often these celebrations had involved old records, pictures and a variety of reminiscences. Also, the Ozanam News had regularly carried a few articles on our history and old photos. There was a feeling that, although members knew of Ozanam and Sister Rosalie, in general that knowledge was slightly limited. One of the ideas mooted to include in our 175 Anniversary celebrations was a short history of the Society in Scotland, and I was invited to be the author.

Writing the history turned out to be a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding experience. I had always known that Ozanam stayed for two formative years with the father of electromagnetics, mathematician and physicist, Andre-Marie Ampere and his family. The term of electrical measurement “Amp” is named after him. Frederic used to help the great man in the lab and Ampere would often stop in mid experiment and acclaim loudly: “How great God is, Ozanam!”



During this time, Frederic found solace in family discussions on science, Catholicism and the importance of charity towards the poor. His faith was greatly strengthened and deepened. One day, Frederic spontaneously visited the local church and was surprised to see Ampere, kneeling amongst the women, fervently reciting the rosary. Later he was to write “the rosary of Ampere did more for me than all the books and sermons put together”. During the 1832 cholera outbreak in Paris, Ampere said to Frederic “if the cholera seizes me in the night, run first, as quick as you can and fetch my confessor; afterwards, you may go and summon my physician”. This example of Faith inspired Ozanam at a formative time in his youth.

The Society in Scotland has changed over the years; women can join the Society and now constitute over 50% of the membership. Young people are welcomed at all levels from primary school to university. However, the Society has remained faithful to its origins – the rule remains essentially as written by Francois Lallier in 1837 and conference meetings still adhere to the same simple format as began in 1833. Membership is growing older and declining. Recruitment is the biggest challenge for the future. Meeting the increased post Covid-19 demands for financial and spiritual assistance will also be a challenge, but one which we face with faith and courage, in the manner of Ampere and Ozanam.

The copy of the 175th Anniversary book will be given to every member of the Society in Scotland later this year.

Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh

Conferences continue to provide support and assistance to the needy of the parishes and co-operate with other organisations in bringing relief to those in need. The recruitment campaign was launched as mentioned in last year's report and there have been a number of conferences who have attracted additional members. This is still a priority for the Society and will continue to be work in progress.

"The Caravan gave us time to relax as a family after a difficult year."

Caravan Project Several conferences from the Edinburgh Group Council have worked hard over the season in making the caravans available for our clients. These efforts meant that many families were able to have a break away from the stresses of life and spend quality time together.

Furniture Project As the project continues to expand its operation it has secured a larger storage facility and with over 300 deliveries and 200 uplifts, a replacement vehicle was required. The Archdiocesan Council agreed and following some lengthy negotiations a new leased van was delivered in December 2019. This is being funded by donations from conferences throughout the diocese.



Support None of the work that our conferences do week in and week out such as assisting a refugee family or assisting in the repatriation of a Polish domestic abuse victim and her children would be possible without the financial support provided by our kind and generous parishioners. One such example of this generous spirit was a donation of £1200.00 to the Fife Group Council made by Joe Rosiejak who did a sponsored cycle on the Camino to Santiago de Compostela to celebrate his 70th birthday. He is pictured here with Mary Lynch, Fife GC President.



Archdiocese of Glasgow



The Ozanam Centre has been supported by St Vincent Youth Volunteers in providing a drop-in clothing collection to the homeless twice a week.

They also run a Sunday lunch club offering a meal, company and warmth to those who attend.

In the last year over 1,500 ladies & gents have received clothing items and over 1,000 have received a meal.

Scholarship Fund

Established in 2018, this has supported five young students within the Archdiocese. In the first year of studies, 2019/20 they received £1500 each and this will continue annually until their graduation. For year beginning 2020/21, a further eight students have been selected.

Our Lady and St George, Penilee

A pop-up cinema was organised for the parishioners during the winter months. This was extremely welcome as it meant there was something exciting to look forward to in the otherwise long, dark evenings.



"It was great to hear about all the different organisations in our local area with help available. As a single parent, it's hard sometimes to know where to go for help."

Our Lady and St Mark's, Alexandria

In January, this Conference attended a Hub event at St Mary's Primary school. This event was to raise awareness of support available for families in crisis. They joined with the Conference from St Martin's to establish a "Talking Table" at their stand. They distributed leaflets, shared information and were able to show the welcoming face of SSVP.

St Mary and St Joseph's Duntocher

The Conference participated in a PHD study by being interviewed about the work of SSVP. They have also supported two Mini Vinnie Groups and initiated involvement of them collecting money after Mass at St Joseph's church.



Diocese of Paisley



St Laurence's Greenock established a uniform bank for both primary and secondary pupils. They collected donations after Mass and distributed them discreetly to families in need. This not only helped to save money but also reduced waste by reusing and recycling.



"The Saturday club is great as I live alone. I am so grateful they pick me up and take me home too. It's great fun and I'd be lost without it."

Their Saturday pensioners' club continues to provide much needed company with a cuppa, bingo and singsong.

St John's Barrhead have been in contact with businesses who have a surplus of sleeping bags. They collected them and in turn passed them to homeless centres in Paisley and Glasgow. These were gratefully received by those working directly with the homeless as they said "a warm sleeping bag can make a huge difference to someone on the streets".



St Joseph's Greenock have been supporting a great initiative by a local convent which organised respite breaks for those in the parish who are sick or in need of some time away. This is valued by the users who appreciate the breathing space this gives them in helping them cope with difficulties.

St Fergus Paisley members have been rolling up their sleeves and donning the aprons as they help to run Ferguslie Café. They provide a three course meal after 11.30 Mass each Sunday for anyone who needs it.

"The café is brilliant - I really like all the people I meet there - and the food is really good too!"

Diocese of Galloway

St Margaret's and St Paul's combined Conference in Ayr have had a busy year helping those in need with food and company. They were happy to share some feedback from their clients.



One said: "Well, at least one poor man with mental health and addiction issues can say, hand on heart, that the Spirit of St. Vincent de Paul is alive and well in South Ayrshire".

Another commented: "I didn't go to the St. Vincent de Paul; they came to me." This was heartening for them to hear and made them feel glad to be carrying out the Vincentian mission.

St Francis Xavier, Waterside

One of the members, Mr James Rooney and his son penned a wonderful book about the Catholic Church in the Doon Valley. The proceeds from the sale of the book were donated to SSVP and raised £1448. Sadly, James passed away in October last year. May he rest in the peace of Christ.



St Mary's Irvine

Members have made valuable community links between their Conference and three local community hubs in areas which suffer from deprivation. Staff at the hubs can identify people or families who are in need of assistance. This most often takes the form of food vouchers or household items. These hubs provide many essential services, most especially feeding the local children during school holidays, which is when many families in our area struggle.



St Teresa's Dumfries

The vision of this Conference is to be a conduit between the parish and wider community. They collected produce from Harvest Festivals at both St Teresa's Primary and St Joseph's College and delivered them to those in need. They also collected and delivered 50 pamper boxes and 25 shoeboxes filled with child gifts to the local women's refuge.

Each month they bring able care home residents to the parish lunch club so they can enjoy the interaction of having company and a change of scene.



Diocese of Motherwell

Caravan Upgrades



Two of the Diocesan caravans were given a revamp recently after the sale of an excess caravan afforded some funds. This ensured a better holiday experience for users. There are two coordinators who check and maintain the caravans. This continues to be an excellent Vincentian project, providing holidays for people who would otherwise be unable to have one.

Furniture Project

The project has progressed tremendously in this past year. We now have five volunteer drivers, five van assistants and ten admin volunteers. We also have two Project managers and two Coordinators: all doing an excellent job. All the volunteers have the PVG and the Moving and Handling certificate. We now have an excellent administration system and all the Health and Safety procedures are now in place for safe working. We hope to have an open day shortly after we reopen when it is safe to do so, to enable our Society members see the progress in this past year. One of our project managers applied for £10,000 to the National Lottery and was successful. This money will be used to buy a newer furniture van.



Ozanam Club turns 30



A special Mass was celebrated by Bishop Joseph Toal of Motherwell Diocese, to acknowledge the 30th Anniversary of the Ozanam Club. Bishop Toal spoke of the important work of the SSV in his homily.

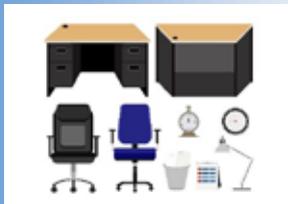
Plaques were given to members, including the club founder, James Lynch, in order to commemorate outstanding work in the community since 1989. The

club was founded in 1989 by James after he and his wife adopted two children with Down's Syndrome.

James said "We always need more volunteers, that's the only thing that keeps the club going. It's a lot harder to get volunteers as they have to get through quite a lot of training. I hope people still want to come and keep these clubs going, I want more to start again. I'd like it to carry on when I'm gone."

Diocese of Dunkeld

St James and St Matthew's Kinross



The Conference at St James Kinross have been very resourceful in sourcing furniture from a company liquidation. This enabled them to pass donations of furniture to a local youth club, the Sisters of Mercy in Dundee and a project sending desks to schools in Africa.

Another of their initiatives is attending parish funerals and providing refreshments afterwards in the hall. Parishioners have said that in a time of bereavement, having somewhere to go for a cup of tea and a sandwich relieves some pressure and allows them to feel supported at a difficult time.



St Stephen's Blairgowrie

St Stephen's have been very committed to their youth and have worked closely with their local primary school. The Mini Vinnie group there has 9 members currently and are supported by 2 members of St Stephen's Conference. They also fund taxis to bring vulnerable children to breakfast club so they can start the day with a proper meal.



They have strong working relationships with the social work department and this enables them to assist

families in coping with difficulties they may face in negotiating the benefit system.

A weekly homeless donations bank for food and essential items in the church has proved to be very fruitful. They are delivered to hostels in Perth and Dundee.

Our Lady of Sorrows Dundee

Personal banking assistance has been offered this year to some of the elderly in the parish. This has involved collecting pensions when parishioners are unable to do so themselves and providing transport for attending banking appointments.

They have also facilitated a lunch club in the church hall every Monday which is a very popular way of the parish community to grow in support of each other.



Diocese of Aberdeen

St Columba's Aberdeen have a monthly dinner for the homeless which they hold in St Mary's Cathedral Hall in conjunction with St Andrew's Community. This is a successful venture and at present they serve between 40-50 meals per session. This makes a great difference in the lives of those who attend.



Our Lady and St John's Ellon, the green fingers of Conference members have been helping an elderly couple who due to health reasons are unable to cut their grass. This has meant a lot to them as they are now able to look out at their tidy garden and it gives them many hours of pleasure.



They also have organised a funeral for a parishioner who died with no family which ensured he had the care of those who knew him in the parish community around him.

Transport is another area where they have worked hard by taking patients to hospital for cancer treatments and elderly parishioners to Sunday Mass.

Diocese of Argyll and the Isles

We have two Conferences in Argyll & the Isles located in Oban and Campbeltown. These Conferences continue to give their time, energy, and love to people in need in the Diocese, often covering large distances to do so.

St Kieran's, Campbeltown have been assisting at a local foodbank this year and providing home visits to those in need.

St Columba's Cathedral, Oban have been assisting those in need financially and providing furniture.

"Charity is the cement which binds communities to God and persons to one another." **St Vincent de Paul**





Youth News



ssvp.youth.scotland



Youth SSVV
Scotland



@youthSSVP

Visit to St John Ogilvie Primary, Paisley

Our National Youth Co-ordinator Pauline Bonnar made a special visit to St John Ogilvie Primary in Paisley. Primary six, along with teacher Miss McNeil are planning to establish a Mini Vinnie group and invited Pauline to give them ideas and information.



“Many of the kids had already heard of the Society, but not of the lives of St Vincent and Blessed Frederic. I took them on an illustrated time travel story journey back to 1581 where they met St Vincent and learned about his life- including being kidnapped by pirates! Many of the kids understood why we must serve the poor in our community. We discussed what a Mini Vinnie meeting is like and how to find ways to help others.”

Motherwell Youth Co-ordinator Rosaleen Steele Reviews her Busy Year.

“There has been a steady increase in the number of Mini Vinnie groups in Motherwell Diocese. According to feedback from teachers and co-ordinators, the enthusiasm and spiritual growth of the children has been outstanding.

A major development was the establishment of a Motherwell Diocesan Mini Vinnie Group. This consists of teachers and co-ordinators who meet regularly to learn from each other and plan Diocesan Mini Vinnie events.



Our first group venture was to make “Socks of Love” at Christmas time. These socks, filled with gifts, were distributed by the Furniture Project in Wishaw along with their deliveries.

Some of our other activities included sponsored walks and prayer silences, jumble sales, visiting nursing homes, food bank collection, Lenten challenges and rosary groups,the Faith in Action list was endless!” .



Welcome to our new Youth Development Co-ordinator

The appointment of Pauline Bonnar as our new Youth Development Co-ordinator has been a welcome addition this year. Pauline is a former English Teacher who has a passion and enthusiasm for sharing the work of the Society with our young people in schools across Scotland. E-mail Pauline for more info on youth@ssvpscotland.com

Twining News



The National Twining officer Kate Kelley has had a busy year making many new contacts and establishing a regular flow of communication with our twin Conferences and Councils in India and South Africa.

“When I took this job my main aim was to improve and extend communication between Twins. This is still very much an ongoing challenge though there have already been some great successes and certainly inspiration for the future. The use of technology can bridge gaps, providing information and photographs of the work being done by SSVP in other countries. Some of the material I have received is being made widely available on our SSVP website and in the Ozanam News. I have also established an email communication with Diocesan Presidents so that Twining news can be cascaded down to all our Conference members.

I have greatly enjoyed learning about the process of specific Projects which I oversee. There is a great deal of planning and organising. The overseas Conferences apply to their Central Councils, then up the chain to the National Council and if these bodies decide the project is sound and can be delivered it arrives with us. There are many checks along the way before and during the process. Afterwards, there is a Certificate of Completion. The past achievements in this scheme are impressive and strong foundations have been set for the future.



We have had two new projects this year and their scottish twins were delighted to hear reports of their success. One was for goat rearing 75,000 Rupees (£811) and the other sheep rearing 70,000 rupees (£757). Some of the others from last year were for drinking water and milk buffalos – projects which give sustainable self help.

The year to come will be busier than ever with poorer communities struggling back to their feet after Covid—19. I look forward to working with them as closely as possible to provide a link to the kindness of our Conferences here in Scotland.”

Support sent from SSVP Scotland to:
Students in India: £5,715
Conferences in India: £35,705
Conferences in South Africa: £12,980
Total: £54,400

Kate can be contacted with any enquiries on twining@ssvpscotland.com and more information can be found on our website.

Social Justice News

National Social Justice Co-ordinator Patricia McCartney writes



“The inequalities that exist not only in Scotland but at a global level, have unfortunately been starkly highlighted in recent months, not least by the Covid 19 pandemic. Consequently, SSVP Scotland’s



affiliations and liaisons with organisations who seek fairness for all, have never been so important nor so relevant. These links not only demonstrate solidarity and support for their work but allows our voice to join with them in seeking social justice for those most in need through campaigns such as:

Challenge Poverty Week (5th – 11th October 2020)

Scottish Campaign on Rights to Social Security - This is a coalition of NGOs, faith groups and unions as well as individuals from across Scotland who want to see a fairer social security system. For more information www.challengepoverty.net

Give Me Five

£5 per child weekly top up to Child Benefit would lift 30,000 out of poverty. A range of children’s charities, anti-poverty campaigners, faith groups, academics and trade unions are making a call to the Scottish Government to use their powers to introduce the top up.

For more information see www.povertyalliance.org

Menu for Change

This is a partnership by Oxfam, Poverty Alliance, Child Poverty Action Group and Nourish Scotland. The project is encouraging a shift away from emergency food aid as the solution, and towards preventive and rights based measures. These increase the incomes of people facing crisis and supports them to be able to access food in a dignified way. It is also working to address underlying causes of income crises, which causes food poverty.

For more information see www.menuforchange.org.uk

Living Wage Scotland

Established in April 2014, this venture aims to increase the number of employers in Scotland who openly pay their staff a real Living Wage. The real Living Wage is the only UK wage rate that is voluntarily paid by over 6000 UK businesses who believe their staff deserve a fair day’s pay for a day’s work.

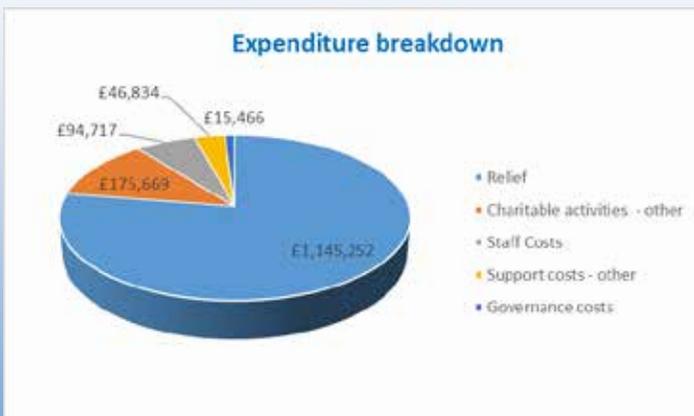
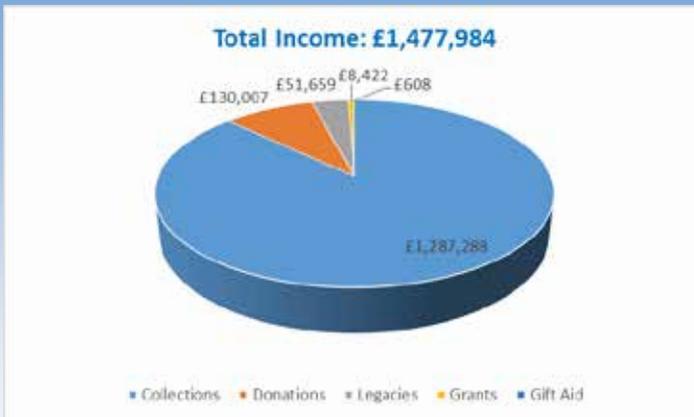
For more information see www.scottishlivingwage.org

Tricia would welcome any enquiries on socialjustice@ssvpscotland.com or [@SocJustSSVPScotland](https://twitter.com/SocJustSSVPScotland)



Society of St Vincent de Paul (Scotland)

Summary of Accounts 2019-2020



A copy of the full audited accounts are available from the National Office

Vincentians

Working Together In Scotland



📍 Society of St. Vincent de Paul (Scotland)

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Registered Company Number SC347803 Registered Charity SC006326