



# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE US SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

## A Letter From Our President

March 23, 2020

Dear Vincentians,

To: Board of Directors, Executive Directors, and National Council Members

Under normal circumstances I would be packing my bag to go to St. Louis tomorrow, but there is nothing normal about the world today.

When I announced the cancellation of our Midyear Meeting the plan was to send out information about the budget and Solidarity Resolutions that were on the agenda for the Business Meeting and follow up with a phone presentation on Saturday. After that, the resolutions were to be voted on electronically. As you might have expected, we need to make adjustments to our plans as the circumstances have evolved in the past week and will continue to do so for many weeks to come. At this point, it seems sensible to move the consideration of these resolutions to a later date so that at its June meeting our Board of Directors can review the impact of the economic disruption on the proposed budget.

We still have a need to keep in touch with each other for support and the sharing of information. You will be contacted this week by the vice president for your region to arrange a conference call on Friday afternoon or Saturday morning. They will be able to report on what we discussed at this week's board conference call. It will also be an opportunity for you to share information about the concerns you have from your vantage point.

From what I am hearing, most of our stores and offices are closed. Many food pantries are trying to continue providing aid, but the difficulty providing volunteers and maintaining social distancing is causing them to reevaluate their ability to serve. Conferences are dealing with their home visits and direct assistance with a range of solutions, from having phone visits to outright suspending all forms of assistance for a couple of weeks. The one service that cannot shut down is our housing programs. Please keep the people who serve in those programs and those they serve in prayer.

Those with employees have taken a variety of approaches depending upon their financial ability. Councils are concerned about the financial well-being of their employees and retaining their health insurance during these closures. Some Councils are reducing their payments to

**National Council of the United States Society of St. Vincent de Paul**

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the percentage needed to retain health benefits for at least a short period of time until things become more clear. Others simply need to lay off their staff and hope they get unemployment compensation quickly. As I previously wrote, each place has different abilities to respond and each community has varying requirements you must follow. We will share pertinent information as it is received.

We need to assume that it will be a long time before we get back to business as usual. In the background we have various groups and committees working on how to continue to operate and use this time to meet the needs of our members. Now, more than ever I ask you and your members to read the weekly E-Gazette. That will continue to be the best vehicle for providing information.

I will continue to keep in touch. Please feel free to contact me, our CEO Dave Barringer or your Regional Vice President if you have information that you wish to share or questions you want to ask. Let's keep each other in our prayers.



Ralph Middlecamp  
National Council President

**Please Note:** The National Council staff is working from their homes, serving our members as normally as possible. You can still reach them by phone, but email may be easier. A staff directory with contact information can be downloaded by [clicking here](#).