

**Frederic's E-Gazette**  
**An e-newsletter from the National Council of**  
**the U.S. Society of St. Vincent de Paul®**  
**May 21, 2020**



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## **A Letter from your Servant Leaders**

The next three weeks will be an historic time for the Catholic Church in the United States. It may be up to us to determine if history will view the period favorably or not.



Five to ten years in the future, we will look back on this pandemic period as culture changing, habit-forming and precedent setting. Nowhere will that be more evident, and debated more, than in the Catholic Church. Before the pandemic struck, one of the Church's biggest problems was the erosion of its membership, both in total and certainly in those who attended Mass. The question will be, did the American Church use the pandemic period and subsequent re-opening to alienate its members even further to stay away, or did it actively recruit existing and new members as part of a Great Rebirth?

Let's look back in time to just months ago. Churches across the country were closing. The second-most identified faith among Americans was "none". Many clergy would have been thrilled to hold a Mass with enough people to sit six feet apart, every other row, as that would have been an increase!

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was in many communities the face of the Catholic Church over the past two months. Our food pantries, contactless deliveries, and adapted Home Visits were elements of our faith that were still on display in an otherwise seemingly shut down faith environment. Council leaders tell me that many SVdP food pantries had demand increase of more than 400 percent. We expect major increases too in the number of Home Visits needed soon as stimulus and unemployment checks run out and people struggle to go back to work, maybe to jobs that will no longer exist.

Our Society's Mission Statement has two active verbs, growing and building. We grow in Holiness and build a more just world. During this national emergency we have been building like crazy as described above, serving our friends in need in innovative ways consistent with our Mission.

Now it's time again to grow in Holiness. More to the point, it is time to help our Church to grow.

As Christians and Catholics we are all called to be evangelizers. We don't simply go to Mass; we invite others to join us. We don't just practice our own faith; we provide resources for others to develop their own. How then can we use our elevated status as a face of the Catholic Church to revitalize Church membership, and ultimately our own, as the pandemic recedes?

Aside from the inherently valid and valued faith reasons to do so, we have self-interest in growing the Church. The majority of our Vincentian members come from active

Catholics. That's also the largest source of our financial and material donations including food and thrift store goods. As the saying goes, if they aren't in the pews, they aren't giving to the collections or contributing to the Poor Box. We need growth to sustain our membership and the impact we can have in our community.

What can we do to grow? As stores open, can we include a Welcome list of parishes within a few miles of the store with Mass times? In our usual respectful way, can we provide invitations to join us at Mass at our pantries and other service centers, and in our information packets we distribute? A great conversation starter with your priest or Bishop is "How can we help right now to grow Church membership?"

We have discussed the re-opening of our thrift stores as an opportunity for a Grand Re-Opening celebration. Can't we apply the same enthusiasm and ideas to the very roots of our faith and service, to grow our parish membership? Will we consider this historic time as the Great Re-birth of the American Catholic Church, or the time when we threw in the towel and gave up, unstopably eroding to be just another fringe movement? The choice is clear in our Society's mission, and in the hearts of our members.

Yours in Christ,



Dave Barringer  
CEO

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## **Extraordinary Circular Letter from the President General to all SSVP Conference Presidents around the world in this time of the Coronavirus pandemic**

**"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." (Saint John 14, 18)**

These have not been easy days for humanity, especially for those most in need. The new coronavirus (Covid-19) has altered the economy and the routine of people, and has had a strong impact on the daily life of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP).

All Councils, special works and Conferences are being severely affected. In addition to illness, we are seeing an increase in hunger, misery, unemployment, and above all, despair and fear.

At the Council General level, various administrative measures have been taken to respond to the effects of the pandemic. The entire international Board has acted in harmony, with responsibility, commitment and conscious that we must work with limited resources. The International Rule says, in Article 1.6, that the SSVP must adapt to the changes in the world: "Faithful to the spirit of its founders, the Society constantly strives for renewal, adapting to changing world conditions"<sup>1</sup> .

As President General, I always seek to convey a message of peace, unity and charity to all members. Of course, during this pandemic, I could not act differently. At this very delicate moment, I believe it is also necessary to look inside our Conferences, to identify some possible difficulties that our own members may be facing.

[Click here](#) to read the full circular letter.

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## New Website for Covid-19 Vincentian Projects in Need of Funding

The current COVID-19 pandemic in our world has multiplied the poverty and needs of millions of people around the globe. From the very beginning, the Vincentian Family (a movement that follows Jesus Christ after the example of St. Vincent de Paul, present worldwide through 4 million people and more than 160 christian institutions) is working tirelessly to alleviate the situation of all these people who have seen their lives worsen because of the Coronavirus: the homeless, the newly unemployed, families in vulnerable situations, etc...

With the aim of connecting projects in need of funding from local organizations worldwide, and people of good will who wish to help financially to keep these works going, we have created a new website. [Click here](#) to view the website.

[Click here](#) to read the article from the SVdP International Council.

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## Questions and Answers

**Q: We have eight active members but no associate members. What is the minimum and maximum number of active and associate members allowed in a Conference?**

**A:** The absolute minimum number of members needed in a Conference is four, which are the officers; or five members if a spiritual advisor is appointed. A minimum of six or seven members is recommended to have an effective Conference. The maximum number depends on the number of activities and what the Conference wants to accomplish in terms of the needs of the community that is being served. No more than 20 is recommended.

**Q: Is there a particular protocol to follow when a friend in need threatens to harm him/herself?**

**A:** For members of the Society, there is no legal obligation to report such findings. There is a moral obligation when there is strong suspicion or if the behavior is witnessed. This question should be presented to your diocese who can give helpful contact numbers for referral.

[Click here to view the Spanish translation of this week's Q&A](#)

[Click here to download this week's Q&A](#)

## [Q&A Index](#)

Click here to visit the SVdP Thrift Store website for stores-related Q&A's:  
<http://www.svdpusa-thriftstore.org/>

Submit your questions to:  
Pam Hudson Johnson  
National Director of Governance & Membership Services  
[phudson@svdpusa.org](mailto:phudson@svdpusa.org)

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## Coronavirus Response Updates

### ***Continued COVID-19 Guidance to SVdP Members***

As the country continues to adapt to the reality of social distancing and impending scarcity, the Society is aware of the need for our services now more than ever.

Local Councils and Conferences shift their work from face-to-face services to creative and location-specific approaches. The National Council will continue its focus on support and value to the entire Society.

Please visit our website regularly (<https://www.svdpusa.org/Assistance-Services/COVID-19-Response>), as we will update COVID-19 related resources for Public Policy & Advocacy, Fundraising, and Leadership Communications.

We are grateful for your good work to continue responding to shifting community needs. Thank you for all you do to fulfill our mission to feed, clothe, house, and heal friends in need across the U.S.

As a trusted nonprofit organization that already serves the most likely to be hurt by the economic devastation of the Coronavirus Crisis, the Society's work has never been more important!

### ***Local Councils Responding to the Coronavirus***

Some Councils have developed resources to help friends in need access assistance and information available at the state and local levels. [Click here](#) to check out these examples from the Attleboro Council (MA).

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## SVdP Safety Face Masks

### OFFERS PROTECTION AND STYLE FROM AIRBORNE PARTICULATES.

Comfortable and breathable to wear. Made of 100% microfiber polyester so it is light weight and cool even in the summertime. When your mask is not needed, simply pull it down off your face and let it rest easily around your neck until you are ready to use it again. This fabric is color fast which means the SVdP logo will be attractive and bright for as long as you own the mask. It is totally washable and easy to maintain. Keep safe from harmful airborne particulates and show the SVdP logo at the same time.



### Washable - Microfiber Polyester - SPF50 - Dry Wicking

#### To Order:

Visit the Magnalite Catholic Website, or [click here](#).

Item: SFM-I Safety Mask \$5.50/ea

\*DISCLAIMER: Masks are non-medical. The manufacturer makes no guarantees that the mask prevents the infection or the transmission of viruses or diseases.



Disaster Services SVdP-USA has set up a Coronavirus Hotline to support St. Vincent de Paul Councils and Conferences in the United States and can be accessed by calling 1 (800) 604-5759. You can learn more about Coronavirus resources and guidance at <https://www.svdpdisaster.org/node/150/>.

## SVdP National Council searching for new Director of Stores Support

[Click here](#) to view the job listing.

#### To inquire or apply, contact:

Anna Filson

[afilson@svdpusa.org](mailto:afilson@svdpusa.org)

## SVdP Immersion Reentry Program works in the Midst of Pandemic

It is difficult enough going to the grocery store during these trying times amid the COVID19 pandemic. It is almost impossible to imagine being released from an institution of incarceration with no shelter, no food, no healthcare resources. This crisis exposes the already bleak realities that exist daily for our brothers and sisters upon their release back

from incarceration into their home communities. These realities become more severe as the social safety network of agencies, such as our Society of St. Vincent de Paul, are limited in their access to the people we serve-those already most in need.

The Society has implemented a national reentry program-Immersion. The first phase of the program has been working since January in 6 sites: Sacramento District Council, Idaho Southwest District Council, Des Moines Council, Green Bay Council, the Attleboro Council and the Orlando Council.

All Immersion Program sites are facing the challenges of the COVID pandemic which has required Immersion sites to adhere to local government orders to shelter. However, our Immersion site leaders and volunteers understand most clearly that those persons reentering will end up homeless on the streets or in shelters without much protection for their health. Further, any possible support from their family or friends is severely limited, if not impossible, to access.

In the face of these severe needs, our Immersion sites response continues to be as best as possible. We are focusing on helping our returning persons with primary issues and moral support.

[Click here](#) to read more about the Immersion Program and its work during the pandemic.

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## Formation Resources and Updates

- [Ozanam Orientation 2020](#) is here – plan your transition.
- [Fred Talk](#) Videos: Vincentian Heritage, Traditions, and Spirituality in Small Doses
- [Weekly Contemplation & Reading Recommendation](#)

## Leadership Task Force Updates

- Midyear Report of the Leadership Taskforce ([Video](#) | [Presentation Slides](#))
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## Getting Ahead Practitioner Call: How and Why to Talk About Systemic Change

Across the country, Systemic Change has invigorated Conferences and Councils. Vincentians are thinking in new and creative ways how to attack poverty in our communities, and Getting Ahead is key to that.

If you are eager to start Getting Ahead or some other systemic change program in your community, this webinar will help you lay the groundwork. What are some of the best practices for having critical conversations about root causes of poverty and the systemic changes needed to address them? How can we share our excitement for new ideas with community members and collaborators?

Join us!

**Monday, June 15, 2020**

**12:00 PM Eastern/11:00 AM Central**

**\*Note new time: This is different from usual practitioner calls\***

[Register Here](#)

**Questions? Contact:**

**Tom Mulloy**

**National Director of Poverty Programs**

**314-576-3993 ext. 215**

[tmulloy@svdpusa.org](mailto:tmulloy@svdpusa.org)

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## **Servant Leaders follow Christ's Example**

This month's topic is Servant Leadership. This is not only a Vincentian concept. In fact it is promoted in the business world. Did you ever wonder what Servant Leadership is? Better yet, would you like to know what it might take to be a Vincentian Servant Leader yourself? Throughout June we will focus on the what, why and how of Servant Leadership in the Society.

Let's begin by taking a look at how this concept connects to our Rule:

Presidents As Servant Leaders

(Rule: Part 1, 3.11)

"Following Christ's example, the Presidents at all levels of the Society endeavor to be servant leaders. They provide an encouraging atmosphere in which the talents, capacities and spiritual charism of the members are identified, developed and put to the service of the poor and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The President of the Conference or Council will have special responsibility for promoting Vincentian spirituality."

[Click here](#) to read the entire article.

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## **Special Notice**

Policies are the operational guidelines for SVdP. Councils and Conferences should continually (at least every two years) analyze their policies to identify any that need to be updated or changed or need to be created.

The National Governance Committee has posted 40 sample policies covering a wide range of subjects at Governance-in-a-Box on the National Council website. The policies shown are intended to be examples of how such policies could read. They are not meant to be adopted as is but rather to serve as examples only. It is always recommended that local legal counsel be sought to ensure that the policies your Council or Conference adopts are compliant with the laws of your state and municipality.

**Questions? Contact:**

**Pam Hudson Johnson**  
**Director of Governance & Membership Services**  
314-576-3993 ext. 214  
[phudson@svdpusa.org](mailto:phudson@svdpusa.org)

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## 2020 Hard Copy Annual Reports Available!

The hard-copy 2020 annual report forms are now available. The reporting period for Vincentian assistance and services provided to our friends in need is for the period of FY Oct 1, 2019 - Sept 30, 2020.

Quarterly report hard copy forms are also available!

Here is the link: <https://www.svdpusa.org/members/Documents/Annual-Report-Forms>

NOTE: The online data entry program for the 2020 annual reports will be available after the start of the new fiscal year 2020-21 after October 1, 2020.

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## June 2nd Final Deadline Online 2019 Annual Reports Data Entry!

All 2019 annual reports deadlines shown below have passed. The 2019 report covers Vincentian assistance and services provided to our friends in need from Oct. 1, 2018 to Sept 30, 2019. The good news is that you still have time to file online! The deadline for online annual report data entry program is at MIDNIGHT on June 2nd. Can we count on your Council/Conference to meet this deadline for service and activities beginning nearly two years ago?

Click here to enter your report online today: <https://www.svdpmembers.com/annual-reports/annual-reporting-cycles/>.

The Society's fiscal year is Oct 1-Sept 30. Annual report due dates for each level of our organization are the same each year:

- Conference annual reports due Nov 30
- District Councils annual reports due Dec 31
- (Arch)Diocesan Councils annual reports due Jan 31
- Special Works & Thrift Store reports are due the same date as the Conferences/Councils that owns/operates them

Isolated Conferences can email hard copy forms to [jwitzel@svdpusa.org](mailto:jwitzel@svdpusa.org).

[Click here](#) to download 2019 hard copy forms.

**For information regarding Annual Reports, contact:**  
**Pam Hudson Johnson**  
**Director of Governance and Membership Services**  
314-576-3993 ext. 214

[phudson@svdpusa.org](mailto:phudson@svdpusa.org)

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## In the News

### International

#### IRELAND:

[Vincent de Paul Clonmel based national president calls for generous response to urgent appeal](#)

### National

#### ORLANDO, FL:

[Vincetians care for those on the fringes](#)

#### CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CA:

[St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County to distribute 500 Boxes of Food / Produce to Pittsburg Community](#)

#### AUSTIN, TX:

[SVdP Austin Collaborates with City of Austin to help slow the Spread of COVID](#)

[Click here](#) to read more National SVdP News.

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## Dates to Remember

North Central Regional Meeting  
[Now virtual, click for more info.](#)

National Assembly  
September 2-5  
St. Louis, MO

Invitation for Renewal  
November 4-8  
St. Louis, MO

South Central Regional Meeting  
October 17  
Oklahoma City, OK

## How to keep up with SVdP

[Click here to keep up with SVdP on social media and join our mobile network!](#)

[Download the free SVdP mobile app now by clicking here!](#)

[Click here to connect with Voice of the Poor on social media!](#)

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## Vincetian Prayer List

Are you or another Vincetian you know in need of prayers from fellow SVdP members? Send the prayer intention to Pam Hudson Johnson at [phudson@svdpusa.org](mailto:phudson@svdpusa.org) and we will add the name to the prayer list on the SVdP website. Thank you and God Bless.

[Click here to view the Vincentian Prayer List.](#)

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## Looking to Support SVdP Programs?

[Click here](#) to access the online donation portal. Use the drop down menu to choose from a variety of national SVdP programs to support.

**If you would like to donate by check, please send it to:  
SVdP National Council  
66 Progress Parkway  
Maryland Heights, MO 63043  
\*In the memo field please write the program you are supporting**

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## **ATTENTION COUNCIL PRESIDENTS & EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS: SOME OF YOUR MEMBERS AREN'T GETTING THE E-GAZETTE!**

If you or another member of your Conference is not receiving the E-Gazette email, [jwitzel@svdpusa.org](mailto:jwitzel@svdpusa.org).

### **Have you Opted Out?**

WERE YOU GETTING THIS NEWSLETTER BUT NO LONGER ARE?

When an email address has been removed by the owner, or the email address holder designates "Do Not Mail," the email address cannot be re-added by the National Council office. The email address holder must sign him or herself up to resume receiving Frederic's E-Gazette at: <http://bit.ly/1GKXYJ6>

Is your Conference or Council doing something that you think should appear in the E-Gazette or on SVdPUSA social media? Send your good news to us!