

The Society Page

The E-Newsletter of The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - Council of Pittsburgh

October 21, 2016



Convicts, Junkies, and the Face of Christ

A reflection by [Keith Kondrich](#), Executive Director

Believe it or not, after 15 years of successfully transforming the lives of hundreds of men, many local Vincentians still remain oblivious, ambivalent, and even publically opposed to the powerful work and ministry of [Michael's Place](#). Michael's Place is our home of hope and recovery for men transitioning from jail to independent living, gainful employment, and personal and spiritual recovery.



My heart breaks when I hear the following comments from brother and sister Vincentians:

- "Michael's Place? Michael's Place? What's that?"
- "Why are we providing twinning funds to a bunch of junkie drug addicts and alcoholics?"
- "Our District Council shouldn't be giving any money to Michael's Place to support those convicts!"

I guess sometimes we forget that Jesus himself was one of those "convicts"! I guess sometimes we forget that Jesus mandates, that's right, mandates that we forgive each other "seventy times seven times"! I guess sometimes we forget our own *Rule* which explicitly states "No work of charity is foreign to the Society."

To continue reading, click [here](#).

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Fall Meeting of SVdP Conference & District Council Presidents - November 12



The Fall Meeting of Conference & District Council Presidents is scheduled for Saturday, November 12th at the Duquesne University Student Union in Downtown Pittsburgh from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Free parking vouchers will be distributed at the meeting.

The meeting will begin with Mass at 8:30 a.m. A continental breakfast follows Mass with a general session during which we'll share some very important updates on local and national issues affecting The Society of St. Vincent de Paul including: a personal reflection on the power of the home visit; Vincentian best practices & innovative programming ideas; results of the 2016 SVdP Pittsburgh Member Survey; Thoughts on the Diocese of Pittsburgh's *On Mission for the Church Alive* initiative; and the Friends of the Poor Walk raffle drawing.

Registration deadline is Wednesday, November 9th. Call or email [James Taylor](#) at 412.321.1071 (x-204) for more information and/or to confirm your attendance.

Joyce & Bill Toms Annual Thanksgiving Benefit for SVdP



We are excited to announce that national recording artist, [Bill Toms](#), and his wife, Joyce, have once again chosen The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul as the recipient of the **Joyce & Bill Toms Annual Thanksgiving Benefit Concert** scheduled for **Wednesday, November 23** (the night before Thanksgiving) at the Hard Rock Café (Station Square).

This will be the 11th Anniversary Show and, in addition to *Bill Toms & Hard Rain, featuring the Soulville Homs*, this year's performers include: *Helene Milan and The Aces*; Bill Deasy; *Miss Freddy Stover*; *Barbara Blue*; *Stevee Wellons*; *Rick Witkowski* and many other talented guest

musicians!

In addition to bringing together the best musicians in Pittsburgh for an incredible night of music, the event features auctions for various-themed gift baskets; a 50-50 Raffle; and silent auctions for some really cool "stuff". Last year's show raised over \$7,500 for the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

The event is 21+ (guests under 21 will be admitted with a parent). General admission tickets are \$15. Tickets can be purchased online by clicking [SVdP.Benefit.Tickets.2016](#)

Santa Shoebox Project

You are invited to participate in the **2016 Shoebox Santa Project** to support our brothers and sisters in need throughout the state of West Virginia.



The project is simple:

- During October and November, participants solicit shoebox donations from parishioners, friends, family, and work colleagues. The shoeboxes should be filled with a variety of personal toiletry items.
- Donations should be contained in a shoebox and wrapped in Christmas paper (no bows or ribbons). Boxes should be clearly marked on the outside with a "W" for women and a "M" for men.
- Donors may also add a Christmas card inside the box to help add to the recipient's holiday cheer (please do not include cash or gift cards).
- The SVdP Warehouse staff and volunteers will pick-up all donated boxes from your location on Monday, November 21st and Tuesday, November 22nd. They will be delivered to Appalachian Outreach, Inc. on Friday, November 25th.

This is a wonderful way to involve and connect youth, young adults, and families from your parish in the mission and work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Last year, we collected over 700 Shoeboxes from the Northeast District Council. This year, by involving the entire Diocesan Council of Pittsburgh, we hope to collect 5,000 shoeboxes!

For more information and/or to register to participate in this very worthwhile initiative, please contact [Brittany Barnicott](#) at 412.321.1071 (x-202) or email her at brittanyb@svdppitt.org.

The Power of the Home Visit: The Importance of Prayer

A reflection by Ray Haskins, St. Kilian Conference

Joining the St. Kilian Conference in 2004, I quickly learned two non-negotiable rules: 1. Weekly meetings. 2. Home visits are mandatory. Little did I realize the importance of Rule #2!

Two years have passed since I received a telephone call from my parish secretary that still leaves me wondering in utter amazement. I was informed that there was an extremely upset woman, whose boyfriend just ended their relationship and rendered her too distraught to drive, who needed help getting food for her cats. Shaking my head, my demeanor suddenly changed when I heard, "She threatened to take her life!"



To continue reading, click [here](#).

The *Power of the Home Visit* is featured in every issue of *The Society Page* as well as posted to our website at: www.svdppitt.org. If you would like to submit a reflection, please email Brittany Barnicott

at brittanyb@svdppitt.org.

From the Society's beginning, the central and most basic activity of Conferences has been the visitation of the needy in their homes. This is the clearest symbol of our Vincentian charism, which dictates the highest respect for the dignity of the poor. It symbolizes our Vincentian commitment to reach out to the needy, rather than require them to report to an outside service site. In the home, needy persons feel most free to confide their stories of struggle. In that family setting, Vincentians are asked to listen, offer humble advice, and render assistance. (The Manual, Section 2.1)

Friends of the Poor Walk




Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Friends of the Poor 10,000 Step Walk! A record number of conferences took part in the event to raise money to support their important work.

If you have not mailed your ticket stubs to the Manchester office, please do so prior to Wednesday, November 9th. We will hold the prize drawing at the Fall Presidents Meeting on Saturday, November 12th. If you have any questions regarding the ticket stubs, please contact [Brittany Barnicott](mailto:brittanyb@svdppitt.org) at 412.321.1071 x-202 or via email at brittanyb@svdppitt.org.

We would also like to highlight the children of St. Vitus School and their Principal, Cathy Ryan, for their participation in this year's Walk. On September 28th, 130 students and teachers walked in prayerful reflection so that they could support the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and those individuals who receive assistance. Thank you for your inspiring support and participation!



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