



# THE VISITOR

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[www.svdppitt.org](http://www.svdppitt.org)

Dear friends,

Are you done with your Christmas shopping? Are you staying home for the holidays? Don't you wish for a white Christmas this year? Are you ready for the holidays?

These are all questions I have been asked this year -and in previous years- as the Christmas holiday nears. This year I wondered about the questions I would like to hear. Like, "are you focusing on your relationship with Jesus this Advent?" Or "will you look after your elderly neighbor this Christmas?" Also, "how do you celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ?" I wouldn't even mind this one: "have you received the Sacrament of reconciliation this Advent?"

Clearly, our society has moved away from what Christmas is, what it means, and what it stands for. It did so gradually, over many years. And some members of this society went with the "new movement" while others did not. I bet I know where you stand in all this. Maybe you are receiving *The Visitor* because you are a donor or because you are a Vincentian. Or maybe you are both. Or you shop at St. Vincent de Paul's stores or maybe you forward our Facebook posts. No matter what your role is with the Society, you are on the right side of Christmas. You have a giving heart, a charitable soul, and you are hopeful. "Rejoice and be glad" (Matthew 5:12), because you have Jesus in your life!

On these final days of Advent, please also take a few minutes to read this edition of *The Visitor*. We hope you enjoy it.

Merry Christmas and a happy start to the new year!

*Ricardo*

Ricardo Luckow  
Executive Director

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## **BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE RECYCLING, TRANSPORTATION, & LOGISTICS CENTER**

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is committed to helping friends in need in a variety of ways, not the least of which is through providing clothing and furniture to many. But that all happens because of an elaborate system of donations, sorting and selecting, transportation and distribution that is centered at our warehouse in Penn Hills.

Director of Business Operations Bryan Engel and his assistant Dawn Dietz work tirelessly in coordinating this effort that relies on, not only the kindness of those donating items and funding, but also on the work of many employees. These workers serve in both the Penn Hills warehouse as well as the four thrift stores located throughout Allegheny County.



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## **PREPARING FOR CHRIST THIS ADVENT**

Advent is a season of longing and preparation. The question is, are we longing and preparing for the right things? Admittedly, I do long for the taste of homemade Christmas cookies, to see the bright, cheerful lights, and to hear my favorite Christmas carols each year. But I also recognize that without a heart that is spiritually prepared, these can be very fleeting pleasures. With a heart united to the Lord, it is possible to savor the delights of the season and to experience Advent and Christmas as time infused with joy and peace.

As Vincentians, our calling to spiritually prepare is amplified. We are called to receive Christ's love so that we can then pour out His love to our neighbors. So many Conferences increase their activities to bless neighbors this time of year through beautiful Angel Trees, toy drives for children, and providing boxes of special foods to make festive family meals. Our Vincentian organizing, shopping, wrapping, decorating, and baking are important preparations! For the neighbors we serve, we are the face of Christ. We see their material needs and accompanying pain and respond in the most beautiful ways! Are we also attuned to the spiritual needs of our neighbors, and do we look for opportunities to share with them the true source of joy and peace? Can there be opportunities to share how we are preparing both materially and spiritually for the coming of Jesus Christ?

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## **A SEASON OF GIVING: HOW YOUR DONATION TRANSFORMS LIVES**

As the Christmas season envelops communities with the spirit of goodwill and generosity, the importance of giving to organizations like the Society of St. Vincent de Paul becomes particularly poignant.

The Society's mission, deeply rooted in charity, focuses on alleviating the struggles of those in need, embodying the true essence of the season. By contributing to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul during this festive time, individuals have the power to make a meaningful impact on the lives of the less fortunate. The Society operates with a commitment to providing essential support to those facing poverty, homelessness, and various other challenges.

The Christmas season, with its emphasis on compassion and selflessness, serves as a reminder of the collective responsibility to uplift those who are marginalized. Donations to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul help fund critical initiatives such as food, housing and utility assistance, and community outreach, ensuring that the warmth and joy of Christmas reach those who might otherwise be left in the cold. In embracing the spirit of giving, individuals not only express solidarity with the less fortunate but also actively contribute to building a more compassionate and caring society.

Thank you for sharing your gifts, not just today, but every day. This Christmas, let the act of supporting the Society of St. Vincent de Paul serve as a reminder that the true magic of the season lies in our ability to extend a helping hand to those in need, embodying St. Vincent de Paul's timeless message of love and generosity.

**YOUR DONATIONS HELP US  
SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS**

**DONATE TODAY**

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR GREAT DEALS IN OUR STORES + STAY UP-TO-DATE ON WHAT WE'RE DOING TO HELP OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED EVERY DAY!



The Society of Saint Vincent De Paul | 3048 Pioneer Ave | Pittsburgh, PA 15226 US

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