



THE VISITOR

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www.svdppitt.org

Dear friends,

"In our world people are all too ready to believe in bad news, but it can be hard to believe that all will be well in the face of current events. What is the good news that God is inviting you to believe in?" That is from [Pray as You Go](#)'s meditation of Sunday, February 18th (you can probably tell I don't like footnotes). Lent started early this year, on February 14th. For some -including me- it provided a certain sense of awkwardness that Ash Wednesday would coincide with Valentine's day. That awkwardness didn't stay with me for long, though.

Lent is often associated with penance and for good reasons. There is, however, one overarching concept that Jesus sets on fire for us more so during Lent than at any other time. It is that of love. It is through Jesus' love for us that we are driven to pray, to fast, to care for the needy, to donate money, to live out gratitude for God's gifts. How appropriate then, that Ash Wednesday was also Valentine's day. And how do Vincentians live out their Lent? That is a personal question, with obviously differing answers depending on who you ask.

As a group, however, at one Conference, one Council, they do what they always do. They pray as they come together at the beginning of each meeting. They pray that they continue to grow stronger in the face of adversity, that they may enrich their relationship with each other and with Jesus Christ, that they may see Jesus in the faces of those they visit, that those they encounter may be driven to seek Jesus. God answers prayers according to His time and will. And sometimes we get to see clear evidence of how prayers are answered.

We occasionally get written, unsolicited testimonials from friends in need and Vincentians alike describing their journey of restored peace and hope. Recently we received a few lines from an unexpected type of stakeholder, a landlord. This individual thanked the Society for helping his tenant. The acts that arise from the hands and feet of our Vincentians are so far reaching that we lose sight of the full impact they have. The starting point for all this is Jesus inviting us to conversion through His undeniable, unconditional love for us. And yes, this happens during Lent.

May this love lead you to accept God's invitation to receive and share the good news with those around you. And may you enjoy reading February's Visitor!

Ricardo

Ricardo Luckow
Executive Director

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: VINCENTIAN TERRY SKELLEY

Throughout her adult life, Teresa (Terry) Skelley had always been an active volunteer for organizations that helped those in need. So, after her husband

passed away in 2016, her priest at St. Robert Bellarmine asked her to attend a meeting of their St. Vincent DePaul Conference one evening.

Terry went in as a curious potential volunteer and walked out as the new President of the Conference!

She has been in that position for the SVdP Conference at Mary, Mother of God parish ever since. On top of that she is also the current Central District Council President. Such are the sometimes amusing ways that God works with us.



As a musician and church Music Director, Terry had long contributed to the work and mission of the church in many ways. But apparently the group that night, along with God, knew that Terry possessed the leadership skills that would help her in this calling.

Besides those skills, her faith has helped and sustained her through all the challenges. Those challenges included the Covid pandemic crisis several years ago as well as continuous membership changes within the conference. The Holy Spirit really stirred up that faith when, as a young 15-year-old girl, Terry connected with the charismatic movement within the Church, a movement that began right here in Pittsburgh from within Duquesne University in 1967. Since then, she has been a faithful servant of the Lord in many ways.

[READ MORE](#)



REFLECTIONS ON FAITH, LOVE, & SERVICE

At the heart of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul lies a profound connection between our mission and timeless spiritual themes that transcend the boundaries of time and space. Our commitment to faith, service, love, and compassion is a testament to the enduring values that guide our actions.

Faith in Action: "Faith without works is dead." These words, inspired by the Book of James, echo the very essence of our mission. We believe that our faith is not only professed in words but demonstrated in deeds. By reaching out to those in need, we embody the living expression of our faith, creating a tangible impact in the lives of others.

Love in Service: "Love your neighbor as yourself." This commandment, spoken by Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, encapsulates the core of our service. We view each individual as a neighbor deserving of love and compassion. Through our actions, we strive to be the embodiment of this profound love, extending a helping hand to those facing adversity.

Compassion in Community: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." These words from Matthew 25:40 remind us of the interconnectedness of humanity. Our commitment to compassion is reflected in our service to the marginalized and vulnerable. In each act of kindness, we recognize the divine spark within every person we encounter.

St. Vincent de Paul's Legacy: The life of our patron, St. Vincent de Paul, is a beacon of inspiration. His unwavering dedication to serving the poor and marginalized reflects a profound understanding of the Gospel's call to love and serve. We draw strength from his example, aspiring to emulate his compassion and selflessness.

As we engage in our mission, think about these spiritual themes that underpin our service. May our actions reflect our faith, an expression of love, and a manifestation of compassion. Together, we embody the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, forging a path of transformative service guided by the enduring principles of faith, love, and compassion.

BREAKING NEWS!

We are thrilled to announce that the Philip and Patricia Muck Charitable Foundation has generously awarded the Society of St. Vincent de Paul a grant totaling \$50,000 in support of our Regional Emergency Direct Assistance Fund (REDAF)! Additionally, it has supported the new SOS Collab, a collaboration of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, [Off The Floor](#), and [Skyline Recovery](#), with a \$55,000 grant over two years in support of the Collab's first Joint Care Navigator representative.

These remarkable contributions will bolster our efforts in providing critical aid to individuals and families facing emergency situations in our community. With the Foundation's support, we will be able to coordinate and offer vital resources such as food assistance, utility bill payments, rent and mortgage assistance, medical expenses coverage, and other essential needs for those in crisis.

The grant to SVdP represents a significant investment in our mission to alleviate hardship and provide hope to those most in need. Ricardo Luckow, executive director of SVdP, added "I am profoundly grateful for the generous grant awarded by the Philip and Patricia Muck Foundation. This invaluable support will enable us to extend a lifeline to even more individuals and families in our community during their times of greatest need. Together, we can continue to uphold our mission of providing compassionate assistance and restoring hope to those facing adversity."

A CALL TO GENEROSITY

As we experience the sacred season of Lent, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul extends a heartfelt invitation to join us in a meaningful journey of giving and compassion. Our annual Lent Campaign holds a special place in our hearts, symbolizing a collective effort to make a profound impact on the lives of those in need.

Why is the Lent Campaign Crucial?

- It embodies the season of reflection and sacrifice. Lent is a time of reflection, self-examination, and sacrifice. It provides an opportunity to align our actions with our deepest values. By contributing to the Lent Campaign, you participate in a transformative act of selflessness, echoing the spirit of this sacred season.
- The Lent Campaign helps us meet growing needs. The demands on our services intensify during the winter months. As temperatures drop, the vulnerable in our community face increased challenges. Your support during the Lent Campaign enables us to meet these growing needs head-on, providing essential assistance to those struggling with poverty, homelessness, and hunger.
- It nurtures hope and renewal. Your generous contributions play a vital role in nurturing that hope. Your donations empower us to create positive change, offering individuals and families the support and resources they need to overcome adversity and build brighter futures.
- The Lent Campaign acts as a catalyst for multiplying the impact of our service. Your donations enable us to expand our reach, enhance existing programs, and launch new initiatives that address the root causes of poverty. Together, we can create lasting change in the lives of those we serve.

How Can You Contribute?

- Make a [one-time or recurring donation online](#) or by mail to 3048 Pioneer Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15226.
- Encourage friends, family, and colleagues to join in the spirit of giving.
- Explore volunteer opportunities to directly engage with our mission.

Join us on this journey of compassion. The Lent Campaign is more than a fundraiser; it is a collective endeavor to embody the principles of love, sacrifice, and generosity. Your support allows us to continue the legacy of St. Vincent de Paul, reaching out to those in need with compassion and care.

As we embark on this Lenten season, let us stand together in solidarity, making a positive impact on our community. Your generosity guides us towards a future where every individual experiences the warmth of compassion and the promise of renewal. Thank you for being a vital part of our mission.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Council of Pittsburgh is waiving pick-up fees for couches and loveseats in February and March because the number of neighbors-in-need are exceeding our inventory. If you have a couch or loveseat that is free of rips, stains, tears, pet hair, and not broken, please call 412-321-1071 ext. 2 to set up a delivery with Cindy.

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, March 10th at 2:00pm there will be a REGIONAL Zoom session, “The Lenten Season and St. Vincent de Paul” lead by a Vincentian Priest, Fr. John Rybolt. There is no more qualified historian or scholar of our Vincentian history, and we are very fortunate to have him join us in this regional webinar. Conferences and Councils in Pennsylvania belong to the Mid-Atlantic Region along with Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, DC, Delaware, and New Jersey. All Vincentians are invited to attend. [Please link to the Zoom meeting by clicking here.](#)

SAVE ANOTHER DATE: The Vincentian Family Gathering on April 6th at St. Thomas More Church. Join fellow Vincentians to listen to the Voice of Youth—local students from Duquesne University, LaRoche University, Seton Hill University, and Junior Ladies of Charity--as they present the program Today’s Hope for Peace. Registration materials will be available in March, so please mark your calendars now. You will not want to miss this special day of sharing concerns, hopes, needs, and current actions in service.

THIS JUST IN: The 10th National Eucharistic Congress will take place from July 17-21, 2024, in Indianapolis, IN. It is a historic event in the life of the Catholic Church in the United States. The last National Eucharistic Congress to take place in our country was in 1941. The faithful from across our country will come together to praise and adore Jesus Christ really present in the Blessed Sacrament, to be formed in His saving love, and to go forth to transform the world in this love. Registration information can be found [here](#). Please pass this news on to your colleagues, friends and family members. Let’s go together, along with Bishop David Zubik and the Diocese of Pittsburgh, to meet Our Eucharistic Lord in Indianapolis!

READING CORNER

A Vincentian Prayer

Written by the Vincentians of Christ the Divine Shepherd Conference to be read before each meeting:

“Here I am Lord, one more day on this earth that I can smile upon someone who may need a comforting glance to lessen their daily worries of the day.

If you need me Lord, one more day on this earth that I can provide sustenance for any family whose kitchen cupboards are bare.

Here I am Lord, one more day on this earth to give thanks for all my worldly possessions that can be shared with those in need, so that they and I will not lack the basics needed for life.

And Lord, with another day on this earth, your servant will continue to honor and praise you through prayer, and display humility to all others we serve.”

**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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