



THE VISITOR

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Dear friends,

In the spirit of our mission at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Council of Pittsburgh, we are called to reflect upon and embody the virtue of generosity. This not only enables us to support our community but also allows us to mirror God's own generosity, a central theme in our Catholic faith.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus says: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap" (Luke 6:38). Through this passage, we are reminded that our own acts of sharing echo God's abundant giving. It is through this lens that we can view giving as more than an obligation; it is an opportunity for spiritual growth.

As Catholics, we understand that all we have comes from God and should be used for His glory (1 Chronicles 29:14). In response to His magnanimity, we are invited not just to return a portion of our financial resources through tithes or offerings but also to share our time and talents in service—a true testament to holistic generosity.

Today, I invite you to join me in this journey towards generous living by considering a donation to support the good work of our Council. No amount is too small as every bit counts in extending assistance to our neighbors in need.

As we strive to live out our faith, let us remember that "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Let us embrace this spirit of generosity and allow it to guide us as we journey together in faith and service.

In God's embrace,

Ricardo

Ricardo Luckow
Executive Director

YOUTH IN SERVICE: SVDP DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE

Bethany Smith has always had a heart for serving others, but when a friend told her about the SVdP program at Duquesne University that helps the homeless, she got a chance to put that to work.

Arian Hajihassani decided to focus his career after school on cancer research to help persons with the

same disease that afflicted his mother. But while he tends to his studies with that goal in mind, he also fulfills his innate desire to help others by tending to the homeless within his local community.

Each Sunday night these co-presidents of the SVdP program, along with their fellow students who volunteer to participate, venture into the world of the homeless in Pittsburgh's downtown area.

Bethany and Arian have found that they have been inspired by the long standing SVdP program in this area.

Bethany says it *"has opened my eyes to the experience of homelessness and the various struggles that they face"*. Through his experience, Arian has come to understand *"how homelessness removes opportunities for the basic things most of us all enjoy and take for granted"*; a roof over our heads and a bed to sleep in, for sure. But also, the chance

for adequate medical care, money to buy things we need, personal hygiene items, simple food needs, and even to be treated in a civil and humane manner by others.



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REFLECTION: CHANGING SEASONS WITH MARTHA AND MARY

Have you been enjoying the beautiful fall colors this year? I marvel and contemplate the good Earth God so lovingly created for us! If we pay attention, nature can reveal much about God's ways, which are always higher than ours! (Isaiah 55:8-9). As our landscapes transform from lush greens to vibrant reds, oranges, and yellows, we are reminded in a gentle and beautiful way that the Earth and all life within it are transitioning. The busy, long, bright, warm, days of summer are now in the past. The crisp, cool air of fall signals preparation for the coming of a dark, still, and quiet winter.

Just as the change of seasons in nature is inevitable, so too are the changes of seasons in our life. One of the reflections that has been on my heart during this change of season is that of the story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10: 38-42). In this passage, Martha is active and busy! She occupies herself with the practical daily tasks of caring for herself and those around her by attending to the very real physical needs of life. What a beautiful gift it would have been to

physically prepare a meal or sleeping place for our Lord Jesus and His disciples! Yet, we see that it is Mary who has chosen the better part. What is she doing? Simply sitting at the feet of Jesus! Her state of physical rest allows her attention to focus solely on Jesus. This posture and place surely allow for profound spiritual growth and deepening in personal relationship with Jesus. And how wonderful that this “better choice” of Mary is still available to us each day!

As Vincentians, we are called to many Martha-like moments.

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NOVEMBER: A MONTH OF SHARING OUR THANKS AND BLESSINGS

As the leaves turn brilliant shades of red and gold and the air grows crisp and cool, November arrives with its unique charm and significance. It's a time when we come together to reflect on our blessings and show our gratitude.

Thanksgiving, celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November in the United States, is a holiday dedicated to giving thanks for the harvest and blessings of the past year. It's a time when families and friends gather to share meals and express their gratitude for one another. In a similar spirit, November is a time for all of us to pause and reflect on the many things we are thankful for, both personally and as part of our larger community.

November provides the perfect opportunity to extend our gratitude to those in need. It's a month when we can turn our thankfulness into action by making donations to causes and organizations that make a difference in the lives of others. Your support and generosity can have a profound impact on those who may be less fortunate.

Why November?

Historically, November has been associated with the harvest season. Farmers and communities gather their crops, and it's a time to share the abundance with those who may not have enough. The holiday season, starting with Thanksgiving and continuing through December, fosters a sense of generosity and goodwill. It's a time when people are more inclined to give.

As we count our blessings, we also recognize the importance of helping others in need. November's reflective spirit reminds us of the value of sharing our good fortune. [November 28 is Giving Tuesday](#), and we invite you to express your gratitude through generosity. Whether it's volunteering your time at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul or making a financial contribution towards our mission, every act of kindness counts!

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AN INTERVIEW WITH VINCENTIAN AND DONOR JUSTIN LUZAR

As an annual donor to the Society of SVdP, Justin Luzar is, in a lot



of ways, your typical Vincentian. Justin, who lives with his wife and two children in Scott Township, is a member of St. Raphael the Archangel parish. He learned about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul when the church's organizations had a 'get to know us' session after Mass one Sunday. But he liked the idea of the work done by the SVdP people because they were "*directly involved*" with those they served. As he put it, they were "*down in the trenches*" dealing with the needs of people.

Prior to that day, however, Justin was inspired by the biblical verse "*those to whom much has been given, much will be required*" (Luke 12:48). That made him think about all the blessings that he has, some of which he feels he earned, but many, he realized, were the result of circumstances into which he was born which were inherently much better than many others.

After that Sunday about 15 years ago, he ventured into the Society of SVdP and began contributing to our work. Since then, two particular cases have left a lasting impression on him.

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INTRODUCING DOMINIQUE JETTER, INTERN

The staff at the Council office of SVdP recently welcomed student intern, Dominique Jetter, as she joined them in their work. Dominique is a freshman at [Nazareth Prep High School](#), which is affiliated with and operated by the [Holy Family Institute of Pittsburgh](#).

Nazareth Prep High School was founded about ten years ago and it currently enrolls about 100 students. The school requires that all students in grades 9-12 participate in an internship one day a week throughout each of their high school years. Those internships may be served in both the corporate and the non-profit sectors within the greater Pittsburgh area. The school even provides transportation for students to and from their internship sites.



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IN CELEBRATION: THE 2023 BISHOP'S MASS AND BRUNCH

It was a glorious day for the Bishop's Mass and Brunch on October 15th at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in East Carnegie. Around 130 Vincentian volunteers turned out for a special Mass officiated by Bishop David Zubik followed by a wonderful brunch in celebration of all those Vincentians present and past that through their faith and good works have made the geography of the Council of Pittsburgh a better place to live for all.

The brunch guests were edified by Keynote Speaker Alicia Hartle who discussed the Holy Spirit. Alicia provided new and deeper insight into our SVdP traditional Opening Prayer for Conference meetings, the "Come Holy Spirit" prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, live within our lives.
And strengthen us by Your love.
Send forth Thy Spirit and new life will be created.
And the whole face of the earth will be renewed.

In addition to teaching about the Holy Spirit, the 3rd person of the Trinity, Alicia encouraged Vincentians to have expectant faith and trust in Divine Providence. If you missed the brunch or would like to contemplate these powerful words again, [please click here](#).

Another event highlight was the drawing of winners for the Help Thy Neighbor Walk cash raffle. Winners included:

Five \$1,000 3rd Place Prizes:

1. Karen B. - Ticket #07413 (Sold by: St. Michael the Archangel Conference)
2. FX W. - Ticket #06822 (Sold by: St. Michael the Archangel Conference)
3. Dave P. - Ticket #05077 (Sold by: Good Shepherd Conference)
4. Mother Teresa Conference - Ticket #13596 (Sold by: Mother Teresa Conference)
5. Joan E. - Ticket #08432 (Sold by: Our Lady of Hope Conference)

One \$2,500 2nd Place Prize:

1. Janice R. - Ticket #01972 (Sold by: Divine Redeemer Conference)

One \$5,000 1st place prize:

1. Rich P. - Ticket #13024 (Sold by: St. Isidore the Farmer Conference)

A warm, heartfelt thanks to Bishop David Zubik, Alicia Hartle, SVdP Director of Formation Karen O'Keefe, the Board of Directors of SVdP, sponsors, raffle ticket purchasers, and all the volunteers who made the Help Thy Neighbor Walk and the Bishop's Mass and Brunch a great success.



On November 3, students from Carlynton, Our Lady of Sacred Heart, Bishop Canevin and Montour High Schools, Boy Scouts, and members of the St. Philip SVdP Conference loaded a garage full of clothing, coats, toys and other items onto a 26 ft. truck that will be delivered to a program for the needy in rural West Virginia.

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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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