

IN *Charity* AND TRUTH

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1 WINTER 2016



CELEBRATING THE
YEAR OF MERCY
Dec. 8, 2015 – Nov. 20, 2016



DEAR FELLOW VINCENTIANS AND FRIENDS,

Since I was born without arms, the Catholic school in my tiny hometown did not have to take me. The principal, Sister Christine, could have easily recited a laundry list of reasons to me away and send me to public school for special education. However, she welcomed me with open arms. It was an act of mercy that truly changed my life.

During this Year of Mercy (see page 3), Pope Francis reminds us of Christ's call to be "merciful like the Father." The mercy Christ calls us to is life-changing because it is freely given—whether we "have" to give it or not, and whether the receiver "deserves" it or not.

That's what inspires me about our Vincentian volunteers. They hear Christ's call to mercy and have been transformed by it. Day after day, they actively respond to it by helping the neighbors Christ brings into their lives, whether those neighbors are victims of unfortunate circumstances beyond their control, or whether their own misguided choices have landed them in poverty.

In those situations where it's easy to come up with that laundry list of all the reasons they don't have to help or why their neighbor may not deserve it, Vincentians go the extra mile, providing beds, utility assistance, food and more... all with compassion and dignity.

Thank you for joining us in this mission of mercy. We are truly grateful for your support.

Most humbly and gratefully yours,

John P. Foppe, Ph.D. (h.c.)
Executive Director



Vincentian volunteers Steve and Carol Fogle prepare a box of food for a family in need at Immaculate Conception conference in Dardenne.

"We're Their Friends:" Mercy Defines Vincentian Spirituality

STEVE FOGLE of Immaculate Conception conference in Dardenne (ICD) grew up a cradle Catholic, but joining the Society about two years ago gave him a new outlook on his Catholic faith that he didn't know he was seeking.

"We always went to church, but my mind wasn't always there," Steve said. "When I became a Vincentian, it was a way to put my faith into action like I had never done before."

Becoming a Vincentian also changed his life in another way: It was how he met his wife Carol.

They were speakers at the same Ozanam Orientation training session. His topic was the importance of the home visit, hers was Vincentian spirituality. That fateful meeting solidified Steve and Carol as Vincentian partners. They now

continued on page 2

“We’re their friends” from page 1

make home visits as a team and volunteer together at ICD conference’s Hope Center, the hub of ICD’s conference operations.

Home visits are an essential component of the Vincentian mission of mercy. By ministering to their neighbors in their homes, Vincentians offer mercy and fellowship to people living in crisis, such as Lori and her family (see sidebar).

“People are amazed when you say you’re coming to their home,” Steve said. “Often, when they’ve gone to other places for help, they’ve had to go to some office somewhere, take a number and wait. That’s what makes the Society different. They’re more than just a number to us.”

For Carol, the opportunity to enter into someone else’s world is a privilege.

“Meeting people on their own turf gives you a new perspective,” she said. “It’s an opportunity to serve some really great people. We’re not their saviors; we’re their friends.”

This spiritual side of service makes all the difference to the Fogles.

“You cannot do what we do without some foundation of spirituality,” Carol continued. “It would be too easy to get burned out. But in many cases, the faith of the people we serve and their determination to survive is an inspiration. When you go into someone’s home and see that, you can’t help but be inspired.”



Volunteers like Steve and Carol Fogle gather at Immaculate Conception’s Hope Center every day to prepare boxes of food, take calls and arrange assistance for people living in poverty.

Vincentians Provide Dignity of a Good Night’s Sleep



LORI FACES MANY CHALLENGES due to her multiple sclerosis symptoms—fatigue, pain and difficulty walking, among others. To make matters worse, Lori and her family slept on old, broken down mattresses, preventing them from getting a good night’s sleep.

Lori’s husband Jeff had to take time off work to care for Lori and their sons, ages four and seven, so the family had trouble making ends meet for medical expenses and basic needs, let alone for decent beds.

“A bed is something people in need don’t typically ask for or make a priority to buy for themselves,” said Carol Fogle, Vincentian volunteer at Immaculate Conception conference in Dardenne, who visited the family with her husband Steve. “They just try to make do with what they have, but that’s not how it should be.”

Unfortunately, this family’s story is not uncommon. A decent bed is a luxury for many of our less fortunate brothers and sisters. Spending the night struggling to sleep on the floor or an old couch greatly impacts a persons’ performance at work or at school, as well as their health.

Thankfully, the Beds for our Neighbors in Need program empowers Vincentians to provide the dignity of a good night’s sleep by purchasing beds for people in need.

Last year, the Society’s generous supporters raised more than \$100,000 to purchase beds for nearly 930 individuals and families like Lori’s. We pray donors will support our second annual appeal for the program this spring so Vincentians will be able to help even more people in need.

The profile above is based on an actual service provided by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Details have been changed to protect identity and preserve dignity.

Donor Spotlight

Seeing the Face of Christ in Those in Need

Mike and Rita Mooney Inspired by Vincentian Spirit of Mercy

Longtime friends of the Society Mike and Rita Mooney ushered in the Year of Mercy by walking through the Holy Doors of Mercy at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

While touring the shrine, they saw many reminders of Vincentian heritage: altars in honor of St. Louise de Marillac and the Miraculous Medal.

“It was a great affirmation of how the Vincentian spirit is tied to mercy,” Mike remarked.

It is the Vincentian spirit that inspires Mike and Rita to support the Society at the Conference level and serve as active parishioners at St. Clement of Rome, their home parish.

“The Society is very hands-on with all their ministries, whether it’s food, prescription drugs, or others,” Mike said. “There are other secular organizations that do this too, but the Society does it all in the spirit of St. Vincent, which is to see the face of Christ in those in need.”

In addition to raising four children and Mike’s work as CEO and President of Footwear Unlimited, the Mooneys live out the Catholic call to serve others and evangelize by supporting a variety of other Catholic organizations.

Through it all, they are guided by a simple philosophy: “Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be required of the person entrusted with more” (Luke 12:48).

“You can only do so much, so the Lord puts you where he wants you,” Mike said. “Everything is a gift, and that gift entails a responsibility.”

FOOTWEAR UNLIMITED



For friends of the Society Mike and Rita Mooney, the spirit of St. Vincent is the spirit of mercy.

Year of Mercy a Call to be God’s Instruments

A Conversation with Fr. Jim Cormack, C.M., St. Louis Council Spiritual Advisor



Fr. Jim Cormack, C.M., is Pastor at St. Catherine Laboure parish and Spiritual Advisor of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis.

We asked Fr. Jim Cormack, C.M., St. Louis Council Spiritual Advisor, to reflect on this Year of Mercy and what it means for Vincentians volunteers.

WHAT DOES THE YEAR OF MERCY MEAN FOR THE CHURCH?

By proclaiming a Year of Mercy, Pope Francis reminds us that the mercy of God is not merely a

lofty ideal. It is a very real and felt truth.

Pope Francis calls us to be “merciful like the Father.” This echoes St. Vincent de Paul’s words: “God makes use of the humblest instruments for the extraordinary operation of his grace.” God is constantly revealing His mercy in our lives and in the lives of others, and we must keep centered on our being the instruments God uses to do this.

WHAT’S THE CALL TO ACTION?

The Mercy of God in us is grounded in prayer. By asking that God’s mercy be made clearly evident in our world and praying for the grace to take up his mission, generosity will necessarily flow, and God will reveal how you can be His instrument in the world.

HOW ARE VINCENTIANS RESPONDING?

We are always meant to be ministers of God’s mercy, but never more so than in this Year of Mercy. For example, Vincentian volunteers feed, clothe and visit neighbors living in poverty. These seemingly simple works of mercy have an enormous impact: Vincentians make God’s mercy manifest on earth, making present the Kingdom of God.

This year of mercy, let us pray that Christ show us how we may join in His mission of mercy and that He may reveal His mercy to us, His humble servants, in our own lives.

To learn more about becoming a Vincentian volunteer, please contact Steve Rupp, Manager of Member Support, at 314.881.6018.

2015 Apostles of Charity

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS who have made donations of \$500 or more between January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015.



All Apostles of Charity are invited to join us for two special luncheons on April 21 and September 27. For more information, please contact Anne Kirwan at 314.881.6024.

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SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL OF ST. LOUIS

Our Mission

A Catholic lay organization, joining women and men together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering.

Please Remember Us

We pray that you remember the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis in your estate planning. Your legacy will continue and strengthen one of the first charitable missions in St. Louis... since 1845.



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St. Louis, MO 63136
(314) 881-6000

Fenton NEW STORE
625 Gravois Rd.
Fenton, MO 63026
(314) 881-6000

Lemay Ferry
3924 Lemay Ferry Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63125
(314) 881-6000

St. Charles
1069 Regency Parkway
St. Charles, MO 63303
(314) 881-6000

South City
4928 Christy Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63116
(314) 881-6000

West County NEW LOCATION
13986 Manchester Rd.
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Memorial and Honor Gifts

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY in remembrance and honor of your friends and family. The following gifts were received between September 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015.

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IN *Charity*
 AND **TRUTH**

After Floodwaters Recede, Vincentians Stay



The Society's Disaster Fund aids people whose lives were uprooted by recent flooding, as well as other disasters. Photo from the *St. Louis Review*.

LAST MONTH, hundreds of St. Louisans in Valley Park, Fenton, Eureka, Arnold, St. Charles, and Jefferson and Franklin counties were suddenly forced from their homes by floods, returning to find everything—their homes, their possessions, their memories—washed away.

Thankfully, Vincentian volunteers are there—and will continue to be there—to help them rebuild.

As second responders after disasters such as floods, Vincentians help victims build new lives after the first responders' rescue efforts. But perhaps more importantly, Vincentians offer fellowship, reassurance and the hope of Christ after the trauma of a disaster.

Most often, Vincentians provide vouchers to the Society's thrift stores, where people in need can purchase the beds, furniture, clothing and other household goods to replace what was lost in the disaster. Shopping with dignity for the things they need is the first step as flood victims rebuild their lives.

The Society partners with a variety of community partners such as the American Red Cross of Eastern Missouri to help victims access the resources they need.

"St. Vincent de Paul is a critical partner in bringing help and hope to disaster victims," said Cindy Erickson,

CEO of the American Red Cross of Eastern Missouri. "Whether a home fire or a flood, St. Vincent de Paul helps them find a path to recovery."

In addition, Chicago Mattress Company, which supplies mattresses to the Society's thrift stores, made a very generous monetary gift and donated half a truckload of mattresses, which will be high in demand among those who lost their beds in the floods.

How Can You Help?

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

To make a secure donation, visit www.svdpstl.org/donate. Checks can be mailed to PO Box 795039, St. Louis, MO 63179-0795.

HELPING YOUR LOCAL CONFERENCE.

Contact your local parish's SVDP conference to ask if they are in need of any volunteers or donated items.

PRAYERS. More than anything, flood victims need our prayers.



American Red Cross
 Eastern Missouri