



# St. Vincent de Paul Society NEWSLETTER



Published by and for Vincentians

<http://www.stvincentdepaul.net/Vincentian-Support>

Diocesan Council of Phoenix, AZ

January/February 2018  
Vol. 20 No. 1

*"It is for your love alone that the poor will forgive you the bread you give them."* St. Vincent de Paul

## Face-to-Face

*By Shirley Smalley  
President, St. Bernadette Conference*

The wisdom of the faithful who have gone before never ceases to amaze, inspire, and challenge me. St. Augustine and St. Aquinas clearly wrote about God with an understanding that far exceeded the limits of human knowledge of their day. The same is true of St. Vincent de Paul, Bl. Rosalie Rendu, Bl. Frederic Ozanam, and the other founders of our Society; and, their understanding of ministry to the poor and our call as disciples to live out our baptismal promise to grow in holiness through service to one another. Among their insights and foundational teachings, I think the commitment to face-to-face ministry is perhaps the most significant and the one that makes us different from many other charitable groups and organizations.

As Vincentians, we are called to minister directly to our brothers and sisters in need. Each one of us has the unique opportunity to look into the eyes of the poor and needy on a regular basis, but this is not necessarily true for most people. Hands down, being able to sit and interact with those in need is one of the most powerful and often life-changing events open to us as people. So, how often do we as Conferences invite others into the beauty of this experience and share with them the joys of encountering Christ face-to-face?

Our Diocesan Council does a wonderful job of opening our council level programs and doors to individual volunteers, other organizations, and companies.

People from all walks of life routinely volunteer in our dining rooms, our stores, our ministry to the homeless, Ozanam Manor as well as in our Medical and Dental clinics, but how often do we as Conferences invite non-Vincentians to serve with us? From time to time I encounter a friend or acquaintance that shares with me that they recently volunteered in one of our dining rooms or the Dream Center and how much that experience touched their hearts and even changed their image of those in need.

We can offer these same experiences at the Conference level if we just open our minds and hearts to the possibilities of expanding our activities and volunteer base. For example, one conference found themselves short of home visit teams during the summer months, so they reached out and obtained volunteers from another faith community in the area. The volunteers from the other faith community serve as companions or second persons to the lead Vincentian who is in charge of the visit, the decisions and the prayer.

For the past several years, St. Bernadette's parish has hosted a Christmas party for the working poor. They do this in collaboration with their own SVdP Conference, two other area Conferences, and the ACS Vibrant Vinnies. This year over 200 children and their families participated in the event that required over 100 volunteers.

The majority of those volunteers, who ranged in age from eight to eighty, were not Vincentians. They were parishioners, students, and people from the community at large. Being part of this event made a real difference in their lives. They could not quit talking about the gratefulness expressed by the attending families, and how much they enjoyed seeing the smiles on the children's faces as they participated in the activities and got to visit Santa.

One of the volunteers approached me to share how much he appreciated being able to be part of this event. He shared with me that he had volunteered for programs and activities across the Valley for most of his adult life, but that this event touched him in a way that no other project had. He went on to say that seeing children be so excited to make a simple gingerbread house, to pet a lamb or to get a \$25 toy was life altering.

In the faces of these children, this volunteer encountered Christ in a real and special way and his life will forever be different. Now when he thinks or prays for the poor and needy, he will see the faces of these families. Because he was invited into our work, poverty to him will never again be faceless or nameless. As Vincentians, we must have the courage and willingness to open our work up to others and by doing so we will all be enriched and blessed.

## *Jubilarians Honored at St. Joachim and St. Anne*



1) *Back Row:* Marilyn Cappelli, Toni Gnotta, Maria Bedolla, Fr. John Ebbesmier, Jean Petersen, Terry Martinez, Dolores Witherspoon, Larry Schulz, **Jerry Vesnaugh**

2) *Front Row:* Becky Doyle, Carol Ann Specht, Mary Taylor, Mercedes Nolasco

St. Joachim & St. Anne's Society of St. Vincent de Paul Conference had the honor to bestow Jubilarian awards and Crucifixes for 15 Vincentians. Our pastor, Fr. John Ebbesmier, blessed and presented to each the Jubilarian Crucifixes, and the certificates were awarded on December 8, 2017.

Marilyn Cappelli: Marilyn is presently Co-President of St. Joachim and St. Anne Conference. She has helped at the Santa Teresita Dining Room, and provides a wonderful Christmas that involves shopping, wrapping and delivering gifts, each year to our adopted families. Another big project that Marilyn has undertaken is organizing and running our annual Rummage Sale. Marilyn also is a Eucharistic Minister at our parish. She has been a Vincentian for 5 years.

Toni Gnotta: Toni is our Spiritual Advisor for St. Joachim and St. Anne Conference. Toni gets involved with Home Visits, office work, Christmas Adopted Families, Rummage Sale, and our annual Food Drive. With parish ministries you will find Toni as an Eucharistic Minister, a Lector, Religious Ed teacher, RCIA, and Pastoral Care. Toni has been a Vincentian for 8 years.

# Jubilarians

Continued

Maria Bedolla: Maria helps with the Santa Teresita Food Pantry and our annual food drive. At the parish level, Maria, enjoys helping at our monthly Hospitality Sundays. Maria has been a Vincentian for 5 years.

Jean Petersen: Jean is one of our co-captains in the office on Thursdays. She helps at our annual Food Drive and Turkey Tuesday. Jean is also a Lector, Eucharistic Minister, a member of the Finance Committee, and has had 9 years' experience working in the Church office. Jean has been a Vincentian for 5 years.

Terry Martinez: Terry works in our SVdP office on Mondays. She goes on Home Visits and helps with office activities. Terry has been a Vincentian for 6 years.

Dolores Witherspoon: Dolores is our District 3 President. She not only has the duties of being the President, she helps downtown with the Ministry to the Homeless, works at our Surprise Thrift Store, organizes the assembly of the newsletter, helps with Home Visits, Turkey Tuesday, Food Drive, Giving Tree for Nursing Home residents, and computer work. Dolores is also involved in different ministries of the parish which includes being a Eucharistic Minister, Lector, Rosary Maker, and Adoration. Dolores has been a Vincentian for 13 years.

Larry Schulz: Larry is one of our winter Vincentians from North Dakota. When he is here in Arizona he gets involved with working in our office, drives our truck to pick up food from downtown, works in our Conference food pantry, helps on Turkey Tuesday, and goes on



Home Visits. He is also involved in our parish as an Altar Server. Larry has been a Vincentian for 5 years.

Jerry Vesnaugh: Jerry helps out at our Santa Teresita Dining Room. He works in our office, as well as going down twice a week for bread and meat at the Sun City Olive Branch Senior Center for our Conference Food Pantry. Jerry is very involved with our parish Men's Club, and helps down at the Olive Branch Senior Center. Jerry has been a Vincentian for 5 years.

Becky Doyle: Becky is presently Co-President of St. Joachim and St. Anne Conference. She is involved with our office computer work, and has worked on Home Visits, Turkey Tuesday, Food Drive, gifts for children of our families that come to us, Adopted Families, Rummage Sale, and organizing our annual School Backpacks for children. Besides the many things for our Conference, she is involved in the parish with being a Eucharistic Minister, Lector, Altar Server, and an office assistant in the parish office. Becky has been a Vincentian for five years.

*Congratulations*