



**Happy Spring and Easter!!**

It is so heartening to put the word *Spring* in the title of this newsletter. In so many ways, for so many people, it has been a difficult winter, with some uncertainty as to how broad the ultimate effects will be. As we enter into April, the utility companies can resume turn-off notices, which they have suspended since November. But, as the warmer, sunnier days encourage growth, they also remind us of the Resurrection, rising from seemingly dead soil to bring forth a great yield.



A brief overview of this edition . . .

- News from the Executive Director
- Report of the Chester District Meeting held Jan 23
- Report on Spiritual Advisor Formation, held Feb 20
- Overview of President's Meeting, held Mar 20
- Preview of Virtual Vincentians Meeting - worldwide, coming April 24
- Conference Spotlight - BVM Food Cupboard
- Letter from Theresa Cipriano regarding the SVDP Trucks and Stores

**News from the Executive Director**

Central Council is currently seeking a Vincentian to serve as Board Secretary. Responsibilities include attending the 7 Board Meetings that take place during the year and preparing minutes of those meetings. It is a great opportunity to get more involved at the Council level! If you are interested, please contact Carey Roberts or Dom Visco.

Please support our 50/50 Raffle to benefit Guiding Star Ministries. Tickets are \$5/each and the drawing will be held May 28th. Ticket stubs and donations should be mailed to Central Council. If you need extra tickets, please contact Carey Roberts.



Our annual Friends of the Poor Walk/Run will be held September 25th at Montgomery County Community College. Why not get your conference involved?! It's a great way to raise funds for your conference -- every single dollar raised by walkers supporting your conference will be sent to you -- there is no administrative charge from our National office or Central Council. Also, if you run, or know someone who does, ask them to participate in the inaugural 5K in support of your conference on the same day!

**Report of the Chester County District Meeting**

*Chesco Chapter Meeting Builds Society*

Chester County is blessed with three very active conferences (SS Simon & Jude, St. Peter, and Coatesville Consolidated) serving clients in and out of their parish boundaries and assisting one another when needs exceed the resources of any one conference. Unlike city parishes, our conferences are miles apart and each covers dozens of

square miles. Communications between conferences and other agencies are routinely by phone with little personal contact.

Roughly a year ago, conference presidents, Robin Burckhardt (St. Peter), Patrick Ivkovich (Coatesville), and Judy Thompson (SS Simon & Jude), along with other officers of the conferences and myself, met to compare the services and operating procedures of each conference and the best ways in which to work with each other. That face-to-face meeting was so well received, it was decided that a meeting of all conference members would be a worthwhile endeavor. And so, on Saturday morning, January 23, two dozen members of the three conferences met at St. Peter parish in West Brandywine, to hear from two local agencies we routinely deal with and to enjoy some one-on-one time with members of our neighboring conferences, who we would ordinarily only encounter over the phone.



Catholic Social Services (CSS) and the Chester County Department of Aging Services were invited to speak to our members. Both Ann Marie Barr of CSS and Carol Harkins of Chester County gave half-hour presentations regarding the services offered by their respective organizations and responded to questions and suggestions from Vincentians, regarding individual concerns and how best to take advantage of the services they offer our clients. Dom Visco, President of the Philadelphia Central Council, also addressed the meeting, providing insight into the work of the Central Council.

The short, spirited, two-hour meeting gave us insight into the workings of the agencies represented, as well as, providing them with an understanding of our capabilities. Speakers and members were able to put faces together with the voices they've known for so long, giving us all a better appreciation for us as a Society. Refreshments were served and members and speakers were encouraged to come early and stay late to socialize with their counterparts from other conferences and agencies. The event was so well received by all that similar gatherings have been recommended as an annual event.

Jim Kurimay, President  
Chester County District  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul

**Spiritual Advisor Formation**

On Saturday, February 20, 2010, after a two-week snow delay, 11 members met with Marge McGinley, the Eastern Region's Spiritual Advisor and her co-advisor, Michelle, at St. Maria Goretti Education Center, Hatfield, PA. Participants ranged from Bucks, Chester, and Montgomery Counties in Pennsylvania and a participant from New Jersey. Marge presented a wonderful overview of her growth in the Society, growth both in awareness of a role as a Vincentian and in

understanding the needs of the Society. Marge explored the mindset of Vincent, Louise, Frederic, and Rosalie, who laid the foundation for how we relate to the poor in the Society.

Additionally, Marge presented the resources available from the National Society, especially regarding Spiritual Formation. She gave the participants a simple math lesson, namely, that approximately half the Rule, the Manual and the instruction given by Vincent, Louise and Frederic is devoted to the spiritual formation of the members.

Contrast that to the usual content of most conference and council get-togethers, which seem to focus more on the business end of the Society.

Of the materials that Marge presented, some are available via the Central Council, either for loan or purchase. Please contact Carey Roberts if you or your conference would be interested in the *Serving in Hope, Module III*, or the *Vincentian Celebrations* package.

### President's Meeting

Topics covered included

- Resource Guide was made available to all participants. The booklet can be downloaded from our website via this link: <http://www.catholicparishes.net/PHL/svdp/>
- Board and Conference Directory was distributed to Conference Presidents and Board Members. Since the list is more sensitive, it will NOT be available online, but is available to conference presidents.
- HP/RP funding options, to assist those struggling to get into homes or to stay in them. Dom Visco explained that some counties have received funds for HP/RP, while others have already used them up. HP refers to Homelessness Prevention; RP refers to Reentry Program. Both aspects provide assistance with utility bills.
- Street Trucks, i.e., SVDP trucks making pickups at individual homes - Theresa reported that due to cutbacks in resources, she can only send out trucks to homes with a minimum of 10 bags. She encourages neighbors to pull together and have a shared pickup. Furniture pickup is still available, but the men will ask the donors to sign a waiver if the furniture is not readily accessible. Theresa also provided a form letter explaining the voucher process and how conferences should inform those needing assistance that they'll need their own means of returning the merchandise to their homes.
- Extensions program. John Donohue is trying to extend the Society into new areas, especially those adjoining existing conferences. He recruited everyone's help in making the Society known, especially with former parish priests of ours who may have moved to a parish that does not have a conference.
- Revitalizing conferences. Ron Mandel asked that we get the youth of the parish more involved in activities of the Society. They provide energy and dedication to ideals that we may have let slip into decline.



- Update to the Friends of the Poor Walk on September 25, 2010, which is a one-mile walk, scheduled at Community College of Montgomery County. There will also be a 5K Friends of the Poor Run, directed by Chris Roberts, Carey Roberts' husband. You can contact Chris about joining him at [chrisproberts@comcast.net](mailto:chrisproberts@comcast.net).
- Ozanam Orientation. Dom Bucciarelli reminded everyone how it builds the foundation on which all the actions of the Society are based. The team of Dom, Dom Visco and Larry Huber are more than willing to "take their show on the road" so that everyone has the advantage of Ozanam Orientation.
- Annual Retreat - Saturday, October 16, 2010, at St. David's Church, Willow Grove. It will contain some elements of the Communion Breakfast as well.
- 50/50 Raffle was announced, benefiting Guiding Star Ministries. Tickets are \$5 each and come in books of 5. Each Conference was given 5 books to sell. Books and monies are to be sent to the Central Council by mid-May. Drawing will be May 28, 2010.
- SVDP's relationship with Impact! - neighbors will get a gift certificate worth the face value of the check we provide, but when they go to use the certificate, they'll get a 25% discount on the purchases made.
- Virtual Vincentians Meeting - April 25, 1-3PM EDT (here). If you're able to host a group (5 or more will need a high-speed Internet connection and a projector of some type), please contact her at [pevanick@gmail.com](mailto:pevanick@gmail.com).
- Then, there were break-out sessions for Catholic Social Services, PECO and CareerLink:
- Catholic Social Services (CSS) was represented by Ed Lis, who can be contacted via e-mail at [elis@chs-adphila.org](mailto:elis@chs-adphila.org). Ed enlightened the group about the many services provided by CSS, including case management, elder-care and family services. He provided contact lists for each of the counties they service. More information can be found at their website, <http://www.catholicsocialservicesphilly.org/>.
- PECO was represented by Alex Talmadge, Universal Services Division, and Chris Hayes and Terry Bentley from the Education Services group. They passed out energy-saving literature and an energy-efficient light bulb to each participant. The education services are available at <http://www.peco.com/KNOW/>. They have many programs for participating with Community Based Organizations (CBO's) to assist low-income people with their energy bills. Alex reminded everyone that the cap on utility bills will expire on December 31, 2010. So, on average, everyone should expect to see an increase of about 10% in their electricity bills.
- The representative from CareerLink was Janet Diconzo, Assistant Director of Career Counseling, PA CareerLink of Montgomery County. CareerLink provides numerous services relating to employment, but focusing their attention on those with the most difficulty getting into the mainstream. Their website



is: <http://www.cwds.state.pa.us/>. Their web site allows for easy searching by County, area, and type of employment.

- During lunch, in the midst of our fellowship, each table came up with a prayer petition from the many petitions available from the Vincentian Reflections, found on the SVDP USA web site. After we sang the hymn, Song of the Body of Christ by David Haas, Sr. Pat led us in prayer, calling on each table to pray aloud their petition. There were 10 tables in all. Following a closing prayer, the group was sent off to do God's work (and to enjoy the beautiful, newly Spring day) at about 1:15.

A summary of the President's Meeting is available at a blog set up for Board information: <http://svdpphilabd.blogspot.com/>.

### **Conference Spotlight – BVM Food Cupboard**

A Day in the Life of Our Volunteers at the Saint Vincent de Paul Food Cupboard.

It's Monday, around 9:15 in the morning, at Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in the old school building that houses our food cupboard. This morning we will be sorting food donated by three churches, Our Lady of Fatima, Secane, St. Joseph's, Collingdale and St. Colman's, Ardmore.

Some volunteers will be making up bags of groceries for our clients. They separate the bags into three categories, single, small families and large families, filling them with the food that has been donated by churches, some organizations and even individuals. These donations consist of food and other products, such as detergents, tooth paste, soap, shampoo, etc. Other volunteers will be making up bags of food that has been provided to us by the government; this food is kept separate, we keep a good count of what they give us and how much we distribute to our clients.

We also receive food from Family and Community Service of Delaware County; we call that our "government food." Usually this delivery consists of frozen meat, poultry, canned foods, pasta, etc. That's when we call for volunteers who are able to lift heavy cartons; fortunately, we have had a good response to our requests for help.

While all this is going on, our clients are taking a number, and filling out our form, then they go to the room where we have our computer. Joe Howard, who is 89 years young, will greet them and check them out on the computer. Yes, Joe uses a computer. From there they take their form to the room where the food is given out. Clients must fill out another form for the government food. If they qualify, they receive both the church food and the government food; most do qualify. Those who live in another zone are given bags of our church food and we direct them to a food cupboard near their home, telling them they are eligible for the extra food at that cupboard.

Every Tuesday morning, our volunteer Carmen, who is 81 years young, picks up bread and baked goods from a local Giant Super Market. The bread and baked goods are put



into the freezer to be kept until our next food distribution, which is on Thursday.

Actually, we have volunteers of all ages; students in the summer and on holydays and holidays, also people who are out of work, immigrants and some of our parishioners.

And we all give thanks to God who allows us to help our brothers and sisters in need. Also, we pray for our pastor, our parishioners, those who donate in any way to keeping our cupboard open.

This has been a little view into the day of our volunteers at our St. Vincent de Paul Food Cupboard in Darby, Pa.

Dot Gallagher  
BVM Food Cupboard

### **Calendar of Events**

- April 21, Board Meeting, OMC
- April 24, Vincentian Virtual Meeting, Worldwide
- May 21-23, Eastern Region Retreat, Pittsburgh
- June 16, Board Meeting, OMC
- August 18, Board Meeting, OMC
- September 25, Friends of the Poor Walk (Run), Montgomery County Community College
- October 16, Annual Philadelphia Council Retreat, St. David's, Willow Grove
- October 20, Board Meeting, OMC
- November 17, Board Meeting, OMC

### **Theresa Cipriano's Letter – Trucks and Vouchers**

March 2010

Dear Vincentians,

To clear up any misunderstanding or confusion, on writing out vouchers, please follow these procedures. For clients needing furniture, they must come to the Warehouse, located at 901 E. Luzerne St, Philadelphia, PA, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9:00am and 3:00pm. They must also make arrangements to bring a TRUCK when they come. We do not have delivery service (although we are exploring that option). Please have your clients call me at 215-288-9540, x210, to notify her of the day they will be coming to pick up their items. If Vouchers are only being written for clothing, clients may go to any store.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me.

Yours in Charity,  
Theresa Cipriano  
Central Council  
215-288-9540, x210

## **Board Members**

- Dom Visco, *President*
- Jim Kurimay, *Vice-President, Chester County District President*
- Jim Blaney, *Treasurer*
- (open), *Secretary*
- Patricia Walsh, *Bucks County District President*
- Jack Kearney, *Delaware County District President*
- Doris Duncheskie, *Montgomery County District Co-President*
- Jerry Hagarty, *Montgomery County District Co-President*
- Dom Bucciarelli, *Formation Committee, Ozanam Orientation, NE Philadelphia District President*
- Ron Mandel, *NW Philadelphia District President, Revitalization*
- Sister Patricia Evanick, *Youth Outreach, Spirituality*
- John Donohue, *Extensions*
- Kathy Emery, *Catholic Social Services Liaison*
- Larry Huber, *Marketing Committee, Spirituality*

## **Philadelphia Council Staff**

- Executive Director, Mrs. Carey Roberts  
215-288-9540 x101
- Assistant, Mrs. Diana Cosme  
215-288-9540 x110
- Operations Manager, Ms. Theresa Cipriano  
215-288-9540 x102
- Council President, Mr. Dom Visco
- Warehouse & Store  
901 E. Luzerne St  
Phila., PA 19124
- Thrift Store  
6247 Frankford Av  
Phila., PA 19135
- Web Site: [www.svdphila.org](http://www.svdphila.org)

## **Remember our Patrons/Saints**

St Vincent de Paul, *pray for us.*  
Blessed Frederic Ozanam, *pray for us.*  
St Louise de Marillac, *pray for us.*  
Blessed Rosalie Rendu, *pray for us.*  
Immaculate Heart of Mary, *pray for us.*

## **Some online resources**

### Vincentian

Worldwide Vincentian Family:

<http://famvin.org/en/>

Vincentian Formation:

<http://vinformation.famvin.org/>

National SVDP Web Site

<http://www.svdpsusa.org/>

Eastern Region SVDP Web Site

<http://www.svdper.org/>

Houston SVDP

<http://www.svdper.org/>

Boston SVDP

<http://www.svdpboston.com/>

Columbus SVDP (Ohio)

<http://www.vincentianvoice.org/>

Church-related organizations

Joseph's People

<http://www.josephspeople.org/>

Operation Rice Bowl

<http://orb.crs.org/>

Angel Food Ministries

<http://www.angelfoodministries.com/>

Other services/information

Info Link (*for Montgomery County Services*)

<http://www.infolinkpa.org/>

Fair Housing Rights (*Southeastern Pennsylvania*)

<http://fairhousingrights.org/>

Pennsylvania "Here to Help"

<http://www.heretohelp.pa.gov/>

JEVs Human Services

<http://www.jevshumanservices.org/>

Cradles to Crayons

<http://www.cradlestocrayons.org/>

FreeCycle.org

<http://www.freecycle.org/>

PA Non-Profit Senior Services (*Montgomery County*)

<http://www.panpha.org/montgomerycounty.html>

DPW Service Programs (*Dept of Public Welfare Svcs*)

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/servicesprograms/>

PUC Energy-Assistance Program

[http://www.puc.state.pa.us/general/consumer\\_ed/energy\\_asst\\_progs.aspx](http://www.puc.state.pa.us/general/consumer_ed/energy_asst_progs.aspx)

COMPASS (*Comm of PA Access to Social Services*)

<https://www.humanservices.state.pa.us/compass/>

Help with Meds

<http://www.needymeds.com/>

PA Department of Labor & Industry

(*Unemployment Compensation Services*)

<http://www.dli.state.pa.us/>

PA CareerLink

<http://www.cwds.state.pa.us/>