

IN *Charity* AND TRUTH

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2 SUMMER 2015



DEAR FELLOW VINCENTIANS AND FRIENDS,

For people living in poverty, one difficulty can erode into a crisis. One thing—loss of a vehicle, sudden illness, utilities being shut off—can trigger the downward spiral of poverty. If their car suddenly breaks down, they can't get to work, they'll lose their job, they'll fall behind on bills and rent, their utilities will be shut off and they'll be evicted. These extenuating circumstances force people in need to make moment-by-moment decisions, which do not always make sense when we view them through our middle class lens. A lack of understanding makes it difficult to see the face of Christ beneath what Mother Teresa calls "the distressing disguise of the poor."

During our recent **seminar on poverty and racism** (page 2), Dr. Donna Beegle reminded us that these extenuating circumstances mean that the poor have a vastly different set of experiences. Listening to and understanding people's needs, without judgment, is key to creating viable long-term solutions.

SVDP has taken action to address the roots of the downward spiral Dr. Beegle described. Our new Bridges Fund helps in extraordinary situations by alleviating the burden of a significant basic need for people trapped in or teetering on the edge of poverty. Out in Troy, Mo., **Heather and Chris** (see sidebar) had their lives changed by the Bridges Fund. No longer burdened by costs of major utility repairs, the couple could start a new business to better provide for their family.

We are incredibly grateful for our supporters, such as longtime friends **Joe and Rosemary Shaughnessy** (page 3) and other **Apostles of Charity** (page 4), whose steadfast support empowers us to keep people away from this downward spiral. As we approach the **170th anniversary** (page 6) of the founding of the Society in the U.S., I am confident our new initiatives like the Bridges Fund will help us continue—and build on—our legacy of serving our neighbors in need across the St. Louis area. This is only possible because of the generous support of our faithful donors and friends like you—thank you.

Most humbly and gratefully yours,



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



Thanks to the assistance they received from the Bridges Fund, Heather and her husband Chris plan to start a new business selling soaps and other products made from goat milk. Photo by Sid Hastings.

Family Regains Hope

SVDP Aids in Extraordinary Cases

FOR VINCENTIAN VOLUNTEERS, helping neighbors starts at home. This includes rural settings, where Vincentians cover a wider area. For SVDP conferences like Sacred Heart in Troy, Mo., the food pantry is where Vincentians first come into contact with those in need from all over the county.

"In Lincoln County, it's not always obvious where people are living in poverty," said Susan Kallash-Bailey, Sacred Heart's Conference President. "In a rural community, you don't always see the need."

The pantry serves 300 people each month who are not only in need of food, but also utility assistance, help with prescription medications, and more.

The food pantry is where Susan first met Heather and Chris, whose family was one of the first to benefit from SVDP's Bridges Fund.

continued on page 2

Family Regains Hope from page 1



Heather (left) and Chris (center) were speechless when Susan Kallash-Bailey (right) told her SVDP could help pay for a new well pump. "We will never take having running water for granted again," Chris said. Photo by Sid Hastings.

Heather and Chris had big plans when they moved to Troy with their two children, including making needed renovations to their home and raising goats to sell goat milk products. But within months of moving in, they faced a major setback: their well pump stopped working. They had no water until they could get it replaced, which would cost \$2,000.

They simply could not afford a new pump. The family got water from friends' homes and collected rainwater for four months but hesitated to get help until a friend convinced them to visit Sacred Heart's food pantry. Heather shed tears of joy when Susan told her that SVDP's Bridges Fund could help cover the cost.

The Bridges Fund empowers Vincentians to create solutions that address extenuating emergency cases. The direct assistance provided by the fund helps recipients like Heather and Chris avoid the snares of poverty. Without water, the family faced a potentially life-threatening situation, and could not build their goat milk business for a steady stream of income.

Thanks to the Bridges fund, they avoided this desperate situation. Their family has entered into a new phase in life. Their new business means they're working toward a reliable source of income to build a good life for their children, and they are hopeful their futures will be bright.

To read more about Heather and Chris' story, visit svdpstlouis.org/news/success-stories. To learn more about contributing to the Bridges Fund, contact Anne Kirwan, Development Officer, at 314.881.6024.

"Our Faith Compels Us" Poverty and Racism Seminar Provides Inspiration, Tools for Change

MORE THAN 350 VINCENTIAN VOLUNTEERS and representatives from over 50 other St. Louis social service agencies attended a poverty and racism seminar hosted by the Society and Catholic Charities of St. Louis on May 14. The seminar, "Understanding Two Americas: When Race and Poverty Divide," featured speakers who had grown up in and eventually escaped poverty.

"Why are we concerned about race and poverty dividing us? Because our faith compels us," said Fr. Bryan Massingale, a Marquette University professor specializing in social ethics and racial justice, who gave the morning keynote about how isolation and ignorance contribute to the cycle of poverty and racism.

Then, Dr. Donna Beegle, who rose out of migrant labor poverty and earned a doctorate degree, led an all-day seminar that reminded attendees to see poverty from the eyes of those within it. Beegle explained that even though those helping people have good intentions, they often have misperceptions about living in and getting out of poverty.

For example, Beegle often hears workers in the helping profession say things like, "Just because they're poor doesn't mean they cannot keep clean." She pointed out that many people in need do not have water for drinking, let alone bathing, if they cannot pay their utility bills. It is these underlying needs that trap people in poverty, but public policy and programs often fail to address them.

Thankfully, SVDP has a special direct assistance fund to help in those extraordinary situations like Beegle referenced. The Bridges Fund helps those trapped in or teetering on the brink of poverty by alleviating the burden of a single, significant basic need, like not having a car or access to utilities.

Both speakers thanked the Society for helping them during their times of need. Massingale recalled when Vincentians brought his impoverished family Christmas cheer when he was a young boy. When Beegle was a young mother without steady income, Vincentians gave her young son a bed of his own to sleep in.

The day-long seminar gave Vincentians and representatives from other agencies the opportunity to discuss their experiences of poverty.



Donor Spotlight

Blessed are the Merciful: Shaughnessys Inspired by Vincentians' Service

FOR JOE AND ROSEMARY SHAUGHNESSY, a trip to France brought the plight of the poor to life.

Walking the streets of Paris, Joe and Rosemary followed in the footsteps of St. Vincent De Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, whose lives of charity and mercy inspired Frederick Ozanam to found the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in 1833. Their time in France gave Joe and Rosemary a deep appreciation for the Society and the great need for its programs and services.

“The key to charity is compassion—the giving of oneself completely to others in a spirit of gratitude for gifts received,” said Joe, co-founder and Chairman of the Board at BSI Constructors. “This spirit is lived out day after day by Vincentian volunteers who have volunteered immeasurable hours all over the world.”



Inspired by works of mercy performed by St. Louis Vincentians, Joe and Rosemary are longtime friends of the Society, both at their own conference at St. Roch parish and at the Council office level.

“These men and women are actively answering Our Lord’s call to ‘love thy neighbor’ throughout the many parish conferences in the Archdiocese,” Joe continued. “Essential to the ongoing mission and success of the Society is financial support and giving back. Supporting the conferences and the greater Council office is a most worthy cause.”



Joe and Rosemary Shaughnessy are faithful friends of SVDP, both at the council and conference level.

During their trip to Paris, Joe and Rosemary were reminded of the earliest days of the Society, when Ozanam brought firewood into the homes of his poorest neighbors.

“Utilities are such a basic need, and the need is still great today, particularly as summer begins,” Joe added.

As utility bills grow each month for those in need during the summer, many fall behind financially in other areas, becoming trapped in a cycle of poverty and in need of the help and mercy of others.

This year, the Society launched an exciting new initiative to help those in need bridge the gap between despair and hope. This fund will provide direct assistance to help stop the downward spiral of poverty. Cases vary, but may include major emergency furnace or air conditioner repairs and temporary living arrangements as clients move into assistive housing.

To read about the difference the Bridges Fund made in the lives of a family in Troy, see “Family Regains Hope” on page 1. For more information about contributing to the Bridges fund, contact Anne Kirwan, Development Officer, at 314.881.6024 or annek@svdpstl.org.

Planned Giving Seminars: Leave a Legacy

SVDP IS BLESSED with a strong network of friends whose generosity plays a major role in SVDP’s today by blessing the lives of those in need.

As a valued friend of the Society, you can also play a vital role in our tomorrow. Planned gifts empower SVDP to continue to grow our outreach in the future. You can establish a legacy that will sustain SVDP for generations to come.

The Council office is excited to announce an upcoming planned giving seminar entitled “Charitable Giving Under the New Tax Laws.” Please join us for one of the following sessions:

SATURDAY, AUG. 15 AT 9:30 A.M.

SVDP Council office: 1310 Papin Street
Breakfast included

FRIDAY, AUG. 21 AT 11:30 A.M.

The Lodge in Des Peres:
1050 Des Peres Road
Lunch included

About the speaker: James Blase is a graduate of Notre Dame Law School, adjunct professor of law at St. Louis University and member of St. Clement parish. He has advised clients and

charities on the best tax techniques for donating to charity for over 34 years and has been an SVDP volunteer member at the local, regional and national levels.

To RSVP, contact Anne Kirwan, Development Officer, at 314.881.6024.

We hope to see you there!



2015 Apostles of Charity

THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS who have made donations of \$500 or more this calendar year.



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Vincentians Thank Apostles of Charity at Luncheon and Chapel Dedication

STANDING UP TO SPEAK about her experience as a Vincentian at the Apostle of Charity luncheon on April 30, Christy Mooney began with a heartfelt note of thanks.

“There are so many Vincentians we represent that would love to be here where we have the honor of standing,” Christy said. “Thank you all.”

Christy and her husband Joe, Vice President and Secretary at St. Norbert Conference, described how serving those in need cultivates Vincentians’ faith.

“You hear their story, you see their pain, and you can really empathize and feel more deeply what their needs are,” Joe said. “As a volunteer, you’re giving dignity, you’re helping them spiritually—in addition to giving them financial assistance.”

The event began with Mass and the dedication of the newly renovated chapel. Several donors stepped forward to fund the chapel renovations, which were completed by a group of dedicated volunteers and vendors. The chapel is home to a refurbished statue of St. Vincent de Paul and stained glass window of the Virgin Mary.

For more information about the Apostles of Charity, please contact Anne Kirwan, Development Officer, at 314.881.6024 or annek@svdpstl.org.



Fr. Jim Cormack blesses the new chapel at the SVDP Council office.

We’re Praying for You

All Apostles of Charity are enrolled in our book of prayer and their intentions are remembered in the Prayers of the Faithful offered at our weekly Masses at our Council office chapel. To submit a prayer intention for our book of prayer, please contact Chelsea Auton at 314.881.6039.



In appreciation of their generosity, SVDP staff lists all Apostles of Charity in the book of prayer and pray for their intentions at weekly Masses.

Memorial and Honor Gifts

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY in remembrance and honor of your friends and family. The following gifts were received between January 1, 2015 and April 30, 2015.

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Neil Haberberger

Katherine Hall's First Communion
Christopher Kalavsky

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Molly Davis' 5th birthday
Floreline Mateo

Msgr. John J. Hickel
60th anniversary ordination
John and Mary Rabbitt

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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.

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YOU'RE INVITED

**170th Anniversary Celebration
 of the establishment of
 the Society in the United States**

Commemorative Mass
 Basilica of Saint Louis, King (The Old Cathedral)
 2 p.m. on September 13, 2015
 To RSVP, please contact Emily at 314.881.6035.



Celebrating 170 Years of Service

SVDP to Commemorate St. Louis Legacy at Old Cathedral

ONE OF THE OLDEST CHARITIES west of the Mississippi River, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul established the first conference in the U.S. in St. Louis 170 years ago. Since then, the vision of the founding members laid a foundation of charity and service that remains strong to this day.

To celebrate the 170th anniversary of this special occasion, the Society will host a Mass and reception on Sept. 13 at the very place where the first U.S. conference began—the Basilica of St. Louis, King of France (the Old Cathedral). Mass will begin at 2 p.m., and all Vincentians, parishioners and donors are invited. Since the Old Cathedral was recently renovated to reflect its original appearance, attendees will get to experience the Cathedral as the Society's founding members did when they worshiped, prayed and served there.

The first conference in the U.S. began when a group of charitable St. Louisans saw a great need among the poor in their community. Bryan Mullanphy, a judge and philanthropist who would later serve as mayor of St. Louis, became vice president, and physician and Saint Louis University professor Moses L. Linton was appointed president. More than two dozen prominent Catholic laymen attended as founding members.

While 170 years have passed since Society members first began their good works along the St. Louis riverfront, the Vincentian spirit and charitable mission remain as strong as ever across the Archdiocese. Today, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is one of the area's largest social service organizations, with more than 3,000 Vincentian volunteers across 142 conferences.

Through prayer and perseverance, the founding members' vision endures as countless Vincentians and supporters faithfully respond to Christ's call in the example of St. Vincent de Paul.

