

Serving in *Hope*

a publication of National Council
of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Inc.®



FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR FOUNDERS

You Immerse Neighbors in Love & Mercy

YOU MIGHT IMAGINE that the day someone is released from prison would be the best and happiest day of their incarceration. But that's not always the case.

Many agonize over leaving. Why? Because they'll walk out to freedom with no more than *that*. No clothes, money, phone minutes, or even a valid ID. No job — and often not a single friend or family member they can go back to. Alone on a bus at the end of the line, they have no idea where to go or what to do next.

Having the right kind of help in those first hours and days is critical to making a successful return to society. So is having **ongoing help** for weeks, months, and even years to come.

Thanks to support from generous donors like you, Vincentian volunteers are receiving the spiritual formation and training they need to serve neighbors in need with the most effective person-to-person assistance possible. The success of the Society's Immersion Reentry Program is one example.

Begun in early 2019, Immersion provides citizens returning to their communities with caring and compassionate support from Vincentian volunteers along every step of their journey. Immediate help includes providing transitional services during the first 72 hours after release, as well as basics like food, clothing, and shelter. Longer-term support includes mentoring, employment assistance, education, help reconnecting with loved ones, advocacy, and securing permanent housing.

"We are following in the footsteps of our founders," says Peter Kortright. He and Diana Reeves co-founded Immersion in their Attleboro, Massachusetts Council. Frédéric Ozanam and the first Vincentians encountered these same situations nearly two hundred years ago. The first Home Visits they carried out eventually became the

Continued on page 2



**"Service is a means,
not an end ...**

... to the works of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. We are walking with people out of poverty not for credit to ourselves, but for love alone. By serving Christ in the person of the poor, we are getting the benefit by drawing closer to one another, and to Christ. This is at the heart of what it means to be formed as a Vincentian.

God created us for community, to grow with and through each other. It is in sharing our growth with others that they can grow. That makes us better servants and we all grow together in spirit."

– Tim Williams
National Vincentian Formation Director



You Immerse Neighbors in Love & Mercy *Continued from page 1*

Society of St. Vincent de Paul. They offered practical and prudent ways to reflect God's mercy.

"Visiting the prisoner who is preparing to reenter the community is quite like a Home Visit, God is asking us to pay special attention to those least of us who may need it."

Immersion currently serves over 400 people in Attleboro, Des Moines, Green Bay, and Orlando. Donor gifts to the National Council are supporting its planned expansion.

"Nobody anywhere gets paid to accompany someone so closely for so long in their journey back to self-sufficiency," Kortwright says. "Vincentians do it for love, with the traditions, mission, and zeal of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and guidance from the Holy Spirit."

The power of praying together, listening, empathizing, organizing, and taking action means the world to brothers and sisters who are rebuilding their lives.

Over 2019 – 2021, volunteers accompanied Christine step-by-step following her release from prison. Along the road they offered grocery gift cards, bus passes, clothing, and rent to enter a "sober house" for two months. There were empowerment classes, job applications, and help to regain custody of her children. There were shared tears and cheers, and many prayers of gratitude.

Last July, with the Society's assistance in funding a security deposit, Christine moved into her own space — the biggest step so far in her journey forward. "It's small and it's kind of ugly, but it has a lock on the door and it is mine," she said with a smile. ●

DIVINE MERCY:

God's Love in Our Hands

ON THE OCTAVE OF EASTER, CATHOLICS CELEBRATE DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY.

Recently Bishop Donald J. Hying spoke about how donors and volunteers of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul serve to further God's mercy through their association with the Society.

"Mercy is at the very heart of Christianity. Mercy is what love does when it encounters people who are suffering."

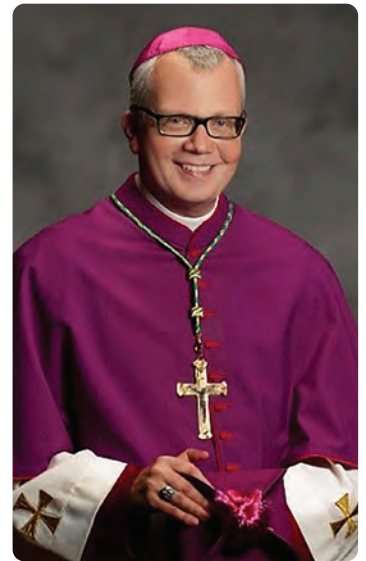
Bishop Hying thinks of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection as God's great rescue mission. Seeing humanity trapped in sin and death, He sent His Son to save us. So every time someone offers an act of charity in Jesus' name, they are extending what Jesus did, "whether it's feeding the hungry or helping someone with rent, or just listening."

Providing material aid is important. But it's not the central meaning of the work itself, Bishop Hying notes. "If the Society found itself without money or food or furniture to share with people in need, we would still go to them and offer what they need even more: the love of God and Christian friendship.

"We would listen to them, pray for them, help them realize that they have infinite value. This is our fundamental work.

"After all, an atheist can feed someone who's hungry. But for Christians, this same act has profound spiritual dimensions." ●

Bishop Donald J. Hying serves as the Bishop of the Diocese of Madison in Wisconsin and as National Episcopal Advisor to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.



"The Society of St. Vincent de Paul takes Jesus' resurrection a step further in the world by extending his love and mercy to every individual as a son or daughter of God. When someone chooses to share their treasure with the Society, it is an act of faith, almost as if they are putting money in Jesus' pocket to help the poor."

– Bishop Donald J. Hying

VINCENTIAN SPOTLIGHT: Wayne Bugg

“God’s divine mercy brought me to St. Vincent de Paul,” says Wayne Bugg.

At 15 years old, Wayne left his parents’ home in Chicago, and went to live with an aunt in Minneapolis-St. Paul. A neighbor invited him to help out at the local St. Vincent de Paul thrift store. There, Wayne found a nurturing community of Vincentian volunteers who treated him with value.

“Their love for God motivated them to love their neighbor,” he says.

To earn a living, the teen shoveled snow and sold Christmas trees at the Minneapolis SVdP Thrift Store. Moving up to store cashier, he felt good. But the local SVdP Conference president told Wayne he could do more with his life and urged him to finish his GED.

Through the generosity of our donors, the National Council offers Vincentian leaders like that Conference president both spiritual formation and the training they need to serve people like Wayne most effectively.

Vincentian volunteers kept mentoring Wayne, encouraging him, and even providing him with a laptop to help him finish school. He graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in business, going on to manage the store where he’d once shoveled snow. Today, Wayne himself is a Vincentian. He now oversees SVdP TC’s Minneapolis and St. Paul stores while serving as SVdP Twin Cities’ Associate Executive Director.

Along the way, SVdP also nurtured Wayne’s spirituality and family life. He’d worked alongside Vincentians “who



were models of what a good marriage could be.” That gave Wayne hope, and he married the mother of his child to unify their family in love permanently.

Later, when the couple was overcome with uncertainty at learning they were expecting twins, a Vincentian named Margaret calmed their fears. She told Wayne she would visit three times a week to help with dishes and chores around the house. “Vincentians know how to help,” Wayne notes. “Margaret gave us grace and love when we really needed it.”

When asked about Divine Mercy, Wayne remarks, “Mercy is unearned forgiveness, and ‘divine’ puts the God in it.” Wayne sees his role as a Vincentian as an opportunity to show God’s love for others.

“Some people think the Society is about giving a couch. But it’s about giving hope. Sometimes that’s by giving a couch, sometimes that’s by giving a job, but it’s always hope. We can give everyone that.” ●

YOUR WILL: 3 Important Questions to Answer

1 Does your current Will or Trust reflect your values and your faith?

A thoughtful estate plan can accomplish these important aims. If the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has earned your trust as a charity worth supporting, we thank you for prayerfully considering adding the Society as an heir in your Will or Trust. There are other simple ways you can provide for our work in years to come. One is to add the Society as a beneficiary to an existing:

- IRA, 401(k), or 403(b) account
- donor advised fund
- life insurance policy, or
- bank or brokerage account.



To learn more, contact your financial advisor or call Dennis Kempf, Director of Philanthropy, at (314) 576-3993 ext. 222.

Our Legal Title is: **National Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Inc.**

TIN / EIN: **13-5562362**

Address: **66 Progress Parkway, Maryland Heights, MO 63043**

2 Is it consistent with how you want to be remembered?

3 Will it achieve your goal to leave your family and the world in a better place?

Extending Our Mercy Toward Others



It's hard to imagine the world without the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Its nearly two centuries of caring for the poor. Its current 800,000+ Vincentian volunteers carrying out countless Home Visits to neighbors in need across 153 countries. Its spiritual formation bringing people closer to Christ through a mission of love and mercy.



No one can count the millions of lives changed for good thanks to donors, volunteers, and friends like you. In every season, you make possible the Society's continuing response to the call of St. Vincent de Paul: *"Extend your mercy toward others, so that there can be no one in need whom you meet without helping."*

Every time you make a gift to the National Council, you enable us to serve nearly 100,000 U.S. member volunteers with spiritual formation, organizational assistance, and financial grants to help local chapters (called Councils and Conferences) meet needs that lie beyond what their resources allow.

On behalf of everyone whose lives you enrich by your generous giving, I thank you.

Together, let us ask the Lord for the grace of carrying out many daily acts of mercy as our circumstances and blessings allow. May each of us become more like the one who is himself the author of Divine Mercy.

Ralph Middlecamp, National Council President



National Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul®
66 Progress Parkway | Maryland Heights, MO 63043-3706
(314) 576-3993 | www.svdpusa.org

OUR MISSION

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a network of friends, inspired by Gospel values, growing in holiness and building a more just world through personal relationships with and service to people in need.

In the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul, we are a Catholic lay organization inspired by Gospel values. The Society leads women and men to join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering.

The National Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Inc. is a non-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Donations to the National Council are deductible. The Council's tax identification number is 13-5562362.



To make a gift online, please visit www.svdpusa.org/donate

NL3

MY DONATION

YES, I want to help SVdP USA continue serving in hope! Here's my gift to support the Society's volunteer members caring for the poor across the country.

\$35 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

- My employer has a matching gift program. My form is enclosed.
- Please send me information on including The National Council of the U.S., Society of St. Vincent de Paul in my Will.
- Please send me information on becoming a Vincentian.

My email is _____

Please charge my MC VISA AMEX Discover

Name on Card _____

Account No. _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Phone _____

Please charge my gift as one time monthly recurring

Make your check payable to

Society of St. Vincent de Paul USA
66 Progress Parkway
Maryland Heights, MO 63043

All gifts to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul are tax-deductible as allowed by law.