



Conference News and Notes for Friday, May 14, 2021

Sent to all Vincentians & Staff

Vincentian Reflection for the Ascension of our Lord, celebrated May 16, 2021

Gospel: (Mark 16:15-20) Jesus said to his disciples: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature...These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

Reflection: Jesus expects his disciples to walk in his footsteps. But Jesus always *invites* us to share in his ministry, never forces us. At the Ascension, Jesus *commissioned his disciples* to proclaim the gospel. At first this might seem an impossible commission: how can we expect to fill Jesus’ footsteps? On our own authority we cannot preach the gospel, we *can* fill Jesus’ footsteps only when we hear “the instructions given through the Spirit”. What an awesome honor it is to be disciples of Christ – by returning to his rightful place at the hand of God, Jesus *entrusts* his mission to us. (*Living Liturgy*, p.136)

Vincentian Meditation: The motto of the Society states that: “**No work of charity is foreign to the Society.**” And so in the Manual we read: Accordingly, the possibilities for Vincentian action are almost without limit. Being poor does not always, or necessarily, consist of being short of material goods. Being poor can also mean being physically and mentally handicapped, sick, crippled, old, ugly, or illiterate. There are poor who are or are made to feel alone...immigrants, transients, orphans, the abandoned or rejected, and all those who find themselves among others who are indifferent or hostile. Being poor may mean wanting to cry when others are laughing; being physically or morally chained, as prisoners, shut-ins, alcoholics, drug addicts; being defenseless against attacks, insults or accusations; being an innocent victim of crime or quarrels. The more the Society grows, the more it will reach the lonely and troubled who have need for care and friendship. (*US Manual*, P.45-46)

**How are we being called to carry the mission of Jesus in
new ways, meeting new needs or creating new works of charity?**

New COVID Developments

As we are called as Vincentians to respond to the needs of our neighbors, we have been presented with 2 new developments as of yesterday (Thursday, 5/13) of which we should take note:

- Governor Mike DeWine announced that the State of Ohio will stop participating in the federal government's supplemental benefits program, which has been providing an extra \$300 per week to jobless neighbors, effective Saturday, 6/26/2021.
- The National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 no longer need to wear masks or

physically distance.

It is certainly fair to say that we can expect more discernment and guidance to follow these 2 announcements...and the reality may have already changed by the time you read these words. We encourage you to prayerfully consider, and to share within your Conference circle, how to best live our Vincentian vocation in these current times.

Our Resource Spotlight Sessions

We hosted our first Resource Spotlight via Zoom on Tuesday, 4/27, featuring New Life Furniture Bank (NLFB). You can access a recording of the presentation at your convenience at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui7EemEN6v4>.

This kicked off an envisioned series of monthly Resource Spotlights in which we expect to deepen our awareness of available tools to better engage and serve our neighbors.

Our next Resource Spotlight via Zoom is Monday, 5/24/2021, 1-2pm, and will feature our Council's Social Services team addressing the range of engagement, assistance, and resources they extend. Link to this Zoom meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/98797991809?pwd=NnBMaW5iRWFvdENLYUtRaWpVM09kdz09>

Meeting ID: 987 9799 1809

Passcode: 179221

We would love to have each of our Conferences participate. Please join us!

SVDP Mideast Region Virtual Meeting - You're Invited

The Mideast Region of our National Council is comprised of 4 states: KY, IN, OH, & MI (clearly not listed in order of magnitude). Each year our region hosts a meeting for its members; this year's will be Friday & Saturday, 6/4&5/2021. Participation is free; you can pick & choose which offerings you access (you do not have to participate fully either or both days); and this virtual format offers the opportunity to engage in the comfort of your own home. You can find more information about the agenda and register to participate at <https://meetingsvdpusa.regfox.com/2021-virtual-mideast-regional-meeting>.

Opportunity - Ozanam Center Program Coordinator

Our Ozanam Center for Service Learning is hiring for a Program Coordinator, a full-time Tuesday through Saturday position. The Ozanam Center Program Coordinator is responsible for supporting the development and implementation of programming for the Ozanam Center for Service Learning and overseeing the works and development of Youth Conferences. Work weeks will vary seasonally and will include night/weekend work. Resumes and cover letters can be sent to Mo Kelly at MKelly@SVDPCincinnati.org. Visit <https://www.svdpcincinnati.org/about-us/employment-opportunities/> to view the job posting.

Emergency Broadband Benefit Available

Effective this past Wednesday, 5/12/2021, eligible Hamilton County residents can enroll to receive a monthly discount off the cost of broadband service from an approved provider. The Emergency Broadband Benefit will provide a **discount of up to \$50 per month** towards broadband service for eligible households. Eligible households can enroll through an approved provider or by visiting <https://getemergencybroadband.org>.

Per the FCC's website, <https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>, the following are eligibility requirements (if a member of household meets one of the criteria):

- Has an income that is at or below 135% of the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) or participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, or [Lifeline](#);
- Approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch

- program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision in the 2019/2020 or 2020/2021 school year;
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year;
 - Experienced a substantial loss of income due to job loss or furlough since February 29, 2020, and the household had a total income in 2020 at or below \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers; or
 - Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program.
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Living this Vincentian Vocation in our COVID Progression

We're excited to hear of so many Conferences re-assembling for in-person meetings - some socially-distanced indoors, some outdoors. Likewise, some Conferences are exploring how to safely engage in home visits. We encourage each Conference and member to decide what is best based upon their respective reality...and to integrate health safeguards for Vincentians and neighbors alike.

Your Bank St - based Conferences Support Team members (thankfully vaccinated) would love the opportunity to join your Conference meeting (in-person or virtual) when you are ready to welcome a guest. **We are here for you...we would love to be there with you!**

Annual Conference Presidents Meeting

Conference Presidents, please reserve on your calendar:

Saturday, 6/19/2021, 9am - noon.

We aspire to assemble in-person, pending further COVID developments.

More info to come in the weeks ahead.

Thanks!

Thanks...

To Conference Presidents & other Conference representatives who are actively participating in this quarter's 5 Conferences Network Meetings. Our East, NorthEast, & West Conferences Networks each gathered via Zoom in the last 10 days. This coming week, our Central (Tuesday, 5/18) & NorthWest (Wednesday, 5/19) Conferences Networks will gather. The explicit purpose of these sessions is to facilitate Vincentian-to-Vincentian sharing to empower our Conferences individually and collectively to best engage their members and their neighbors.

We are filled with hope that our next round of these sessions will be safely-assembled in-person.

More Resources for our Conferences and Neighbors

Cincinnati Eye Institute Foundation Vision Clinic in our Neyer Outreach Center

Great news! This extremely popular resource for our neighbors has successfully returned after a COVID-responsive hiatus. The Vision Clinic re-opened in March and will operate **by appointment only** 9am - 2pm on alternate Thursdays; our next operating date is this coming Thursday, 5/20. To schedule an appointment, or to inquire for additional info, please call 513.207.6140.

Conference Assistance Fund ("CAF")

We received 100 CAF applications and extended \$44,999 in CAF assistance in April. Through yesterday morning (Thurs, 5/13), we had received 63 CAF applications in May...and over half had already been approved. The pace of your submissions has accelerated since the early April lull.

Hannah & Margaret greatly appreciate the efforts invested by our Vincentians to submit complete, descriptive, and accurate CAF applications. And many thanks to our Finance team for expediting the disbursement of approved assistance.

Publicly Funded Resources Available through SVDP Social Services -

Process Update

Our Social Services team continues to administer the City of Cincinnati's Eviction Prevention Initiative (EPI) for qualifying residents of the city as well as Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) for qualifying Hamilton County residents.

Guidance from our Social Services team:

To access an SVDP Social Services program, please coach neighbors to call the SVDP Help Line, **513-421-0602**. After they leave a message, a staff member or volunteer will return their call. This call back begins the process of assessing eligibility. Assistance will be extended if eligibility criteria are met and if funds are available. Please do not give false hope as there is no guarantee of assistance.

We have put a new process in place so that Vincentians can check on EPI or TANF cases when a neighbor has not been able to connect with our staff or when a case seems to have been delayed.

We do encourage you to continue to first ask neighbors to call our staff themselves, as it is important for them to have ownership of this process; however, if this has not been effective and if you have a question, please follow the process below:

- Email Mary Reid at mreid@svdpcincinnati.org. Please be as thorough as you can in your email, including the neighbor's name, address including ZIP, their need, and which program they have applied for
- Please cc Margaret Rahn on your email
- Mary will check the status of the case and will email you within 48 hours, cc'ing Margaret Rahn

Watch for more details about these assistance programs and how we administer these resources most productively and impactfully.

Fans & Air Conditioners Distributions

Fan & AC distributions began Monday, 5/3/2021, at the Neyer Outreach Center.

Neighbors interested in receiving a fan can simply call 513-562-8850 *on the day that they plan to pick up their fan*. Neighbors are eligible if they live in Hamilton County and did not receive a fan from SVDP last year. Neighbors interested in receiving an air conditioner must fill out a request at www.svdpcincinnati.org/AC. Neighbors are eligible to receive an AC if they live in Hamilton County; are 65 years old or older or have a medical need for an AC; and haven't received an AC from us in the last four years (2017-2020). Please note that neighbors may receive one fan or one AC per household, but not both. Complete details on the program were sent out to Conference Presidents on April 20.

Through end of day Thursday, 5/13/2021, we have distributed 139 fans; we have received 157 eligible AC applications; and we have distributed 85 ACs.

We are eager to welcome Mount St Joseph University student Christine Deckard this Monday, 5/17. Christine will be with us to help administer our Fans & ACs Distributions. She can be reached at 513.562.8841, ext 772, or via email at

summerrelief@svdpcincinnati.org.

Rahe Beds Fund & Program

We extended vouchers for **168 beds in March & 155 in April**. We intend to extend our **full monthly target of 180 beds in May**. Initial May requests were reviewed on Wednesday, 5/5/2021. As a result, 110 of the 180 bed vouchers have been committed. Each Conference may initially submit up to 5 bed requests each month. If the initial requests do not fully extend out target (as has been the case in March, April, and now in May), we reach back out to those Conferences who submitted their full 5 requests to complete the target of 180 beds. Those contacts will begin this coming week. **The message here: we want to distribute 180 Rahe beds each month.**

Beds are currently available, but our vendor is again reporting COVID-related supply chain and production challenges. Please stay tuned to these weekly updates.

As a reminder, please be sure you are submitting accurate, complete mailing addresses for each neighbor (including apartment numbers and zip codes), as vouchers are sent via traditional mail.

Please contact rahebedfund@svdpcincinnati.org if you have any questions about our program and process.

Hamilton County CARES Act Assistance

As you are undoubtedly aware, the latest wave of federally-funded COVID assistance extends well beyond stimulus checks. If you encounter a neighbor who has experienced

financial hardship due to COVID, please refer them to <https://513relief.org/housing-utility-relief/>. There is an array of resources available through this website.

Hamilton County Job and Family Services (HCJFS or JFS) is administering stimulus funds for Hamilton County and Community Action Agency (CAA) is administering for the City of Cincinnati.

Metro Bus Tickets - Everybody Rides Metro Program

The Human Services Chamber of Hamilton County (we are an active member) championed the revival of this Everybody Rides Metro program which had been inactive since 2017. This program enables us to be reimbursed for half of the face value of Metro bus passes which are extended to neighbors for specific transportation use. We are happy to share this resource with the neighbors you serve. **If you are serving a neighbor who needs bus tickets for employment, medical services, and social services including food assistance, please encourage them to call our general help line, 513-421-0602.** As a reminder, all Hamilton County residents are eligible for short-term assistance with this need through our Neyer Outreach Center, subject to our qualification policies. Our team members will handle the documentation requirements for assistance we extend.

CDC COVID-19 Eviction Moratorium

While the CDC did extend the eviction moratorium to 6/30/2021, the Hamilton County Municipal Court, following a 6th District Court ruling, decided that the CDC moratorium on evictions for failure to pay rent no longer applies in our county. The net result is that, at least for now, the CDC eviction moratorium does not protect Hamilton County tenants who are delinquent on rent obligations. You can share the following resources with impacted neighbors facing issues with their landlord and possible eviction:

- The Hamilton County website 513Relief.org Delivers COVID-19 Relief Options - Hamilton County (hamiltoncountyohio.gov)
- the Municipal Court Legal Help Center [Help Center for Hamilton County Municipal Court \(cincyhelpcenter.org\)](https://www.cincyhelpcenter.org)
- Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) 513.721.4663

You may also find more info at this State of Ohio site link:

<https://www.ohiolegalhelp.org/topic/covid-19-renter-protections>

Free Tax Prep Services Still Available - 2020 Filing Deadline is this Monday, 5/17/2021!

Many of our neighbors may be entitled to an income tax refund for the 2020 calendar year. These funds could be a critical resource as COVID continues to disrupt economic activity and employment. The various forms of COVID-response public assistance extended during 2020 have resulted in special corresponding income tax treatment. Good news: Free Tax Prep, an initiative of United Way of Greater Cincinnati, provides free income tax preparation and filing services, funded by the IRS and powered by volunteers. Vincentians, staff, and neighbors can find more important info, including supporting documentation required and how to access service at sites across the Greater Cincinnati region, at [uwgc.org/community-impact/free-tax-prep](https://www.uwgc.org/community-impact/free-tax-prep), or call United Way at 2-1-1 for assistance.

Call to Prayer

**Jesus is ever present with God, and ever present with us, and so we pray,
Jesus is Lord of heaven and earth.**

**We ask for strength to continue as your faithful disciples,
may we seek to speak your word and share your healing presence.**

**We ask for the grace to live our motto “No work of charity is foreign to the Society”,
may we be aware of the poorest among us and seek to assist them.**

Amen.

STAY CONNECTED

