



Conference News and Notes for Friday, April 30, 2021

Sent to all Vincentians & Staff

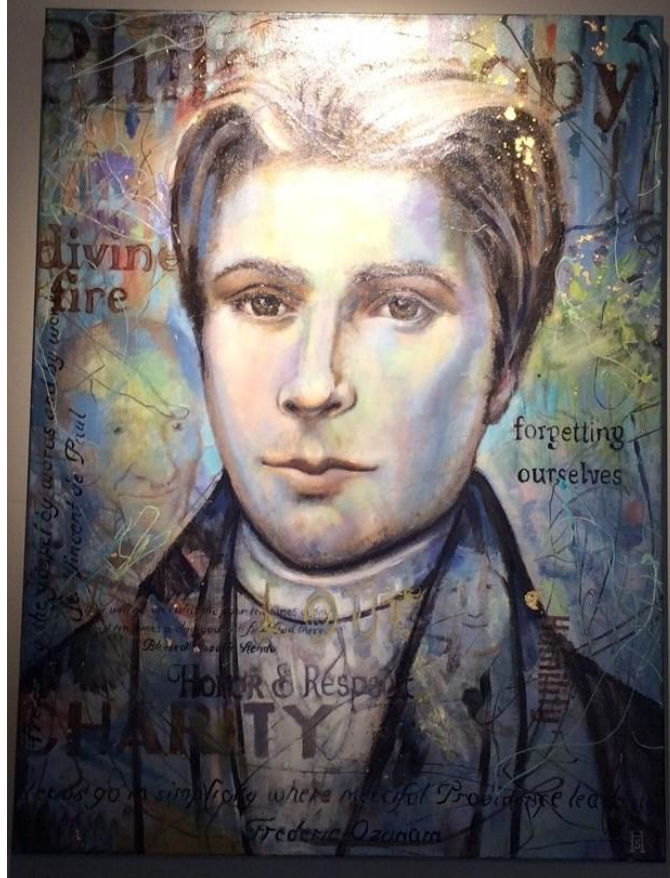
Vincentian Reflection for the Fifth Sunday of Easter, May 2, 2021

Gospel: (John 15:1-8) Jesus said to his disciples: “*I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.*”

Reflection: What do we look like when we are pruned? Some pruning creates a new shape for fruitfulness—anything is taken away that does not lead us to Christ. We may end up a little misshapen—we don’t act like others because we choose to be friendly and helpful to all without discrimination. We are allowing God’s words to remain in us. The fruit we bear blossoms from the intimate relationship we have with the Risen One. Fruitfulness is never for our own sake, but always for that of others. This kind of fruitfulness is what glorifies God—bringing others into closer relationship with God. Self-giving love motivated by the sheer joy of the resurrection opens us to fruitful pruning. Part of our pruning is dying to our prejudices toward others and allowing them to grow in their relationship with the risen Christ. Their growth is also our growth, a deeper share in the resurrected life. (*Living Liturgy*, p.128)

Vincentian Meditation: In the Manual we read: For Frederic, Vincentians transcended racial and national prejudices. They judged women and men strictly on their need, not on their color, nationality, education, morality. Vincentians are non-judgmental. A non-judgmental attitude excludes assigning guilt or innocence, or judging a person’s degree of responsibility for their needs or problems. St. Vincent appealed: “Deal with neighbors in a gentle, humble and loving manner, even with the most hardened of sinners, and never employ a vehement accusation or reproaches or harsh language toward anyone whomsoever.”(*US Manual*, P.24-25)

Do we need pruning to become more non-judgmental, to let go of some prejudices?



This beautiful portrait of Blessed Frederic Ozanam hangs in our Ozanam Center on the 3rd floor of our Liz Carter Center on Bank St.

Prayer Service for Anniversary of the Founding of the Society

Last Friday, 4/23, marked the 188th anniversary of the founding of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. A prayer service in honor of this special occasion is attached below. Please feel free to use this as the prayer/reflection for an upcoming Conference meeting!

[CLICK HERE FOR THE PRAYER SERVICE](#)

The portrait above and this prayer service have been re-shared this week in case you missed them last Friday.

Bob Ramsay of Nativity Conference to be honored as 2021 Seniors Who Rock Award Recipient

We are thrilled to celebrate Bob Ramsay who has been selected to receive the 2021 Seniors Who Rock award. Seniors Who Rock is an annual award given by ProSeniors to honor three local residents who are active, working, or volunteering and adding a value and vibrancy to our community.

As an active Vincentian with the Nativity Conference, volunteer in SVDP's Call Center at the Neyer Outreach Center, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) at ProKids, and volunteer tax preparer for the United Way, Bob is eminently worthy of this recognition for his vibrant contributions that help make our community a better place. Of his faithful Vincentian service, Nativity Conference President Kathy Michel says, "We are very fortunate to have Bob serve as our Conference's vice president. The way in which he lives his life and serves our neighbors exemplifies his commitment to Vincentian values and social justice. I am also grateful to personally benefit from his counsel and support. His only flaw is that he is a lifelong Cardinals fan."

The Seniors Who Rock awards ceremony will occur virtually on Wednesday, 8/11/2021, 4:30pm-5:30pm. [If you would like to register to attend, you can do so now at this](#)

[link.](#)

Please join us in congratulating Bob on this well-deserved honor! We look forward to celebrating with you on August 11th.

Voice of the Poor Update

The SVDP Voice of the Poor Midwest group (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio) has created a short, 5-question survey to “hear” the major issues your Conference is handling so that SVDP might better assist with educational workshops and other resources. Please discuss the issues at your next Conference meeting and complete this on-line survey. It is a great way to engage your members. <https://forms.gle/VFWySpacZytHkMJL8>
This Tuesday, 5/4/2021, is election day. Cincinnati Issue 3, an affordable housing charter amendment measure, is on the ballot. Cast your vote!

Mark Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, 5/26 & 27/2021, for “Connect the Dots” virtual summit that brings together non-profit organizations, educators, housing experts, elected officials, public policy experts, and other stakeholders to discuss a variety of present-day issues. Our own Mary Reid, Social Services Director for our Council, will be discussing “Helping Suburban Residents to Access Stabilizing Social Services.” Register at https://hopin.com/sign_in

Please consider joining Voice of the Poor or being a representative for your SVDP Conference. Our goal is to learn more about systemic poverty issues and advocate for changes that make a lasting difference.

Our Resource Spotlight Session #1 - New Life Furniture Bank

We hosted our first Resource Spotlight via Zoom this past Tuesday, 4/27. The featured service provider was New Life Furniture Bank (NLFB). Thanks to Dana Saxton, Executive Director of NLFB, Bev Diemar, Jill Keefe, and our own St Clare Conference Vincentian Charley Pittinger for their presentation which was followed by questions and answers. Thanks also to those Vincentians who seized this opportunity to better understand how NLFB services can be an effective complementary tool to our furniture vouchers and value-priced furniture available for sale within our own SVDP network of thrift stores. We recorded the presentation which can be viewed at your convenience at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui7EemEN6v4>.

Our SVDP thrift stores are always eager for your donations of furniture, household goods, and clothing which help our neighbors directly and indirectly as our thrift stores generate funding that empowers many other forms of engagement and assistance we extend.

This was the first in 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.

Please watch for upcoming sessions...and join us!

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.

Living this Vincentian Vocation in our COVID Progression

In recent weeks, with the arrival of spring weather and with many of us now recipients of

COVID vaccinations, we have heard from a number of Conferences who are evaluating evolving their practices. Among the considerations are in-person meetings and 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.

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!

Income Tax Filing Deadline Extended

The IRS has extended the federal income tax filing deadline for individuals for the 2020 tax year from 4/15/2021 to Monday, 5/17/2021 (now less than 3 weeks away). The IRS extended the deadline to provide relief to taxpayers facing challenges as a result of the pandemic.

The state of Ohio extended its 2020 tax year filing deadline to Monday, 5/17/2021, as well. Please also note that a free tax return preparation resource is cited below.

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 returned after a COVID-responsive hiatus. The Vision Clinic re-opened last month and will operate **by appointment only** 9am - 2pm on alternate Thursdays; our next operating dates are this coming Thursday (5/6) & 5/20. To schedule an appointment, or to inquire for additional info, please call 513.207.6140.

Conference Assistance Fund ("CAF")

Today is the final day of April. We have received 97 CAF applications in April; 82 have already been approved. The pace of applications has accelerated in the last 2 weeks after a slower start to the month. We continue to monitor the impact of the recent direct federal stimulus assistance and the income tax refund season.

For comparable perspective:

We received and processed 156 CAF applications and extended \$80,362 of assistance in March. This completed our most active CAF quarter ever: we extended assistance of \$249,498 for the 3 months ended 3/31/2021, compared to \$157,616 in the previous quarter ended 12/31/2020 and \$69,528 for the year-earlier quarter ended 3/31/2020. 30+ Cincinnati Council Conferences submitted over 970 applications and accessed \$407,114 in CAF assistance for their/our neighbors in the 6 months ended 3/31/2021. CAF assistance was often utilized in tandem with direct assistance extended by the respective Conferences...and was sometimes augmented by assistance from other publicly-funded programs.

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

Our 2021 Fan & AC Distributions begin this Monday, 5/3/2021, with inquiries and applications being accepted. This year, ACs will be given out through an application/scheduled pick-up process and fans will be distributed on a walk-up basis (both at our Neyer Outreach Center). Please note that households may receive either an AC or a fan, but not both.

This summer heat relief program will be co-coordinated this year by VVC Nicolette Mantica and a Mount St. Joseph student.

More detailed info has been sent via email to Conference Presidents.

Please direct any questions and communication to 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**. Your May requests will be first reviewed **this Wednesday, 5/5/2021**. 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 both March & April), we reach back out to those Conferences who submitted their full 5 requests to complete the target of 180 beds. 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.

Reinforcing more good news: **Rahe Beds are once again available to Conferences for purchase on a limited basis through our thrift stores**. These sales will be based on availability and it may take up to two weeks for your order to be filled. We are not instituting a per-Conference limit, but please know that the supply chain has not yet fully recovered and Stores will not be able to fulfill orders on a scale as large as they previously did. We ask that you not attempt to purchase beds for everyone on your wait list at once and instead submit a portion of your list each month.

Thanks for your understanding and cooperation as the bed supply chain continues to recover.

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 is back!

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 \(hamiltoncountyohio.gov\)](https://www.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

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

**With grateful hearts we pray for the grace of pruning,
Grant us the grace to be kind and loving.
For the poor we serve,
Grant us the grace to be non-judgmental.
For the Society of St. Vincent de Paul,
Grant us the grace to live the spirit of Frederic and Vincent.
Amen.**

STAY CONNECTED

