



DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF AUSTIN
SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, INC.

Conference Presidents, please forward to your conference members.

SSVDP Calendar

Upcoming Events

1/31 VFC Tour & Open House

2/15 Council Office Closed
for President's Day;
Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

3/5 Ozanam Orientation, Santa
Cruz, Buda

3/8-9 Amplify Austin

3/12 Save the Date: Diocesan-
wide Day of Spiritual
Retreat hosted by Office of
Life, Charity & Justice (TBD
Austin)

3/19 Spiritual Advisor Training
Council Office, ATX)

4/9 Save the Date
General Assembly (Austin)

Friday, January 29, 2016

**Vincentian Family Center and Thrift Store
Mid-construction Tour and Open House**

January 31, 2016
901 W. Braker Lane
Austin, TX 78753

We're anticipating a big crowd on Sunday! If you haven't already, there's still time to RSVP for the **mid-construction tour and open house for our new VFC and Thrift Store on January 31 from 2:00 - 4:00 pm!** If you haven't already signed up to join us, this will be a great opportunity for Vincentians, friends, and partners to see our progress on the new facility, discuss our collective vision for the VFC, take part in an interactive community art project, and enjoy fellowship and refreshments. **You'll also be able to check out our mobile thrift store!**

Please be aware, as the building is still under construction, there will be no heating or A/C, so dress for the weather and wear closed-toe shoes.

We hope you will be able to join us! Family and friends are welcome. If you plan to attend, or bring additional people, please

5/14 Ozanam Orientation
(TBD)

Predatory Loan Conversion Program

The Numbers

\$47,838.56 in loans converted

71 high interest loans converted

18 closed loans

7 incentives paid

329% APR for loans converted

2.25% APR for PLCP loans

83.7% repayment rate

31 days without a default

[Link to secure "how to" page -
now with client forms in
Spanish.](#)

Disaster Response

Donate now!

To make a gift, please visit our [website](#) and select "disaster relief fund" from the drop-down menu.

Your gift will help families impacted by the Memorial Day Floods, Hidden Pines Fire and Halloween 2015 Floods.

Archived Documents

[Vincentian documents](#)
[Spiritual Reflections](#)

RSVP [here](#) today! Feel free to reach out to Katie at katie@ssvdp.org with any questions.

Our Society

Pope Francis Quote

"When the world slumbers in comfort and selfishness, our Christian mission is to help it rouse from sleep."

- Pope Francis @ Pontifex

The Voice of The Poor

I am Andy Vasquez, chair of the Society's Voice of the Poor Committee. Consider this article a kick-off for this committee.

Last week we celebrated the birthday of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. He serves as an extreme - Nobel prize winning - example of a voice for the poor.

I watched the movie, Selma, recently and learned that there was a Catholic connection to those events. I had seen the sad, painful photos and news footage of "Bloody Sunday", but never understood the context. I thought it was one of many marches on the path to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the struggle for equal rights for African-Americans. Not true. The Selma marches were after the passage of the 1964 Act, when Dr. King realized that existing laws allowed thousands of people to be kept from voting - not only African-Americans - and had to change. This was a systemic problem. The movement eventually led to President Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Dr. King had called for people across the country to help him in Selma. He made a specific appeal to religious and clergy. Many lay people and clergy responded. In the movie, it showed that a priest was murdered during that time. This intrigued me and I researched further.

Jonathan Daniels was an Episcopalian seminarian who joined the movement. While in Selma, he also helped integrate an Episcopalian church and helped "...assemble a list of federal, state, and local agencies that could provide assistance for those in need.

Links

[Bulletin Announcements
Ethics & Integrity in Ministry](#)

[Donate your vehicle to our
Vehicle Donation Program -
the proceeds from the sale of
your vehicle will stay right
here in our diocese!](#)



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He also tutored children, helped poor locals apply for aid, and worked to register voters." (Wikipedia). In the weeks after passage of the 1965 Act, he was still in Alabama registering voters. Mr. Daniels and 25 others were arrested for picketing Whites-only stores. After their release, Jonathan, Father Richard F. Morrisroe, and two teenaged black women (Ruby Sales and Joyce Bailey) walked to a near-by store that served non-Whites. An off-duty deputy was standing outside with a shotgun. He fired at Ruby Sales, but Jonathan pushed her out of the way and was hit, eventually dying. Fr. Morrisroe, a Catholic priest, grabbed Joyce Bailey and started running. The deputy shot him in the back. He lived and eventually walked again.

I believe these stories of Dr. King, Jonathan Daniels, and Fr. Morrisroe help capture some of the aspects of the Vincentian Voice of the Poor efforts. They heard the people explain what systemic issues were keeping them in poverty and advocated on their behalf. In this case, laws needed to change and there was extreme passion amongst people for and against the change. While focusing on the big systemic change goal, Jonathan Daniels and Fr. Morrisroe, and others continued doing their daily work of helping those in need. Prayer, persistence, education, and the concerted voices of many people eventually led to passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. Notably, it also required members of Congress, the Supreme Court, and the president to listen and take the right actions.

In future articles I will tell you more about ways we can start small (no marches) to be a voice for our friends. I have already heard from a couple of Vincentians that have expressed interest in the Voice of the Poor committee. If you are interested, please send me a note at: avasquezaus@att.net. A small number of committee members can do much to educate and inform many; and, it will take many informed Vincentians to effect systemic change.

In Case You Missed It

News from National...

In this week's e-gazette from the National office, our fearless leader, Dave Barrienger, wrote a great article (below) about aligning values throughout every layer of the Society. Several of us from Central Texas participated in this process and are excited about the prospects of the future.

Over the next few weeks we will report elsewhere through the E-Gazette the Key Beliefs and Key Results developed by the National Council Board with input from nearly 200 Society leaders from around the country. We will integrate these beliefs and results within our existing mission and vision, and align them with our current national strategic plan. This plan, by the way, will be the focus of much of our collective efforts during its upcoming final two years.

If all of this gives you a headache and you are thinking, "Just leave me alone and let me do my home visits!" I hear you. Yet we have nearly 100,000 Vincentians, in 4,400 Conferences that could each go in their own direction - and there are many possible good ones - in attempts to serve the poor. And they may do so with varying degrees of spirituality, with or without systemic change program elements, and with or without proper governance, legal and Rule alignments. If this happens, we are no longer a Society; we instead become a collection of independent parish groups using a common name. But if we think and act together as one true Society, based on common beliefs and a common set of goals, we can achieve so much more!

To see the whole article, click [HERE](#)

New Year, New Officers

We are so happy to welcome new Presidents to three Districts. We are thankful for their willingness to answer the call to leadership.

The incoming District Presidents are:
Manny Ruiz - Austin North District
Jerry Mitchell - Austin Central District
George Caudle - CenTex East District

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the outgoing District Presidents: Your leadership has been invaluable. We look forward to continuing to work with you in your respective Conferences.

The outgoing District Presidents are:
Donny Widjaja - Austin North District
Letha Wiley - Austin Central District
Patricia Schoenemann - CenTex East District

We are all called to service. How is God calling you? What will you answer?

"Speak, for your servant is listening."
1 Samuel 3:10

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Office Hours M-TH 9:00 - 4:00 and F 9:00 - 2:00 ---
see calendar above for office holiday closings.

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