



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

Conference Presidents, please forward to your conference members.

### SSVDP Calendar

#### Upcoming Events

[3/19 Spiritual Advisor Training \(Council Office, ATX\)](#)

3/24 Office Skeleton Staff - Holy Thursday

**3/25 Office and Store Closed - Good Friday**

3/26 Office Skeleton Staff - Easter Monday

[4/9 General Assembly \(VFC\)](#)

[5/10 Blessing of the Vincentian Family Center](#)

[5/14 Ozanam Orientation - St Theresa Conference](#)

5/14 New Vincentian Family Center Carnival and Community Celebration

### Predatory Loan Conversion Program

#### The Numbers

**\$47,986.72** in loans converted

**74** high interest loans converted

**20** closed loans

**7** incentives paid

**329%** APR for loans converted

**2.25%** APR for PLCP loans

## Friday, March 12, 2016

### Amplify Austin Update

Amplify Austin was a success! The annual day of online giving provided a phenomenal opportunity for the Society to celebrate our past on South Congress and our future in North Austin. Over 24 hours, the Society received 42 donations for a total of \$5,985 to support the Vincentian Family Center and Thrift Store. We extend a heartfelt thank



you to all our donors and to everyone who joined us for the party at the Thrift Store! We shared breakfast and fellowship with volunteers, staff, and a number of the thrift store's regular customers, including long-time shopper Laura and one of her seven daughters, Grace (*pictured above, left and right*).

Laura and Grace have been shopping at the St. Vincent de Paul thrift store for more than thirty years. Grace, now 40, recalled her embarrassment at having to wear thrift store clothes while her classmates had new designer and name brand fashions. Only later did Grace realize that as a single mother, her mother was simply doing the best she could. That included shopping at the thrift store. As she shared memories of her hundreds of trips to St. Vinney's, Grace was moved to tears.

Laura and Grace are still devoted customers. While she may have been embarrassed in her youth, Grace now finds herself treasure hunting at the store. Laura called in sick to work to make the Bon Voyage party, as she wanted to personally thank the store employees. Both of them promise to come to our new North Austin store when it opens in May.

**86.4%** repayment rate

**21** days without a default

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

### Archived Documents

[Vincentian documents](#)

[Spiritual Reflections](#)

### 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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## Voice of the Poor Update from Andy Vasquez

Last month, Pope Francis held his final mass of his visit to Mexico in Ciudad Juárez. He traveled halfway around the world to speak with the people of Mexico and the Americas and he capped his visit on the U.S. and Mexico border to dramatically emphasize his message about immigrants. If Pope Francis felt the issue was that important, I figured I should listen.

First, he commented on the first reading, Jonah 3:4, where God instructed Jonah to warn the people of Ninevah to change their ways, to tell them that injustice has infected their way of seeing the world. Pope Francis then reminded us of the mystery of divine mercy, saying that Mercy invites us to see the damage being done at every level and then to transform it. Jonah went out and found people, "capable of weeping. To weep over injustice, to cry over corruption, to cry over oppression."

Pope Francis chose the U.S.-Mexico border to speak about migration, but he reminded us that this is a global crisis. Certainly, Europe has seen a flood of Syrian and other refugees; just as we have seen a flood of refugees from Central America who have crossed through Mexico. He calls it a "forced migration". Thousands of individuals are living with extreme poverty, violence, drug trafficking, and crime and feel they have no choice but to flee their homes, enduring incredible dangers to reach a safer destination. Pope Francis asks of us, "Let us together ask our God for the gift of conversion, the gift of tears, let us ask him to give us open hearts like the Ninevites, open to his call heard in the suffering faces of countless men and women."

Pope Francis praises the work of civil organizations, religious people, and lay people who support the rights of migrants. As members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul he calls you "prophets of mercy", the "beating heart and the accompanying feet of the Church that opens its arms and sustains." When you are on a home visit listening to a person who is struggling in this country because she lacks a proper ID, you see her as a child of God and do not judge. We do not super-impose a label across her forehead as she speaks: Immigrant, Illegal, Alien, Mexican, Criminal. We are two souls joined at that moment through divine providence.

We can honor and love the people we serve – and millions of others facing similar circumstances - without suggesting that we tear down the border wall and declaring everyone who crosses a citizen. The national Voice of the Poor (VOTP) Committee has a position paper on [Immigration](#) at svdpusa.org. Like Pope Francis, it calls for us to always consider the humanity and intrinsic goodness of each person before developing solutions for the very real problems that result from thousands of people entering the country every year. It does a good job of framing all sides of the issue and offering recommendations.

In this Year of Mercy and Year of Election, I invite you to keep in your prayers all the people who have forcefully migrated, all the people working on solutions, and to make us all "capable of

weeping". Peace be with you.

Andy Vasquez

## Our Society

### Pope Francis Quote

"It is not easy to entrust oneself to God's mercy, because it is an abyss beyond our comprehension. But we must!"

- - - *Homily on March 17, 2013*

### 5th Sunday Lenten Prayer

God of mercy and compassion,  
Lead us to new life.  
Free our hearts from unkind judgment of others.  
Make us meek and humble of heart.  
Open our hearts to all people.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord,  
Amen.

### In Case You Missed It

## SAVE THE DATE - May 10th Blessing of the Vincentian Family Center

We are honored to announce that on **Tuesday, May 10, 2016 from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**, the Most Reverend Joe S. Vasquez, Bishop of the Diocese of Austin, and the Most Reverend Daniel Garcia, Auxiliary Bishop, will bless the new Vincentian Family Center.

Doors will open at 1:00 pm, and Society staff and leadership will lead small group tours of the facility. The blessing of the facility will take place at 2:00 pm.

All guests will need to **RSVP** by **Monday, May 2**. We invite you to bring friends, family, and guests, but **all names must appear on the quest list to attend.**

More details are still to come!

### APRIL 9TH: General Assembly hosted at the New Vincentian Family Center

We're just over a month away from our annual General Assembly!  
Please plan to join us on **April 9, 2016 from 9:30 am - 2:00 pm** at

the new Vincentian Family Center and Thrift Store. All Vincentians, both active and associate, are invited to join us for this great opportunity for fellowship and networking. You'll also be able to check out our incredible new facility.

We'll plan to publish the agenda in the e-news in just two weeks!

**Please RSVP by April 6, 2016.** We hope to see you there!

**Diocesan Council Staff - Phone: 512-251-6995**

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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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