

SVP 1833 News - May 2011

St Vincent de Paul Society for the 18-30s

Christian outreach to people in need

SVP 1833 Conferences are currently active in the universities of Bangor, Bath, Birmingham, Birmingham Newman, Brighton & Sussex, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Essex, Hull, Kent, Leeds, Leeds Trinity, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle & Northumbria, Oxford, Reading, Roehampton, UEA (Norwich) and Warwick. Most are thriving, though a few have requested help with a re-launch, which will be offered together with resources. The aim is also to set up SVP 1833s in the inner cities where needs are very great and where there are often communities of young people.

The first non university-based SVP 1833 has started in London and is based at Westminster Cathedral. Provisionally known as "London Central" the Conference has chosen the name **Bl Frederic Ozanam SVP 1833**. Members help at The Passage at Carlisle Place where the Daughters of Charity support the homeless with food, resources, and other services. They are also involved in a project for the homeless in Islington - "Shelter from the Storm" Other projects include l'Arche, a hospice, sports mentoring and the Cardinal Hume Centre, offering English and IT skills. One member from the Czech Republic has befriended several people from her country who come to the Lincoln's Inn soup run organised by St James' Church, Spanish Place. She is hoping to set up a drop-in to offer them English language support.

Targets for new Conferences

At **Exeter University** several Cath Soc members joined the local parish SVP, but after a recent presentation at the Sunday chaplaincy Mass they have now formed themselves into their own SVP 1833 Conference. At **Lancaster University** preparations are in hand for a new Conference there in October.

News from the Conferences

Around England and Wales SVP 1833 members are bringing a Vincentian presence into many local projects. Several help out at soup runs, homeless shelters, or give learning support to children. Some, such as the Conferences at Oxford and Cambridge, Leeds and Bangor, organise their own food for the homeless and Big Issue sellers. Members in Manchester recently held their

pancake - making marathon to raise funds for their chaplaincy parties for older people.

The most recently set up Conferences in Bristol, Essex and Warwick are finding their feet and starting to volunteer locally. In Colchester (**Essex**), members organised afternoon tea and entertainment at a residential home and are preparing to help at the homeless shelter in the town.

SVP 1833 national meetings - a springboard for action.

At a one-day meeting in November Alison Gelder from Housing Justice invited the **SVP 1833s** to collaborate in the nationwide campaign, "Who counts?" during Poverty and Homelessness Action Week in February. Members from **Cambridge** were out at 2am, counting the number of people sleeping rough. Members in **Leeds** made a film interviewing three of the Big Issue sellers whom they have come to know through their regular food runs in the city.

In March members from four **SVP 1833** Conferences enjoyed a weekend of talks, workshops, reflection and socialising at the Ozanam Centre in North Wales. Mike Worthington, E & W national president, encouraged members to consider how St Vincent de Paul interpreted Christ's message in the theme "Seeing Christ in our midst" and challenged them to broaden their own Vincentian activities. Annette Haigh from St Jude's Furniture Store, Leeds, gave an overview of the Society's Community Support Projects and invited members to get involved in SVP shops or resource centres in their own areas. David Drozdziak, a founder member of the **BI Frederic Ozanam SVP 1833** in London, who works for **pact** (Prison Advice and Care Trust), gave a moving presentation on the reality of life for people in prison, and suggested ways in which Vincentians could help by welcoming family members at prison visitor centres or by forming Basic Caring Communities - groups who support ex-offenders with friendship and practical help when they leave prison.

SVP 1833 and international links

Several **SVP 1833** members are preparing to attend an international Vincentian Youth Gathering, which will take place just before World Youth Day in Madrid in August this year, where they will have the opportunity to meet with young adult SVP members from around the world. The England & Wales delegation are preparing a film to show the work of **SVP 1833** and will also take part in a "Vincentian Festival" during World Youth Day.

For more info on SVP 1833 please contact Mary Abel - SVP Young Adult Development Officer.

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