

The SVP in India

Johnson Varghese
National President SVP India



Building the Kingdom – National Meeting 2019

How good communications can enhance SVP work



Building the Kingdom – National Meeting 2019

Ç Awareness month

Ç SVP in the press

Ç Vincentian concern



Building the Kingdom – National Meeting 2019

'Love your neighbour' means...

Befriending the lonely

Belinda loves her neighbour. Do you?

Jesus said: "Love God and love your neighbour."
And loving your neighbour means helping them when they're in need.
That's what we do in the SVP. Join us, we need you. Your neighbour needs you.

Watch our video...
Scan me to hear Belinda's story

With kind thanks to
CCLA
GOOD INVESTMENT

Join the SVP - Turn Your Concern into Action
SVPEnglandWales SVPEnglandandwales visit: svp.org.uk
Registered charity number 1050992

'Love your neighbour' means...

Feeding the hungry

Winston loves his neighbour. Do you?

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'Love your neighbour' means...

Helping Parents and Children

Geraldine loves her neighbour. Do you?

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'Love your neighbour' means...

Helping the homeless

Michael loves his neighbour. Do you?

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'Love your neighbour' means...

Visiting older people

Louise loves her neighbour. Do you?

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'Love your neighbour' means...

Visiting people in prison

Mikhael loves his neighbour. Do you?

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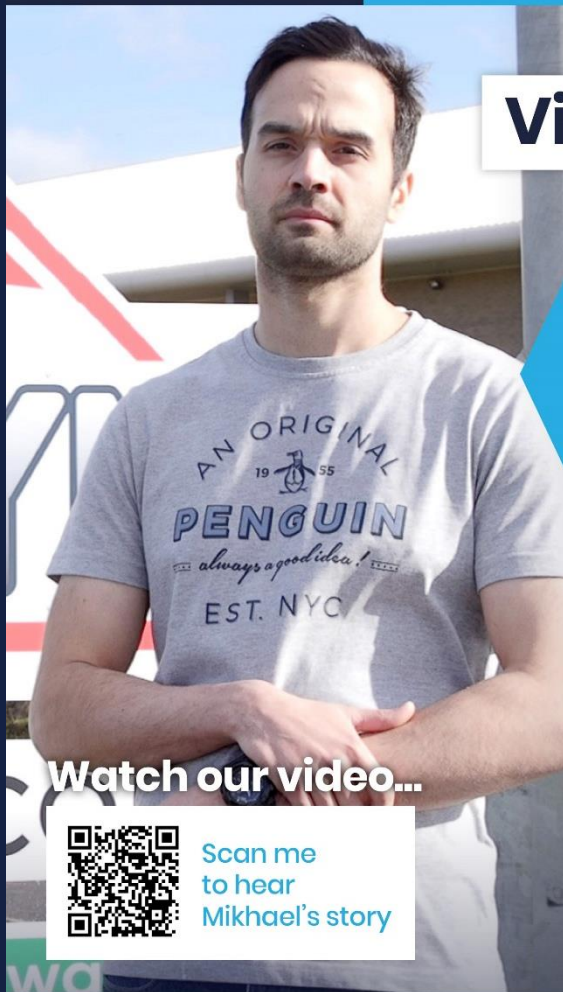
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Why do we need good SVP stories in the news?

1. Awareness

2. Interest

3. Action

What does 'action' look like?

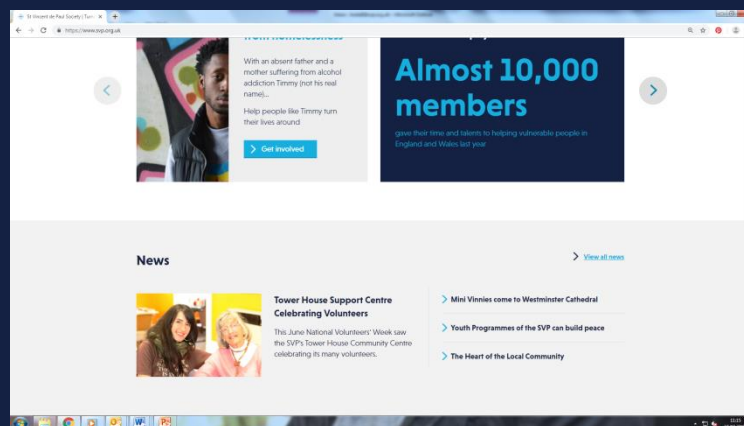
- Ç Attract more members
- Ç Attract more donations
- Ç Gain more support : prayer and spreading the word
- Ç Attract more beneficiaries



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How can members follow SVP in the news?

- Ç Home page of svp.org.uk
- Ç On social media
- Ç The members enewsletter
- Ç In Vincentian Concern



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Writing and sharing your news

What's your story?

Why do you want to tell it?

News leads to the new – supporters, beneficiaries, donations, and... Renewed belonging.



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Telling a News story - the basics

First Paragraph – the W's

Who

What

When

Where

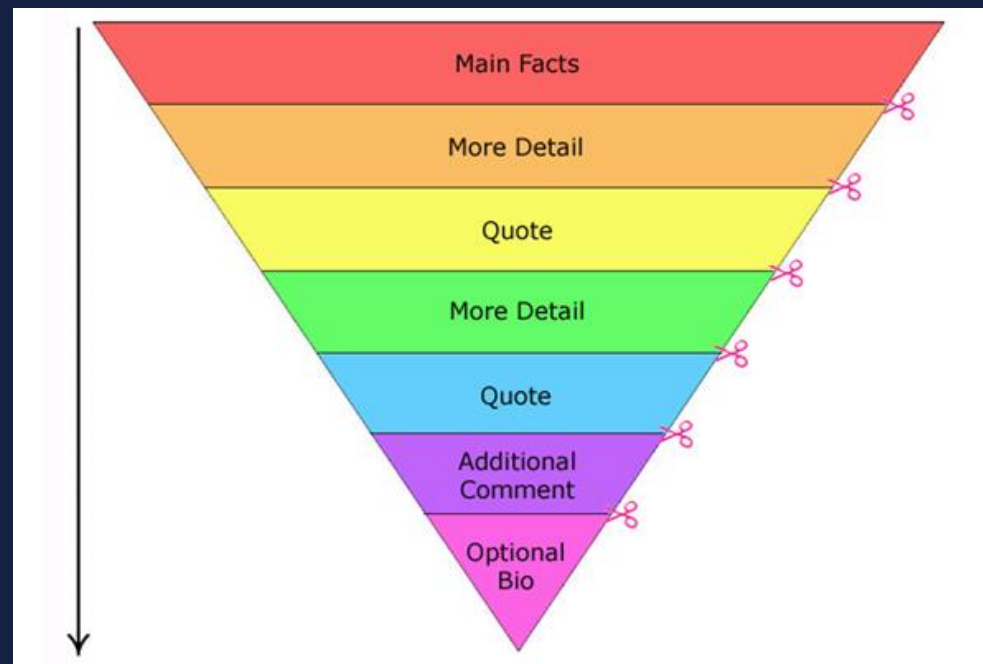
Why and...

How



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The Inverted triangle of a story



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The pitch...



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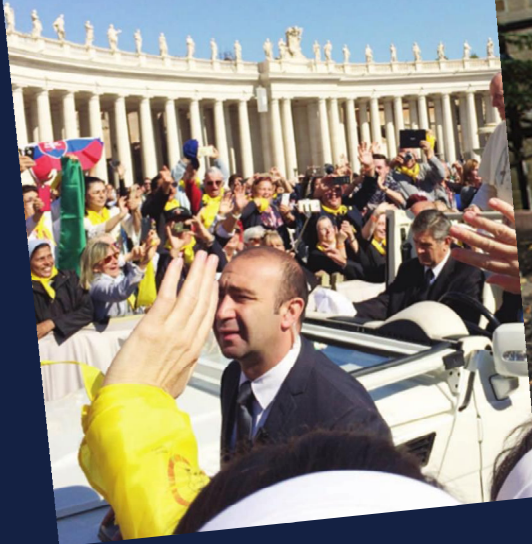
Look
who's
reading...



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**"I thank the Lord
for the four hundred
of your charisma"**
Pope Francis



**An amazing
adventure**
SVP Vinnie Camps

**Mending Lives
Spending
with ex-off**



Inside this edition
Conference innovation
Community collaboration • Catholic social thinking

Keep in touch with us
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Building the Kingdom – National Meeting 2019

- Ç Published 3 times a year
- Ç Spring, Summer and Winter
- Ç Thought pieces, features and news from across the SVP



Building the Kingdom – National Meeting 2019

PACT: Prison's Advice and Care Trust

In this new series we interview the CEOs of Catholic charities for information and advice that can help our members working in related fields. In this, the first feature, Anita Boniface talks to Andy Keen-Downs, CEO of PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust).

Catholic Social Thinking and the Vincentian Vocation

Kevin Flanagan, director of the St Antony Centre, Manchester describes to Anita Boniface his vision of how Catholic Social Thinking connects with the Vincentian vocation.

Catholic Social Teaching, or Thinking (CST), continually developed through papal encyclicals, is often referred to as the Church's 'best kept secret'. At its heart is the belief in the "value and dignity of every human person".

This belief that every individual has an implicit dignity and is worthy of respect, together with the rights and responsibilities around this, is the key to social justice. According to Kevin, social justice is the "bridge between the beautiful honorific vision of the Gospel values, and the often hard and harsh realities of everyday life". SVP members are called to "be the bridge, the intermediary



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St Cuthbert's is strictly tea dancing

Warm coats from SVP warm hearts



Dudley District Council, the West Midlands, have been collecting over 80 coats from a number of people in the area to give to those leaving prison during the winter months.

Last issue of Vincentian Concern reported how, if people are arrested in summer, when they come to be released they often find themselves coming out of prison in the same summer clothing, even if it's the middle of winter.

This issue arose at HM Prison Hewell in Worcestershire where the Prison Chaplain's Department appealed to the help. Four Conferences in Dudley DC – Halesowen, Stourbridge and Tipton – arranged for parish collected warm coats for distribution to the ex-offenders.

Mike Weaver, president of Our Lady & St Kenelm, Halesowen, reports that Dudley District was able to provide HMP Hewell with no less than 80 warm coats.

See our Prisons Update feature on page 11.

St Augustine's pop-up in High Wycombe



St Augustine's parish in High Wycombe is delighted to share the news that a new parish SVP Conference has been meeting regularly, under the very much appreciated tutelage of St Teresa's of Beaconsfield. The Conference has been running tea and coffee mornings after the main 11am Mass to raise funds and awareness. On 19th August the parish put on one of its slightly grander occasional pop-up cafes, serving strawberries & cream, scones and tea, making a profit of £69. As the news of the Kerala floods had recently broken, and as many of St Augustine's parishioners come from that area, the members of St Augustine's decided to donate the money raised to the emergency appeal.



Our Lady & St Thomas' Summer Party

The Our Lady & St Thomas – Hallam Conference held a summer party for over 60 senior parishioners from local churches in the area. The event was held at the De La Salle club rooms where guests enjoyed a sunny Saturday afternoon of cakes and tea.



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Conference Innovation



Left to right: Ian, Marcus, George, Greg, Neil, John, Steven, Tony and Anne Marie

SVP members go beyond boundaries to make a difference

Anita Boniface visits HMP Hindley to observe the work of the Catholic charity helping vulnerable prisoners.

"Deep within a complex compound of locked gates and high fences a small group of prison chaplains at HMP Hindley near Wigan in South West Lancashire has joined Catholic charity the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) to become volunteers helping the 500 men incarcerated at the prison.

On a relentlessly hot, dry summer's day SVP members Ian Kampsell, John Lawless, and I meet chaplain Anne-Marie Harrison and prison volunteer Tony Blackburne (both of whom are SVP members), together with five of the men they work with, to find out what this unusual Conference is doing for the prisoners.

The first thing I notice when entering the prison are the tall fences that seem to reach to the sky as high as I can imagine, topped with vast tangles of barbed wire. The ground is paved solely with concrete, and the tiny patch of grass around the chaplaincy building is scorched dry. There are limited trees and a few flower beds, but little in the environment to remind these men of their humanity. But entering the chaplaincy there is a buzz of excitement, a very human palpable sense of welcome and joy that

is punctuated with humour, camaraderie and optimism. That's the first thing that the presence of Christ with His forgiveness, reconciliation and hope gives these men. Joy.

For the next two hours, the prisoners Neil, Steven, Greg, George, and Marcus explain a little of their stories and what the SVP is doing to help them. Neil explains that "negative lives lead to problems which lead to drugs". Many (but not all) prisoners come from broken homes, experience childhood abuse (more than 50%) and then fall into addiction as a way of coping. The SVP helps distract them from their pain by providing board games, chess sets, art materials and even guitars. "Doing something like music gives you a positive feeling without using the drugs", says Neil.

Another man, Steven shows us the scars on his left arm where he has self-harmed. "The beginning of prison is mental health problems" he says. "We're away from our families and away from the children". Steven lost his partner when he entered the prison system. This led to depression and self-harm.

However, he explains that SVP member and prison chaplain Anne-Marie "was there like an angel in the prison". The members provide "someone to talk to, someone to let go of stuff to." Steven continues:

"In the past I would have gone and taken drugs. Using drugs helped me forget about things and to cope. Now, talking to the chaplain is an alternative."



Conference Innovation



Growing children in the Greenhouse

A psychologically informed, Christ-centred approach taken by head teacher Andrew Rannard and staff at De La Salle Secondary School in St Helens, Merseyside is turning children, some of whom can be angry, disruptive and aggressive into model students. Anita Boniface reports.

Here, where pupils enter Year 7 often suffering childhood trauma, learning difficulties and behavioural challenges, the teachers have set up a Vincentian 'Greenhouse Project', funded and supported by the SVP. The project gives troubled children another chance to learn and improve their behaviour by providing tailored, individual and small group attention in a separate space during lessons. It offers a model of how to improve the behaviour of disempowered, disenfranchised children who ordinarily feel alienated from the learning environment.

Within a separate classroom where up to 16 students receive lessons in English, Mathematics, Geography, Spanish, and History, children are improving in leaps and bounds. In the first 12 weeks of The Greenhouse, the average improvement in reading and writing was 11 months. This phenomenal result was achieved initially through teachers across the school using spare periods to spend time with the children in The Greenhouse. After proving successful it was decided the project would be sustained with a dedicated primary level teacher being brought in to teach in the current academic year.

The children in The Greenhouse have often been disadvantaged disproportionately because they cannot keep up with standard lessons and who, because of behavioural problems, are often excluded or disciplined negatively in other educational settings. The project's aim is to build trust, restore a sense of emotional safety and wellbeing, and ultimately foster learning. It does this by adapting the curriculum to meet their academic, social and emotional needs.

The foundation stone, says Anna De'Ath (project manager) is seeing the good and potential for good in these children, and understanding that "all behaviour is communication". Therefore when a child "acts up" and misbehaves, the teachers understand the child is trying to express an unmet need he or she does not know how to articulate. The teachers consider it their duty to interpret that need, and find ways to meet it. It requires compassion, respect and enormous efforts to build trust.

Building trust is essential. Greenhouse teacher Alex Neil explains: "Often these children have disrupted attachment styles, and their ability to relate to adults has been hindered." However, through building trust the children develop and demonstrate reciprocity,



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Let your compassion live on

St Vincent de Paul's Legacy

Our patron, St Vincent de Paul, was an extraordinary man whose passion and dedication to improving the human condition led to the foundation of our Society and the basis of our mission to help individuals and families in need; giving them hope, dignity, well-being and peace of mind.

St Vincent's legacy of love and care has found its way to almost every corner of the world. As Vincentians, we have many opportunities to leave our own legacy through our service as SVP members and supporters.

Raymond's Legacy

In 2013, long standing SVP supporter, Raymond Robinson, sadly passed away. He was a strong advocate for our work and was touched by the spirit of charity exemplified by St Vincent de Paul. Raymond wanted to leave a similar legacy of compassion

and decided to leave a gift in his will to his local SVP Conference so his service to the poor could continue. His gift contributed greatly to improving the lives of many in the local area, particularly a young man named Ibrahim.

Ibrahim lives with his mother and three sisters. Despite wanting to live an ordinary adult life, he was always dependent on his family for even his most basic needs, as he suffers from a rare eye disorder that left him almost sightless. Unable to take care of himself, Ibrahim felt that he had lost his sense of dignity and there was a great deal of financial and emotional strain on the family.



Ibrahim

Your Catholic Legacy

The SVP is a member of Your Catholic Legacy (YCL), a group of 27 Catholic charities working together to raise awareness of the importance of leaving a gift to Catholic causes in their wills. Together, we recently launched the 'Share your Saint' campaign. You are invited to be part of this by sharing the saint whose legacy has given you the most inspiration and why. Please visit www.yourcatholiclegacy.org.uk/share-your-saint to share your story across the world. A YCL leaflet is included in this issue and contains more information.

As you consider your saint, please take a moment to think about what you hope to leave as your own legacy. There are countless ways to make a difference. Many people, like Raymond, choose to leave a gift to a charitable cause in their will. Such a gift ensures your compassion lives on and gives hope to many people in need or experiencing difficulties. If you would like your compassion to live on why not take advantage of our free will-writing service. This is available to SVP members on a first come, first served basis from 15 April until 30 September or until funds available are exhausted. Through this service you can have a simple single or mirror will written free of charge by a participating solicitor in your area, with no obligation to leave a gift to the SVP or other organisation.

Using Raymond's legacy, SVP Conference members were able to give Ibrahim the life he dreamed of. They provided funding towards enlarging the family home, giving Ibrahim his own space, complete with an en-suite bathroom and a talking microwave so he can both wash and cook independently. The family were very thankful for Raymond's gift and endeavoured to learn more about the great Saint who had inspired him.

If you wish to register for our free will-writing service or need information about the 'Share Your Saint Campaign' please contact Fundraising Officer, Aisha McCarthy, at the National Office on aisham@svp.org.uk



CSP News

Collaboration in the community

In any furniture store, handling donations can be a difficult thing to balance. It can often be the case that a request is made for furniture that you don't have, or items are donated that are simply not useful to a family in need.

Having storage facilities is key to striking a balance between accepting donations and being able to supply quality goods on demand. In 1984, SVP Conference members in Leeds acquired the use of the crypt of an Anglican church for furniture storage. This gave the Conference the ability to provide items of furniture when needed by families in need.

As those requiring help grew so did the requirement for space. The breakthrough came when the National Lottery made an award to St Jude's enabling them to purchase the lease on a property in Holbeck.

St Jude's continued to grow, but additional funding was required. The newly formulated Shops Strategy was initiated and Leeds quickly embraced the opportunity to open several Community Shops. St Jude's became the local hub for sorting donated goods, while in return the shops provided the project with the funding it needed. This collaborative effort motivated the Catholic Housing Aid Society (CHAS) in Bradford, to invite the SVP to take over its furniture service. With a larger building 10 miles away in Bradford, some of St Jude's operations moved there, leaving the project with a reduced role and in turn, allowing SVP members to re-engage with St Jude's and better utilise its facilities.

Last November, with the help of SVP Central Council president Marie Atherton, an Open Day was arranged at St Jude's. It opened with Holy Mass celebrated by Father



Ben Griffiths, a regular supporter of the Society. Thirty members, mainly from the Leeds Conferences attended, including Andrew Winfield, a DC President who had managed St Jude's through many of its developments. Young Vincentians from Corpus Christi College helped by greeting members and serving refreshments.

Julie Milner, manager of St Jude's, spoke at the Open Day emphasising the need for quality goods and furniture and explaining that not everything that is donated can be used, for example stained mattresses or furniture that is not fire-safety compliant. Julie also appealed for help in sorting clothing and goods. As well as donations there is also an increasing demand for volunteers to serve customers, sort donations and to look after the shops.

St Jude's had 708 referrals last year, of families whom they were able to help, of which 24 were from SVP Conferences. Adrian Abel, former SVP National President, called for Conferences to use the store to their advantage in assisting local families in need and to encourage more people to donate their unwanted clothes, household articles and furniture.

The Open Day concluded with objectives being set to improve the sustainability of St Jude's, while continuing to work in collaboration with the local community in order to further assist the people who need it most.



If you are interested in volunteering at an SVP shop or project please get in touch at lyndseyb@svp.org.uk. If you would like to make a donation of goods or furniture please get in touch with your local shop. Please note that beds are in particularly high demand. If you would like to request the contact details directly call the National Office on 020 7703 3030.



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Ç Provide insight

Ç Inform

Ç Inspire



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