



The Voice

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Newsletter
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Columbus Diocese

Bill Sparks, outgoing Diocesan Council President, reflects on his six years of service



It is with some sadness that I write this, my last President's Message column. What a wonderful 6 years it has been—and it seems like it just started. There are so many people to thank who have been an integral part of these years so I thought that I would share some moments with you as I did at the reception a couple of weeks ago.

Proudest Moment: Starting 10 youth conferences at our high schools and middle schools, thus preparing the way for these youth to be the future Vincentians in their parishes.

Most Spiritual: All of our days of recollection were special with leaders from our national office facilitating all but one of these events. But the one with **Fr. Vinny McKiernan** from the Newman Center was extra special and moved us all to higher and holier ground.

Least Spiritual: Early in my term we had to get our own tax exempt (501-3-C) designation from the IRS. The paperwork and sweat that went into

that effort (thank you **Janet Jobco**) was very successful—but anything but spiritual.

Most Appreciated: The support we received from the **Catholic Foundation** allowed us to much better serve those who came for food and clothes at St. Lawrence Haven and our Clothing Distribution Center. **Thank you Loren Brown and Amy Parker!**

Scariest: The first Top Hat Dinner when we planned for 100 people and had only 35 people signed up a week before. What I found out is that Vincentians are notoriously late in signing up and by two days before the event, we did indeed have 100 reservations. (**Whew**) !

Education: Over 20 Ozanam Orientations which trained almost 200 Vincentians, thanks to **Maureen Meck, Kevin Murphy** and their dedicated teams.

Worrisome: Losing **Sanese Vending Machine Company's** food for St. Lawrence Haven when they sold their company. But the **Holy Spirit** stepped in and we are now able to cook something each day to supplement the sandwiches that are core to this ministry.

Growth: Adding conferences at **St. Mary's New Bremen** and at **St. Vincent de Paul** (their name says it all) in **Mount Vernon**. We also consolidated the Scioto County conferences into a single **St. Joseph Conference of Scioto County**, thanks to **Doug Gulley** from St. Monica's in New Boston.

Rewarding: Seeing **St. Vincent Haven** come to fruition as a shelter for homeless men in Newark—the result of a lot of hard work by a number of people.

Filling a Need: The partnership with the **Furniture Bank of Central Ohio** which provides free furniture and delivery to those we serve by way of a generous donation from the **Coughlin Automotive Group. Thank you Jim Stein!**

Communication: The significant enhancement of our communications through our quarterly newsletter, **The VOICE**, and our phenomenal **web site** (www.vincentianvoice.org). Thank you, **Charles Kielkopf!**

Awesome: Watching our volunteers at the Clothing Center and St. Lawrence Haven interact, one on one, and truly seeing the **Face of Christ** in those we serve.

Smartest Move: Hiring **Heather Swiger** to manage our diocesan ministries: St. Lawrence Haven, The Clothing Distribution Center, and our Saturday Morning Program. She is truly amazing and gives her whole self to serving not only those that come to us for assistance but to all of her volunteers as well. **Thank you, Heather!!!**

Thankful: For **Pat Summers**, without whom this organization would be far different, less organized, and certainly not as efficient. Pat is the great stabilizer, seeing that everything gets done— correctly and on time. **Thanks you, Pat!!!**

I would like to thank **Bishop Campbell** for his unwavering support over these years. I always knew that if we ever needed his help in any way that he was there for us. **Thank you, Bishop Campbell!**

Our **Diocesan Council** has likewise been so very supportive and willing to spend their time to support our mission and determine our direction for the future. They developed a Strategic Plan, led the way and were willing to step up and do what was necessary to make this a real living document. **Thank you, Diocesan Council!** And finally, my thanks and appreciation to all of you, **Vincentians and Volunteers**, that make

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul the organization that it is. It has truly been a privilege and blessing to lead you all on this journey over the past 6 years. May the Holy Spirit— and St. Vincent and Blessed Frederick— be with us as we continue His work in serving others. **It has been my pleasure.**

Mark Your Calendar! Save these dates!

October 2, Thursday Installation Mass and Reception for Warren Wright, incoming SVdP Council President, 7:00 PM, St. Paul Church in Westerville

October 3, Friday, Catholic Social Services Annual Breakfast with the Bishop (7:45-9:00 am) Jodi Pfarr, a certified trainer in ***Bridges out of Poverty*** is the speaker.

October 4th, Saturday Ozanam SVdP Orientation following 8:15 mass at St. Michael's Church in Worthington. Call Pat Summers 614-221-3554- with reservations.

December 1, Monday, Bishop's Appreciation Mass and reception, 6:30PM St. Joseph's Cathedral

Schedule: Bridges Out of Poverty Video Sessions

These valuable motivation and guidance seminars for Systemic Change have already begun. Seventy five Vincentians from twenty seven conferences participated in the September 13 session at St. Cecilia. The session begins with a graphic video i.e., a video highlighting Frederic Ozanam as a Catholic social reformer. This video produced by the Australian National SVdP makes the first session well worth attending. The first session is presented again on Sunday, September 28 from 12-3PM at St. Elizabeth. The schedule for the next two sessions is below.

SESSION 2**Sunday, October 12, 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm**

(following 11 am mass)

St. Elizabeth's Church (North East Side)

or

Saturday, October 25, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

St. Cecilia's Church (South West Side)

SESSION 3**Sunday, November 9, 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm**

(following 11 am mass)

St. Elizabeth's Church (North East Side)

or

Saturday, November 15, 9 am to 12 am

St. Cecilia's Church (South West Side)

Call Pat Summers in the Diocesan Office (614-221-3554) psummers@cols.org with sessions you will attend.

Report: 2014 Day of Recollection

On August 24, 106 Vincentians gathered at the Martin DePorres Center for their annual Day of Recollection. Deacon Gene Smith, past National President, guided them through morning and afternoon sessions titled: **Journey Together Toward Holiness**. The sessions opened with a video of the August 22, 1997 Beatification of Frederic Ozanam in the Paris Cathedral of Notre Dame at which St. John Paul II gave the homily.

Gene is currently the spiritual Advisor of the SVdP Western Region Council of the USA. He is also serving as Deacon at his parish in San Rafael, Ca. He has been an active member of the Society for 44 years.

By explaining the significance of the Incarnation for St. Vincent dePaul he gave an account of the five Vincentian virtues: Simplicity, Honesty, Gentleness, Selflessness, and Zeal. His account of the virtues was a reminder that the primary purpose of our Society is to sanctify its members. Deacon Smith's presentations served as training for conference spiritual advisors. The sessions closed with a commissioning, and recommissioning, ceremony for conference spiritual advisors.

Fr. Charlie Klinger, Spiritual Advisor for the Diocesan Council, closed the Day of Recollection with a 2PM Mass in the beautiful chapel of the Mother House of the Dominican Sisters of Peace.

Welcome To Our Voice of the Poor, Community Organizer

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) awarded The Diocesan Council a \$65,000 grant to develop advocacy and action collaboratives from among those we serve. The grant includes funds are for a community organizer to develop these collaboratives initially in Columbus, Lancaster and Newark. After a careful search, the committee selected Wendy Tarr.



Wendy Tarr is a community organizer with 10 years of experience. A 2004 graduate of Florida State University, her experience includes working with migrant farm workers in Florida on behalf of the Florida Catholic Conference and low-income workers in Orange County on behalf of California for Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice. She has also brought diverse groups together in the Midwest working for immigration reform as a regional organizing consultant with Bibles, Badges and Business for Immigration Reform. She is married and has two children (5, 1/2 yrs).

Wendy officially started September 15 and has already participated in a Newark "Think Tank" session as well as attending the first

session of the **Bridges Out of Poverty** videos at St. Cecilia.

Newark's Think Tank

Lesha Farias, St. Francis DeSales, Newark, and a member of our Diocesan Council has already started to organize an action collaborative from those we serve in the Newark area.

See a video of Think Tank's first meeting <http://vimeo.com/97774036>

Hannah Sparling of the *Newark Advocate* reported on the Think Tank in two articles: August 6, 2014 and September 8, 2014. Excerpts from her reports show what action collaboratives are and what Wendy will try to accomplish:

NEWARK (August 6)– Calling all oppressed: The unemployed, or seemingly unemployable. Those struggling to pay rent, buy food or keep gas in the car.

The newly formed Newark Think Tank is seeking experts on poverty — those experiencing it — to try to solve it. . . . At least for now, the meetings are for people experiencing some type of poverty or joblessness, said Lesha Farias, group facilitator. Too often, focus groups center around the haves trying to help the have-nots; the goal of the think tank is to work WITH those who are struggling rather than FOR them, Farias said.

"We're giving them a seat at the table and a voice to find out what's going on in our community and what we can do about it," she said. . . . For now, the think tank is focusing on three main issues: increasing access to stable jobs with living wages, increasing affordable access to mental-health services and ending discrimination against people with felony convictions. . . .

The initial idea for the think tank came, at least in part, from Farias' work with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Nationally, the society is taking a turn toward finding people who are in poverty and — rather than just helping with bills or supplying some groceries — finding why the poverty exists and tackling the issue at its source. . . .

NEWARK (Sept. 8) – On Saturday afternoon in the Licking County Library, a group of more than 30 people were brainstorming ideas to rid Newark of poverty.

It wasn't a group of community leaders, though: It was a meeting of the newly formed Newark Think Tank, a grass-roots, ground-up organization dedicated to eradicating poverty. The group discussed barriers and threw out ideas to make things better. They broke into subcommittees to delve deeper into topics such as discrimination against people with felony convictions, availability of stable jobs with living wages and gaps in services for people with mental health issues or substance abuse disorders.

The norm in the middle class is to try to fix problems for people living in poverty, said Lesha Farias, Think Tank facilitator. The Newark Think Tank, however, is about educating people, giving them a voice and empowering them to make a change themselves. It's about solving the problem at its root rather than treating the symptoms.

"Why are there so many people in poverty, and why does it never stop?" Farias asked. "We're lulled into that, thinking that's the reality. We can fight the dominant narrative. We can be educated. We hear things from our friends and neighbors all the time, but is it true?" .

The ultimate goal is action — identifying problems and finding solutions. That might mean attending public meetings to offer a different voice or perspective, it might mean creating petitions, or it might mean going door-to-door to explain to people in the community what is going on, Farias said. . . .

Report: Voice of the Poor Committee

A group of Vincentians along with Jerry Freewalt of the Columbus Diocese Office of Parish Social Ministry visited with Adam Rapien, field representative in Congressman Steve Stivers' office, on August 29 to discuss issues relating to reentry of ex-offenders and immigration reform. Two pieces of legislation

that would benefit returning citizens, the Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2013 and the Smarter Sentencing Act, were discussed with Mr. Rapien. Mr. Rapien indicated that, to his knowledge, Rep. Stivers would be supportive of both pieces of bi-partisan legislation. On immigration reform, Mr. Rapien reported that the congressman is in support of immigration reform, but in pieces, rather than all together like the legislation passed in the US Senate during this current Congress. The Vincentians also presented the SVdP position that unaccompanied minors fleeing violence in Central America need to be treated humanely and with due process.

As the Voice of the Poor committee expands throughout the Diocese, committee members will present the Vincentian stance on current issues to legislators of all districts in the Columbus Diocese.

Jim Emley, Immaculate Conception, drafted a proposal of a low income low interest loan program (LILI). The proposal has been distributed to the committee. It can be downloaded through a link on the first page of our website: <http://www.vincentianvoice.org> Discussion of Jim's proposal will be a major item on the agenda of the Voice of the Poor (VOP's) next meeting on October 18, 10 am to 12 pm at St. Paul's,. Jim is proceeding to contact credit unions that may have interest in being part of the program.

Danielle Farmer-Grey, formerly of St. Timothy but now in Our Lady of Peace, is the new chair of the Voice of the Poor committee.

From the Conferences

Lancaster Community:

Jerry Welker, president community conference Lancaster reports: "The lack of good paying jobs continues to have a major impact in Fairfield County. Many families cannot provide adequate clothing for their children when they go back to school. On August 9, working side-by-side with the Charity Newsies, St. Vincent de Paul members provided \$100 vouchers to 126 local poverty level children enrolled in preschool or kindergarten. At the same time Charity

Newsies provided vouchers to poverty level children enrolled in first grade and higher. The vouchers can be used at the Lancaster K-Mart.

Since education is a vital tool in a child's ability to break free from generational poverty, it is important that children have a good start to the school year. For a second year in a row, the St Vincent de Paul Community Conference of Lancaster teamed up with Charity Newsies and Fairfield County 2-1-1 to provide school clothes to children in the county. Even though St. Vincent's of Lancaster had been providing school clothes vouchers to preschool and kindergarten children for many years, this collaboration with community partners has allowed us to more than triple the number of children helped. In previous years we were only able to reach 30 to 40 children a year. We are extremely grateful for this partnership and we continue to look for more opportunities to work with local community organizations in our mission to help those most in need in Fairfield County."

St. Francis of Assisi

Lorri Kuczynski, president, reports from conference at St. Francis of Assisi, revitalized by Bill Sparks. "We supported the Women Affirming Women Respite weekend in July through monetary donations and volunteers during the weekend. Some of the volunteers picked up the women and drove them to the retreat, drove them home after the retreat was over, served meals and helped support activities during the weekend.

Immaculate Conception, Columbus

The Immaculate Conception conference sincerely appreciates Bill Sparks' foresight in purchasing liability insurance for Vincentians while performing Vincentian works. A member of our conference broke an expensive plate glass window when he slipped and fell while loading turkeys for Thanksgiving dinners. In a few weeks and with no fuss, the insurance reimbursed the delicatessen owner who had stored the turkeys for us.

Bill's prompt and generous response to our *Emergency Rent and Urgent Need*

Assistance Applications helped IC get two households over some very troubled times.

St. Mary, Delaware

Rich Rossi, president St. Mary, Delaware, reported with special attention to the leadership of Bill Sparks.

“There were a couple of things that stood out for our council at St Mary's SVdP. There was a lady in need that had two of her kids in RCIA and was having difficulty getting them to class every Tuesday evening. So I contacted Bill and asked really out of the blue if he knew of a donation of a car. It didn't take long for Bill to respond quickly. Bill gave me the address and I escorted the lady to the people making the donation. She was so please and was most grateful. By the way, the car was an older model but in mint condition. After following up with Bill he said that the Holy Spirit was at work here.

The other stand out was when I applied for money to assist a person in need after a house fire that caused a great deal of damage. I filled out the forms for money assist on a Monday. By Wednesday Bill emailed saying the check was in the mail. You know we've all heard that saying before but Bill was true to form. I received the funding by week's end and we were able to restore the house so that it was habitable again. The client was very thankful & mentioned that he was proud of the rooms we repaired.

Whenever I met with Bill he always seemed to mention that we Vincentians are a spiritual people and that stuck with me.

St.Mary's Bremen

Tyna Fox, president St.Mary's, reported: “Bill played a big role in the formation of the St. Mary's Bremen Conference. Bill visited our Parish three times in the first formative months. He came and spoke to us, the interested Parishioners making us believers in the Vincentian Way. Bill makes it seem so simple he explains, simply ask what would Jesus do and don't be afraid to give them some fish while they learn or you teach them to fish. Bill eased our fears, answered questions via phone and email and spoke at Mass to the Parish. Bill always responded quickly to emails but most

importantly, it is the kindness, understanding and patience he showed our conference that mirrored the way our conference now works with those in need of our community. Thank you, Bill, for showing us the Vincentian Way and wishing you and your family all the best. “

Our Youth Conferences

In his homily at the 1997 Beatification of Frederic Ozanam, Karol Wojtyla, now St. John Paul II, reminisced that as a teenager before WWII he belonged to a Vincentian Conference. Indeed, Frederic Ozanam was only twenty when he and his companions founded our Society. Young people are vital for Vincentian service and its mission. Bill Sparks has been recognized by National Office for his extraordinary work in developing Youth Conferences.

Deke Hocker - Moderator for Saint Paul the Apostle Youth Conference-wrote.

“Bill helped us get our Youth Conference started almost two years ago. His passion for the mission of Saint Vincent de Paul was inspiring for us all.

He was committed to helping us in every way he could and we are truly thankful for his dedication and leadership. Bill's enthusiasm and belief in the objective of the Society is something we hope to pass on to our young Vincentians. On behalf of St. Paul the Apostle school we would like to thanks Bill for all of his kindness and service in carrying on the mission of the Society.”

Change of Presidents

Pat Meves for Art Dossman, St. Joseph, Circleville

Remember in your prayers

Stu Sinn, St. Mary's, Columbus
Lou Fabro, St. Timothy

DIOCESAN COUNCIL

Officers:

- Diocesan Council President: Bill Sparks
- Diocesan Council Vice President: Warren Wright
- Treasurer: Janet Jobko
- Secretary: Kym Haskins
- At Large: Jody Stahr, Darrell Bragg, Maureen Meck
- Spiritual Advisor: Fr. Charles Klinger

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- East: Tim Hickey
- East Rural: Richard Shannon
- N-NW: Charles Kielkopf
- N-Central: Maureen Preston
- N-NE: Bob Zabloudil
- E-SE: Lesha Farias
- South Rural: David Lanning
- Inner-City: Gina Langen
- S-SW: Joffre Moine

Website address:

<http://www.vincentianvoice.org>

Committee Chairs:

- Ozanam Orientation: Maureen Meck, Kevin Murphy
- Voice of the Poor: Warren Wright
- VOICE & Website: Charles Kielkopf
- 2014 Friends of the Poor Walk: John Willig
- Publicity: Dianne Keller-Smith
- Music: Joann Wright
- Photographer: Angela Ray

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Send news items and articles for The VOICE
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the Diocesan office.

From St. John Paul II's homily at the mass for the beatification of Frederic Ozanam in the Paris Cathedral of Notre Dame, August 22, 1997

Frédéric Ozanam loved everyone who was deprived. From his youth, he became aware that it was not enough to speak about charity and the mission of the Church in the world: rather what was needed was an effective commitment of Christians in the service of the poor. He had the same intuition as Saint Vincent: "Let us love God, my brothers, let us love God, but let it be through the work of our hands, let it be by the sweat of our brow" he created the Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul which aimed at helping the very poor, in a spirit of service and sharing. These Conferences rapidly spread beyond France to all the European countries and to the world. I myself as a student before the Second World War was a member of one of them.

...

He observed the real situation of the poor and sought to be more and more effective in helping them in their human development. He understood that charity must lead to efforts to remedy injustice. Charity and justice go together. He had the clear-sighted courage to seek a front-line social and political commitment in a troubled time in the life of his country, for no society can accept indigence as if it were a simple fatality without damaging its honor. So it is that we can see in him a precursor of the social doctrine of the Church which Pope Leo XXIII would develop some years later in the Encyclical [*Rerum Novarum*](#).