

## **Society of St. Vincent de Paul Rockford Council**

There are five districts in our Society of St. Vincent de Paul Council of the Rockford Diocese. Our Southeast District has nine Conferences: St. Peter, Geneva; Holy Cross, Batavia; St. Patrick, St. Charles; St. John Neumann, St. Charles; St. Paul the Apostle, Sandwich; St. John the Baptist, Somonauk; St. Katharine Drexel, Sugar Grove; St. Gall, Elburn; and St. Mary/Christ the Teacher, DeKalb.

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## **SVDP Christ the Teacher/St. Mary Conference**

Website: [svdpdekab.org](http://svdpdekab.org)  
Food Pantry Location: 302 Fisk Ave. DeKalb, IL  
Hours of operation: Every Tuesday, 3-6 pm  
General: 815-200-4730  
Financial Assistance/Home Visit Helpline: 815-761-0430

## **SVDP National Confederation of the United States**

Website: [www.SVDPUSA.org](http://www.SVDPUSA.org)  
e-mail: [usacouncil@svdpusa.org](mailto:usacouncil@svdpusa.org)  
Phone: 314-576-3993

### **What is the Society of St. Vincent de Paul?**

**We've been helping people worldwide since 1833.** The Society was born in 1833 in Paris, France. Its founder was young layman and student, Frederic Ozanam. By 1845, the first Conference in the United States was formed in St. Louis.

**Where do our resources come from?** Financing of a Conference is seldom a problem. Proceeds from parish special collections, poor boxes, and donations from contributing members are the usual methods of support. In cases where no other funds are available, the Diocesan and District Councils and other Conferences can provide help.

**No dues required.** There are no dues charged to members although Conferences are encouraged to take up a secret collection at each meeting so members can give their own resources as well as their time.

**We meet regularly.** The Society is typically formed into Conferences in a parish setting consisting of 10 or more persons. They meet weekly or twice a month. They pray together and discuss current cases being handled. The St. Mary/Christ the Teacher Conference in DeKalb meets the second and fourth Monday of each month at 6:30pm in the lower level of the St. Mary Church Ministry Center.

**The Two Great Commandments:** The purpose of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is to fulfill the two great commandments---love of God and love of neighbor. We seek to grow spiritually in our meetings and through prayer and sharing of our faith. We develop a bond or community of faith with our fellow Vincentians. We participate in other forms of spiritual activity. We seek out God's needy, both materially and spiritually, and help where we can. Sometimes great resources are needed---sometimes we can do no more than listen and comfort. We respond to the opportunities God presents to us. In coming closer to those in need, you are coming closer to God.

**We're people just like you.** Vincentians are doctors, teachers, office workers, lawyers, factory workers, housewives, students, retirees---people just like you. Your next door neighbor could very well be a Vincentian and you might never know it.

**Vincentians are not professionally trained social workers.** The important thing is the desire to serve as Jesus served---with unconditional love. All prospective Vincentians are encouraged to attend a Society of St. Vincent de Paul Orientation. These are held annually at different Conferences within the District and provide in depth presentations related to serving our neighbors in need, Vincentian spirituality and the Society's overall mission.

**Those we serve have need of your talents, your know-how, your concern, your love.** All of us have a great deal of expertise in various areas and by working together we can move mountains. Many Vincentians have raised families, run a household, built buildings, repaired autos or done just what you do so very well.

**You say how much time you can give.** Anyone who is willing to lend a hand is welcome to join the Society. Even a few hours of your time are very precious to the needy and distressed. In fact, all we ask is that you devote some time for works of charity and for a regular meeting.

**We help get problems solved.** The Society is not just an “emergency food distributor.” Vincentians are also concerned with the needs of the aged, lonely, handicapped, permanently sick or homebound, and of persons in convalescent nursing homes and hospitals.

When making calls, Vincentians determine first the immediate need, which frequently is food, clothing, shelter, or medical care. Material assistance is given on the basis of the need indicated and by the needs determined by the visiting Vincentians.

We promote dignity and respect. Persons to be aided are to be met “on an equal basis,” at their level, never looked down on, and always with the thought that they are our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

***Essential Elements of the Society are Spirituality, Friendship, and Service.***

<div><i>Spirituality</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Showing Christ’s Face to the Needy</li><li>• Seeing Christ’s Face in the Needy</li><li>• Evangelization by Example</li><li>• Praying with those in Need</li><li>• Prayer, Meditation, Discussion of Ministry</li></ul></div>	
<div><i>Service</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Material Assistance (Food, Clothing, Furniture)</li><li>• Financial Assistance (Rent, Utilities, Travel)</li><li>• 100% Volunteers</li><li>• Special Works (Stores, Pantries, Housing)</li></ul></div>	<div><i>Friendship</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Person to Person Relationship with Needy</li><li>• Home Visitation to Maintain the Dignity of the Needy</li><li>• Working Together on Special Projects</li><li>• Collaboration With other Conferences</li><li>• Praying Together at Retreats and Festival Meetings</li></ul></div>

## Core Values

The core values that make up the Society’s creed and define the ministry of its members are:

- The dignity of the human person
- Identification of Jesus with the poor
- The preferential option of the poor
- Jesus, Evangelizer and Servant of the Poor
- Growth in intimacy with Jesus as a life-long process
- Poverty in spirit
- Concern with charity and justice
- Prayer as essential: personal and communal
- The virtue of humility: personal and corporate
- The virtue of charity within and outside of the Society
- The virtue of simplicity
- Reliance on Divine Providence
- Friendship
- Solidarity
- Community

***“Love your Rule and keep them as the road which God intends to lead you to Himself.”***—St. Vincent de Paul

Some of the Society Rules which our St. Mary/Christ the Teacher Conference members follow are listed below. A complete copy of the Rule of the International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent De Paul is available in PDF format online at <https://www.svdpusa.org/members/documents/council-conference>

## **OUR PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH THE POOR**

### **1.7 Prayer before personal encounters or visits**

Vincentians pray that the Holy Spirit may guide them during their visits and make them channels for the peace and joy of Christ.

### **1.8 Reverence for the poor**

Vincentians serve the poor cheerfully, listening to them and respecting their wishes, helping them to feel and recover their won dignity, for we are all created in God’s image. In the poor, they see the suffering Christ. Members observe the utmost confidentiality in the provision of material and any other type of support.

### **1.9 Empathy**

Vincentians endeavor to establish relationships based on trust and friendship. Conscious of their own frailty and weakness, their hearts beat with the heartbeat of the poor. They do not judge those they serve. Rather, they seek to understand them as they would a brother or sister.

### **1.12 Gratitude to those we visit**

Vincentians never forget the many blessings they receive from those they visit. They recognize that the fruit of their labors springs, not from themselves, but especially from God and from the poor they serve.

### **2.5.1 Essential virtues**

Vincentians seek to emulate St. Vincent in the five virtues essential for promoting love and respect for the poor:

**Simplicity**---frankness, integrity, genuineness.

**Humility**---accepting the truth about our frailties, gifts talents and charisms, yet knowing that all that God gives us is for others and that we can achieve nothing of eternal value without God's grace.

**Gentleness**---Friendly assurance and invincible goodwill, which mean kindness, tenderness and patience in our relationship with others.

**Selflessness**---dying to our ego with a life of self-sacrifice; members share their time, their possessions, their talents and themselves in a spirit of generosity.

**Zeal**---a passion for the full flourishing and eternal happiness of every person.

## **Food Pantry**

St. Mary/Christ the Teacher St. Vincent de Paul Conference in cooperation with the Northern Illinois Food Bank operates a food pantry in the lower level of the St. Mary Church Ministry Center. The normal hours of operation are on Tuesdays from 3pm to 6pm.

## **Home Visits**

From the Society's beginning, the central and most basic activity of Conferences has been the visitation of the needy in their homes. This is the clearest symbol of our Vincentian charism, which dictates the highest respect for the dignity of the poor. It symbolizes our Vincentian commitment to reach out to the needy, rather than require them to report to an outside service site. In the home, needy persons feel most free to confide their stories of struggle. In that family setting, Vincentians are asked to listen, offer humble advice, and render assistance. **(Rule: Part I, Articles 1.2 and 1.7-1.12; Part III, Section 8)**

In the modern world, there are certain situations when a home visit is not possible or advisable—for example, those involving homelessness, battering, or safety. Nevertheless, Vincentians should never excuse themselves lightly or regularly from the tradition of home visitation. Even when assistance is given in an emergency from the parish or other service site, Vincentians should follow up with a home visit.

Vincentians always visit in pairs. This practice emphasizes the Conference's status as a community, not a collection of individuals who "do their own thing." The visiting team is ideally composed of Vincentians of both genders, various age groups, and different life experiences, so that a better perspective of the needy person's situation can be gained, and various sources of action explored. From the beginning, Vincentian visitation to the needy was done in pairs for the protection both of the needy and the members. The precedent was set by Christ Himself, when He sent out the Apostles two by two (MK 6:7). The Society wisely continues this tradition in the interest of safety, liability, and propriety.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality, based on the individual's right to privacy, has both legal and ethical implications. Disclosures made to a Vincentian member and Conference by an individual or family may be revealed to others only under specified conditions, and solely for the purpose of providing help. Only in rare circumstances may information be released without the informed consent of the individual or family, such as when persons pose a genuine threat to themselves or others. If time allows, the member should check with the local Council before acting. Local Councils should have an

attorney they can contact in such an emergency. Confidentiality does not prevent a Conference from publicizing its work in general terms.

Confidentiality has always been an important value for the Society. Trusting relationships develop between Conference members and the persons they serve. Confidentiality is a prerequisite for membership in the Society; a breach of confidentiality may be grounds for requesting a member's resignation.

Maintaining confidentiality can be a challenge. With fewer resources and more people in need, Conference may find it prudent to collaborate with other groups, but collaboration may entail sharing information about persons served. Computers facilitate this sharing, but ever-changing privacy laws must be obeyed and lawsuits avoided. Utility companies and other agencies with national databanks may require Conferences to provide written permission from those they serve.

### ***Suggestions for Conducting a Home Visit***

- Be prepared with information on the people you are visiting—take resource information to give.
- Always pray before going out.
- Visit in pairs—a man and woman preferred.
- Show respect for those we visit—we are guests in their homes.
- Wear a name badge—first name only.
- Keep an open mind.
- Don't pity. Be sympathetic, but don't encourage people to feel sorry for themselves.
- Put "Those In Need" at ease—make light conversation.
- Give a brief description of the Society and how we are funded.
- Be cognizant of your surroundings regarding un-discussed needs.
- Insure that you have the information you need to make a proper determination.
- Give hope but make no promise.
- Let them know that we will pray for them and ask if they will pray for us.
- Don't discuss the case until you are away from the home.
- Discuss the home visit with your Conference members.
- The way we give is more important than what we give—material things last only a short time, whereas how we give lasts forever...giving proper dignity and respect is foremost.

# **Diocese of Rockford Safe Environment Program Protecting Children and Young People**

## **Our Commitment:**

Sexual misconduct by clergy, Church personnel, Church leaders and volunteers is contrary to Christian morals, doctrine and Canon Law. It is never acceptable and Bishop David J. Malloy has declared emphatically, that “one case of abuse is one too many.” Sexual misconduct can have devastating consequences and effects on the victims and their families, the Church community, and for the transgressor. The Diocese of Rockford remains committed to preventing abuse and remains vigorous in its efforts to educate in the detection, and prevention and reporting of abuse, and to assist victims in healing.

## **Our Program:**

The Diocese’s Safe Environment Program entails the proper screening of those who wish to be employed by and/or volunteer for a parish, school, or other diocesan entity; the proper safe environment training of our employees and volunteers working with youth, and the chastity and personal safety training of our children in our schools and religious education programs; and compliance with Diocesan safe environment policies and the Charter for Protection of Children and Young People.

The Diocese screens and tests candidates for the priesthood and diaconate. It conducts ongoing training and education programs in the detection and prevention of sexual abuse for priests, deacons, candidates for ordination, religious, employees and volunteers. All of the Diocese’s elementary students and high school students, both in our Catholic schools, and in our religious education programs at our parishes, have been receiving ongoing training in sexual abuse awareness and prevention. Protecting God’s Children, an online safe environment training program created by Virtus, is offered to all parents, and required of all employees and volunteers having direct contact with children. All Diocesan priests, seminarians, employees and volunteers in direct contact with children are criminally background checked before they perform service for the Diocese in any parish, school or other diocesan facility. The Diocese responds promptly and decisively to allegations of sexual abuse- and removes from ministry and employment any individual associated with the Diocese, be it a priest, deacon, candidate for ordination, religious, or lay employee or volunteer, when a credible allegation is made. <https://www.rockforddiocese.org/protecting-gods-children/>

# Let us be God's hospitality in the world

Give us eyes to see the deepest needs of people.

Give us hearts full of love for our neighbors as well as for the strangers we meet.

Help us understand what it means to love others as we love ourselves.

Teach us to care in a way that strengthens those who are sick.

Fill us with generosity so we feed the hungry, clothe the naked and give drink to the thirsty.

Let us be a healing balm to those who are weak and lonely and weary by offering our kindness to them.

May we remember to listen, to smile, to offer a helping hand each time the opportunity presents itself.

Give us hearts of courage that we will be brave enough to risk loving our enemy.

Inspire us to go out of our way to include those in the margins.

Help us to be welcoming and inclusive to all who come to our door.

Let us be God's hospitality in the world.