

VINCENTIAN NEWS

SVP
Society of St Vincent de Paul

Winter 2015/2016 Volume 4 Number 8



**Christmas
2015 -
our 36th
annual
festive
appeal**

Also inside

Refugee update

Around the region

Chapel Lane Centre opens

Youth News

**Belfast's Lord Mayor praises
SVP and Salvation Army
for being at the heart of
communities.**

Spiritual Reflections

Fr Perry Gildea C.M

God's heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself "became poor"

The Jubilee Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has proclaimed this year as a Jubilee year of Mercy. What is a Jubilee Year? It is an important tradition in the Old Testament initiated in the book of Leviticus. *"You shall make the fiftieth year holy, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee to you; and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family... For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat of its increase out of the field. In this Year of Jubilee each of you shall return to his property."* (Leviticus 25, 8-13) In the Jubilee Year all debts were forgiven, and slaves and their families were set free. It was a year of liberation. Special significance was derived from the starting day ie the Day of Atonement the day in which individual and communal sins were ritually forgiven. These Jubilee Years were proclaimed every 50 years. In the Middle Ages (1300) the Church adopted the idea of Jubilee Years every 50 or 25 years. In recent times they have also been proclaimed for special occasions. This Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the solemn closing of the Second Vatican Council.

Pope Francis is at pains to explain that infinite mercy is what motivates God's relationship with the human family and that "Jesus is the face of the Father's mercy". We are all called to know and experience this "visceral" divine mercy revealed in the life of Jesus. Jesus continually reveals this compassionate mercy in his actions and words. As in his parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the errant son, and his admonition to Peter to forgive not seven but seventy times. Pope Francis' appeal is for us to trust in and throw ourselves on this endless mercy in this special year. A characteristic of the Jubilee Year is that involves pilgrimage. Pope Francis by opening not just one Holy Door (the symbol of the Jubilee) but arranging for many such doors in all dioceses has made this pilgrimage journey much more practical and easier. In Down and Connor for those who are ill or house bound it can even be done online!

However, the Jubilee of Mercy is not purely passive. Francis reminds us that Jesus said "blessed are the merciful for they shall have mercy shown them". Part of our Christian witness is to be living expressions of mercy *"In this Holy Year, we look forward to the experience of opening our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society: fringes which modern society itself creates. How many uncertain and painful situations there are in the world today! How many are the wounds borne by the flesh of those who have no voice because their cry is muffled and drowned out by the indifference of the rich! During this Jubilee, the Church will be called even more to heal these wounds, to assuage them with the oil of consolation, to bind them with mercy and cure them with solidarity and vigilant care" ... Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognise that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own."*

He appeals for our dedication to the Corporal and Spiritual works of mercy "that we may enter ever more deeply into the heart of the Gospel." *"Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead."* Interestingly he also spelt out how we can fulfil the Spiritual Works of Mercy. *Moreover, we will be asked if we have helped others to escape the doubt that causes them to fall into despair and which is often a source of loneliness; if we have helped to overcome the ignorance in which millions of people live, especially children deprived of the necessary means to free them from the bonds of poverty; if we have been close to the lonely and afflicted; if we have forgiven those who have offended us and have rejected all forms of anger and hate that lead to violence; if we have had the kind of patience God shows, who is so patient with us; and if we have commended our brothers and sisters to the Lord in prayer. In each of these "little ones," Christ himself is present. His flesh becomes visible in the flesh of the tortured, the crushed, the scourged, the malnourished, and the exiled... to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us."* (MV .15)

At the heart of Divine Mercy is the constant gift of forgiveness. Not only are we asked to seek this forgiveness for ourselves acknowledging all our own shortcomings and failings. We are also asked to be agents of mercy in our forgiveness of others – especially enemies. This is one of the acid tests of our belief in the reality of Divine Mercy. There is much in all this to reinforce the Spirituality of all Vincentians.

Quotations are from *Misericordiae Vultus* (MV) ie The Face of Mercy, Pope Francis' Introduction to the Jubilee Year.

Welcome

by Pauline Brown, Regional Manager



A warm welcome to the Winter edition of the Vincentian News. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year!

December and the run up to Christmas was an exceptionally busy time for all our members. The demand for our services increased but so too did the donations of toys and food as the generous, ever-giving public excelled in their contributions. This edition reflects the support we received around the Region. Thank you to those who sent their photographs and stories.

A New Year often indicates a new start. For the staff in Regional Office this is particularly so as we begin the year in our newly refurbished office. The Regional Office is now fully functional and operational. The new entrance is now on the opposite side of the building at the side of the shop and we have a new carpark. All staff are on the first floor. All training sessions, meetings and seminars can now take place through a booking system with Deborah Kane, Information Officer. Our contact telephone numbers, direct lines and email addresses remain the same. We plan to have a coffee morning during the Spring and invite all members along to view the office.

Here are some "before" and "after" photos.



On behalf of the staff, I would like to express our appreciation for your co-operation and patience during the last few months and we very much look forward to sharing the Regional Office with all members in what can only be described as a modern, fit for purpose working environment.

The Antrim Road shop is just about to embark on some minor works that will assist both the operation and shopping experience for customers.

Finally, I just wanted to reaffirm the commitment of staff and to encourage you to make contact if there is anything you need help or support with. Sadly, Joseph O'Neill, the Regional Fundraiser, has resigned from the team. Joseph is off to London to pastures new, we wish him well for the future and thank him for his hard work and dedication in the short time he was here.

May I take this opportunity to wish you every blessing and success for 2016.

Your news in Vincentian News!

Do you have an event or a story that you would like to see featured in a future issue of Vincentian News? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Just email the details of your event and a picture if you have one to karen@dcppr.co.uk.



Another successful Christmas appeal

The Society and the Salvation Army teamed up once more for their joint Christmas Family Appeal.

The 36th annual appeal was launched in the run up to Christmas in Belfast City Hall by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Arder Carson, who praised both charities for being at the heart of communities.

The Lord Mayor said: "The Christmas period is about spending time with our families and sharing gifts with one another. However, for some Christmas can be a very difficult time. The Family Appeal is a great opportunity to spread Christmas cheer and help those less fortunate in our society."

Pauline Brown, Regional Manager for St Vincent de Paul in Northern Ireland, said: "The Family Appeal is a vital part of our yearly calendar and really helps us to meet the needs of children in Northern Ireland.

"We appreciate how generous the public and the business community are towards the appeal. Christmas is a wonderful time for families and the aim of the appeal is to make sure that every child has a special time on Christmas morning."



Pictured at the launch of the 2015 Family Appeal are from left: Cormac Wilson, Regional Vice President of St Vincent de Paul; Pauline Brown, Regional Manager of St Vincent de Paul; Belfast Lord Mayor, Councillor Arder Carson; 11 year old Emma Anderson from Lisnasharragh Primary School and Major Elwyn Harries, Divisional Leader, Salvation Army.



Giving Tree helps local children at Christmas

The Giving Tree, a cross-community initiative run by Belfast Central Mission (BCM) and the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) was again in Marks and Spencer in Donegall Place at Christmas.

The Giving Tree gives members of the public an opportunity to donate a toy or gift to local children with the gifts being divided equally between SVP and BCM before being distributed to families in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

M&S store Manager, Colin McGreevy, paid tribute to both charities and to the generous M&S shoppers. He said:

"Marks and Spencer is delighted to continue its support for The Giving Tree partnership along with Belfast Central Mission and the Society of St Vincent de Paul. This is such a worthwhile project which encompasses the true meaning of Christmas – helping others and reaching out to those who are struggling in these often difficult times.

Pauline Brown, Regional Manager of SVP, comments: "The Giving Tree is a great way for people to provide a gift that could bring a smile to a child in their local community whose family may be facing financial difficulties this Christmas."

Rev Richard Johnston, BCM Superintendent, said: "As a charity, BCM has been supporting people across Northern Ireland for more than 125 years and will continue to do so, particularly those most vulnerable in society."

Photograph: Cormac Doherty helps to launch the Giving Tree for BCM and SVP in Marks & Spencer.



Assembly Christmas lights switch on

Pictured from left, Rosamond Bennett, Christian Aid; Assembly Speaker, Mitchel McLaughlin MLA; Justin Kouame, Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers; Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MLA and Aidan Crawford, Northern Regional President, St Vincent de Paul. They are pictured with a group of children from the Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers. The speaker also launched the Giving Tree.



Assembly Speaker, Mitchel McLaughlin MLA (centre) delivers the gifts from the Giving Tree at Parliament Buildings to SVP on the Antrim Road. Also pictured are back from left: Joseph O'Neill, Maria Fyfe and Cormac Wilson, Regional Vice President of St Vincent de Paul. Front from left: Aidan Crawford, Regional President of St Vincent de Paul and Pauline Brown, Regional Manager of St Vincent de Paul.



Sorting some of the toys received at Antrim Road.



Refugee crisis - an update

Further to my updates regarding my visit to Athens, Kos and Lesbos, I wish to express sincere thanks for all of the financial and material donations. To date £210,000 has been received and due to the donations of clothing, shoes, food etc we have, in partnership with the NI & Border Counties Refugee Crisis Appeal, sent another 6 x 40ft container back to Greece.

When I visited the Greek islands I witnessed some horrific scenes of desperation from refugees risking their lives to ensure safety for themselves and their families as they were coming off "death trap" dinghies soaked and terrified, with no possessions or food and in a lot of cases, even no shoes. When we were on the islands we bought food and bedding and put some young families up in hotels. Young children and babies were sleeping rough in hedges and on roadsides. The partnership group has been very active and has well advanced plans to build and stock a food station catering for 140 people at a time, giving them hot food, dry clothing and somewhere to rest when they come off the dinghies. Refugees then face a six mile mountain walk carrying their children, for their onward journey. This station will be a tremendous interim help for them going some way toward alleviating their exhaustion and ensuring they receive hot food and dry clothes.

At present we have temporarily stopped taking donations of clothes as there is sufficient stock to fill more containers but no room at present. The group may, however, require more donations a later date. The Society is still asking for funds which will be used mainly for food for refugees at home and abroad.

Myself and a group of approximately 30 volunteers intend to go back to the Islands during February so if anyone is considering going out, please contact me as there will be a training and briefing session for volunteers wishing to take part in the trip.

At home, you will be aware that approximately 51 refugees arrived in Northern Ireland on 15 December. The Society has been reliably informed that once refugees have received their initial induction from the Department of Social Development and some other key agencies, they will be accommodated in North, West and East Belfast. The Society and local Conferences may be asked to step in and help the individuals and families and Aidan will be in touch with Area Presidents to ensure there are enough funds locally to support the refugees.

I was invited to speak in the NI Assembly at the Christmas tree lights switch on and the Speaker adopted the SVP as his Christmas charity for this year. I also made a presentation to the All Party Group on International Development which was very positive and well received. MLAs expressed their amazement at the work of the Society, so hopefully, this will help in raising our profile.

My sincere thanks to all of you for the tremendous support you have given to help all of the refugees and ask for your continued prayers for refugees and the volunteers around the world.

Aidan Crawford, Regional President



Below: Presenting to the Stormont All Party Group on International Development. *Pictured from left are: Jim Wells MLA; Claire Hanna MLA; Aidan Crawford, Regional President SVP; David McCreedy, Office of the First and Deputy First Minister; Anna Lo MLA and Sammy Douglas MLA.*



Hampers for Christmas

Thank you to all the local schools and organisations which donated Christmas hampers to those less fortunate in our society.



St Michael's College, Enniskillen



St Joseph's Primary School, Ederney



St Patrick's Primary School, Ballynahinch

St Colman's, Ballynahinch

St Colman's High and Sixth Form College, Ballynahinch, collected contributions for 30 hampers for St Vincent de Paul, which were then distributed among those in need in the local community.

Rachel Donaghy-Ardle, St Vincent de Paul coordinator in St Colman's, would like to especially thank the parents who have once again contributed so generously to the appeal and Paul Fallon for his organisational skills in providing the boxes from his workplace, Iceland, Ballynahinch.



From left (back): Peter Cunningham; Carol Potter, Vice Principal; Jane Stewart, SVP; Rachel Donaghy-McArdle and (front) Year 13 Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) students Curtis Falloon and Reece Hanna.

Our Lady Queen of Peace School, Dunmurry

A huge thank you to the staff and pupils of Our Lady Queen of Peace School, Dunmurry for their contribution again this Christmas of 27 fabulous hampers, for distribution in their parish.

Pictured is Headmaster Mr O'Doherty along with some of the pupils, presenting the hampers to Eilish Armstrong of SVP.



Omagh Christmas Tree Festival

Christmas started early for St Columbas's Conference when Lislimnaghan Church of Ireland kindly nominated SVP for a share of the proceeds from its Christmas Tree Festival.

Our tree was to be placed in the chancel and the focus was to illustrate our work across the community – support and friendship and promoting self-sufficiency and social justice. A plywood tree, made by Omagh Men's Shed, was designed to show our Vincent's shop, visitation by members, part funding of white goods, the oil saving stamps scheme, distribution of donated furniture, food hampers and toys, English classes for our new European neighbours with Christmas greetings in five languages. There were 88 exhibitors from local businesses and visitors from far and near.

After the festival the tree was set up in our local Sacred Heart Church for St Vincent de Paul week in early December.

We are very grateful to Canon Quinn, his hardworking team and all his parishioners for their kindness and generosity to us.



Long service celebrated

Larry McWilliams expresses his delight as he receives his 50 year long service medal from Joe Cauley, Conference President, St Colmcilles, Holywood, during the annual SVP Christmas Dinner. Also included are (from left): Louise Dempsey, Gerry Dorrian and Brenda O'Reilly.



Vincent's West Belfast re-opens

Pictured at the re-opening of the St Vincent de Paul shop in West Belfast are (from left): Aidan Crawford, SVP Regional President; Cormac Wilson, SVP Regional Vice President and Pat McKee, SVP Area President.

The joy of sharing

Armagh Saint Patrick's Conference and Lurgan Salvation Army shared in a bumper harvest of 290 top quality toys collected through the Armagh City Centre Management Committee Charity Event. Huge thanks is extended to those who provided gifts and to Malachy O'Neill and the management committee for nominating their local SVP as recipients of the gifts.

Representatives from SVP & the Salvation Army pictured with some of the gifts collected.





Venture Scouts keep it local

It was full steam ahead at Christmas for the 1st Armagh Venture Scouts as they came on board with the St Patrick's Conference to help less privileged people in their local area. The young scouts, encouraged by their leaders and with the help of family members, provided 16 wonderful hampers for families in need of help. Huge thanks to all 1st Armagh Venture Scouts, their leaders and families.



Musical entertainment

Musicians with St Joseph's SVP Ederney entertaining patients in the Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital Omagh at their Christmas party.



US visitors

A number of American visitors made an impromptu visit to the St Vincent de Paul Antrim Road office whilst on vacation in Ireland.

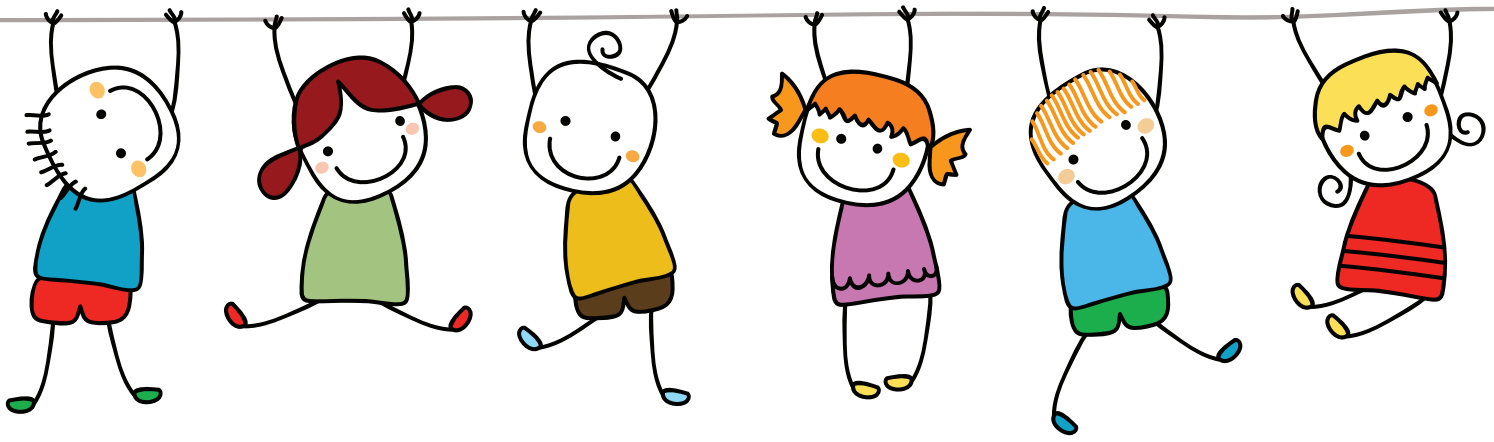
Pictured from left are: Aidan Crawford, SVP Regional President; Pauline Brown, SVP Regional Manager; Patty Hughes, Regional Council President for Manhattan, New York; Patty's sister, Jeannie and Brian O'Reilly, Int RVP.



Working together

The spirit of Christmas partnership remains firm in Armagh as Lion's Club members continue sharing their time and expertise with St Patrick's Conference. Over the years Lion's Club members have undertaken a two day bumper food collection outside the local Sainsbury Store which ensures that the SVP can continue reaching out with the hand of friendship to needy families across the community. The Royal British Legion also participated by helping SVP members put hampers together for distribution. Huge thanks to Lions and the Royal British Legion.

Pictured are from left: James Moffet, Lion's Club; David Hammerton, President of the Royal British Legion; Kathy Donnelly, President of St Patrick's Conference; David Elliott, President Lion's Club and Iain Wright, Lion's Club.



Limavady Summer Scheme 2015

With summer holidays being a difficult time for families to entertain their children, St Canice's Conference Limavady was keen to explore options to assist families in need within their Conference area. One possibility they discovered was that the Roe Valley Leisure Centre runs an annual Summer Scheme for six weeks during July and August for children in the age groups 4-7 years and 8-12 years.

They contacted Barry Tourish, the Leisure Centre Manager and Janet Butcher, the Reception Co-ordinator. The various activities for the children included badminton, cake decorating, soccer coaching, fitness freakz, mini disco, arts and crafts, and basketball. There were also pool based activities for the 8-12 age group only, such as water warfare, kids ahoy, pool disco, snorkelling, slip 'n slide and water polo. The activities began at 9am and finished at 3pm.

SVP contacted families with eligible children that SVP had helped during the year and offered to pay for one week of the summer scheme for each child. The offer was received with enthusiasm and anticipation. The initial collation of names and addresses, authorisation signatures and week preference took a bit of organising but with the help of an Excel spreadsheet, registration was quickly achieved. The use of the Conference helpline was invaluable in contacting families and provided

the Leisure Centre with a means to contact our Conference immediately in the event of a problem or to prevent any distress to a child or family.

SVP helped 27 families totalling 52 children to participate in this summer scheme. The rates for participation were as follows: £30 for one child, £50 for two children, £70 for three children and £10 extra per child per week for four plus children. Afterwards SVP undertook a phone survey to gauge the success of this project and requested feedback to ascertain if this service could have been improved. All of the parents said that their children had a great time and were delighted to have had the opportunity to participate. One repeated suggestion, relating to children living rurally, was that they struggled to attend because of lack of transport.

The Conference wanted to share the idea of this scheme with other Conferences throughout the Northern Region, as they felt that this is a great programme to help families in need. We are considering providing transport for children from rural areas next year as the summer scheme is very much established as a fixture in our event calendar from now on.

Sean O'Neill
St Canice's Conference, Limavady

AROUND THE REGION



Members of Banbridge Conference enjoying their Christmas dinner.



Enjoying a weekend at the Ozanam House Holiday Centre are a group from Cookstown Conference.

Winter Gala dinner success at Titanic Belfast

The Winter Gala dinner at Titanic Belfast proved to be a huge success and Society Regional Manager, Pauline Brown, thanked all who attended.

“Without the continued support from you, our donors, it would be impossible for the Society of St Vincent de Paul to meet and sustain the level of ongoing help we give to those who are most vulnerable within our Society and who need our help.” said Pauline.

“Every year we see a significant increase in those seeking our assistance and our volunteers carry out approximately 900 visits per week. In helping alleviate poverty we spend approximately £3m across Northern Ireland each year. The sad reality is that this level of poverty continues to rise.

“I wish to express a special thanks to a number of our Board members who made the Gala dinner happen – to Pat McCann, Cormac Wilson, Ray Brady, Kevin Dougan and our Regional President, Aidan Crawford, and to all of the staff who have been working very diligently behind the scenes to make this an important event in the Society’s calendar.”



Dance cheque presentation

Mary Colton of the Baxter School of Irish Dancing donated the proceeds from the recent Drumragh Feis which she organised in Omagh.

The donation was shared equally between the St Columbus Conference of SVP Omagh and Aware Depression also in Omagh.

Pictured are two of the dancers as they present the £1200 cheque to Sinead Duddy of Aware Depression and Pat Tierney of SVP Omagh.



Derry Fundraising

A quiz night held in Sandino’s Lounge Bar, Derry raised approximately £1,000 for the Refugee Appeal.

Pictured here is Aileen Hughes with a quiz participant.



Specialist Joinery assists international aid project

St Vincent de Paul Regional President, Aidan Crawford, recently visited Specialist Joinery Group HQ in Maghera to officially recognise the support provided by the company to the Society’s ongoing Refugee Appeal in Greece. The Mid Ulster joinery manufacturers assisted this work by raising more than £50,000 to date and providing significant donations of aid supplies, clothing and food.

Pictured from left are: Sean O’Hagan, Contracts Director, Specialist Joinery Group; Aidan Crawford, Regional President of St Vincent de Paul; Ciaran O’Hagan, Operations Director, Specialist Joinery Group; and Dermot O’Hagan, Sales Director, Specialist Joinery Group.

Does your Conference need new members/volunteers?

Here are some ways you can promote member and volunteer opportunities within the Society:

- Hold an appeal in the local church for volunteers – put a notice in the church bulletin, ask your priest to announce any events
- Hold an information evening/coffee morning to chat to potential members about roles available
- Place an editorial in the local newspapers or community newsletters
- Ask your local paper if they will consider doing a volunteer profile and use this as an opportunity to promote volunteering within the Society
- Leave posters and flyers detailing the volunteer opportunities in local shops/health centres/community buildings/leisure centres/job centres
- Ask local shopping centres/health centres/libraries if you can set up a stand to not only promote volunteer opportunities but SVP services in general eg: flu clinics have a high footfall
- Ask your local Council to add your email address to their community mail outs – you can also ask them to email out information on events you are hosting
- If you see an information day/health fair being promoted - contact the group organising the event and ask if you can have a stand
- Contact groups that meet regularly to ask if you can come along and again promote your services as well as volunteer opportunities eg: retired teachers' groups/social services staff, Rotary group, Soroptomist group, U3A, young farmers, mother and toddlers groups etc
- Use the official SVP social media outlets (Facebook & Twitter) to promote volunteer opportunities – All requests must go through Linda O'Connell. Her email address is linda.oconnell@svp.ie
- Hold a volunteer event during Volunteers' Week to promote the Society and volunteer opportunities (1st – 7th June)
- Contact your Membership Support Officer who can liaise with Volunteer Now/Local Volunteer Centres to advertise member/volunteer opportunities and assist with the drawing up of a role description.

Your Membership Support Officer is here to support you with the recruitment of members and volunteers. Contact Maria Fyfe at Regional Office on 028 9075 0151 or Joann Barr in the Derry Office on 028 7137 7311 for more information.



Safeguarding Officers

The Designated Liaison Officer for **Vulnerable Adults** is **Mairead Breen** – contact number is tel: **07707 364606** and for **Child Protection** is **Dominic Burke** – contact number is tel: **07746 405304**.

In the case of an **emergency**, the Regional Out of Hours statutory contact number is tel: **028 9504 9999**
If you consider someone at risk do not hesitate to call.

Archbishop Martin opens Chapel Lane Centre

September 23rd 2015 saw His Grace Archbishop Eamon Martin, officially open Armagh St Patrick's Conference's new Chapel Lane Centre.

The Archbishop gave an address to those attending praising the work of the

Society and its many volunteers who give of their time to help others. A strong church and cross-community representation was present including the very Reverend Dean Gregory Dunstan, (Col), Reverend Tony Davidson, (First Presbyterian), Father Peter McAnenly, Armagh Parish Administrator, Father Rory Coyle, Ivan Burns from Christians Against Poverty, the President of the Royal British Legion, David Hammerton and two members of the PSNI. Former Chief Executive of the old Armagh City and District Council, John Briggs, and local Armagh councillor, Mealla Campbell, also attended.

The St Patrick's Conference President, Kathy Donnelly, gave an opening address and the Very Reverend Dean Dunstan was invited to participate in the Gospel reading of the day. Aidan Crawford, St Vincent de Paul Regional President and Cormac Wilson, SVP Regional Vice President were both in attendance, with Aidan providing an update on the refugee crisis and the ongoing involvement of the Society.

The official marble dedication plaque was presented to the St Patrick's Conference by Mr and Mrs Seamus and Patricia McCann, the owners and directors of ARMATILE tileroom and factory.



Kathy Donnelly, Area President, with the Archbishop.



Guests at the opening included the Regional President, Aidan Crawford (front, 3rd left) and Cormac Wilson, Senior Vice President (back, 3rd left).

Become an SVP Friend

In the Autumn of 2015 the Society of St Vincent de Paul offered parishioners across the Northern Ireland the opportunity to become a 'Friend' of the Society.

Leaflets explaining about SVP and encouraging parishioners, 'Help us to Help Others', were distributed at masses. 'Friends' of the Society will receive a copy of St Vincent de Paul's quarterly Regional Newsletter and a mass will also be offered for their intentions once a month.

Aidan Crawford, President of SVP's Northern Region, explained: "Our new leaflet, 'Become a Friend of the Society of St Vincent de Paul', will help further as we work to alleviate poverty and need in Northern Ireland. We are

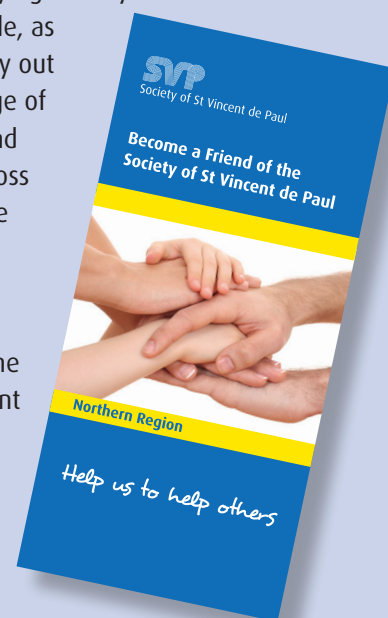
always on the lookout for new friends as the demand for our services has never been higher.

"Times are difficult for a lot of people out there and in this recessionary period our services are needed more than ever. We work to identify the causes of poverty and we would encourage parishioners to help us create a more caring and just society. Many families are struggling in these times and these members of the public would welcome your friendship."

"There is a role for everyone. Whether this is donating time, money or praying for those who further the work of the Society. Our members carry out thousands of home visits, volunteer in the retail shops or help to organise events. Visits are made to people in hospital, residential homes and prison. SVP also support needs in administration

and IT staff as demand for assistance increases every year. In the last 4 to 5 years SVP has witnessed a 100% increase in demand for its services."

Around 1600 SVP volunteers provide the charity's wide-ranging services to which includes paying weekly visits to around 2,500 people, as well as carry out a wide range of activities and support across the province including crèches, breakfast clubs and the management of 31 Vincent's shops.



Youth Update

by Claire Morgan



For many Vincentians, Christmas is the busiest time of year. However, for many it seems like a distant memory as many within SVP are reflecting on the previous year and getting organised for the year ahead.

The Youth Development Team is no different, especially as the Annual Youth Days across Ireland are just on the horizon. The Northern Region's Annual Youth Day is always first on the calendar and this year we are bringing the event back to Belfast for the first time in many years.

The Annual Youth Day will be held in the Crumlin Road Gaol on Wednesday 10th February and we hope to have schools, young people, teachers and SVP Members from all across the Region attending this energetic day of reflection, sharing ideas and thanks. Last year, the Youth Day in Ballymena was the largest the region has seen and it was a wonderful day for all involved! Within the Youth Programme, I feel very privileged to be able to work with such inspirational young people and their teachers everyday and this event gives all involved an opportunity to meet other Vincentians, young and old!

Finally, the Annual Youth Day is such an important event as our Young Vincentians are involved in much work throughout the year, it gives us a real opportunity to meet and thank them for all their efforts. Furthermore, when working with the young people involved in the programme, I can see a real passion for their work and this is a

passion for change. Moreover, this is the belief that a better future is possible which also remains central to the Society of St Vincent de Paul's ethos. As agents of change and bearers of hope, young people keep the Society young and remain a critical part of the Society's pursuit of social justice.

If any member is interested in attending or would like more information, please contact Claire Morgan at the Regional Office on 028 9075 0159 or claire.morgan@svpni.co.uk

SVP'S ANNUAL YOUTH DAY 2016

A DAY TO CELEBRATE OUR YOUNG
VOLUNTEERS!

**Crumlin Road Gaol Belfast
Wednesday 10th February 2016**



#SVPschools #LivingFaith #AgentsofChange

New Year at the new look Clare Lodge

Clare Lodge staff and guests welcomed in their first New Year and what a celebration it was!!!

Our guests participated in a number of planned activities and our friendly staff pulled out all the stops to ensure everyone enjoyed and remembered their New Year 2015-2016 celebrations!

We offered daily activities which were organised and hosted by our team (eagerly attended by guests). This included a team quiz, games, card making, baking and the opportunity to compile a memory booklet of the guests' stay.

To top it all off guests and staff saw in the New Year in style entertained by Pat King & Co, and danced and sang the night away to the fantastic Francie Cunningham.

The feedback from all our guests has been very positive and they have built up great friendships which will continue to flourish. We are delighted that they will be returning for a birthday celebration in early summer.

Some of the quotes from guests included:

"Fantastic staff, very reasonable price."

"Best New Year I have ever had!"

"Staff would do anything for you."

"Can we live here permanently."

"Can't wait to return."

A big thank you goes out to all our guests and entertainers from all the Clare Lodge Team, it wouldn't have been the same without you taking part and the craic was great.

Now taking bookings for New Year 2016 – 2017!



For more information contact:

Clare Lodge Centre,
3 Castle Place
Newcastle,
County Down BT33 0AB
Tel: 028 4372 2849
(0044 if dialing from outside Northern Ireland)
Email: clare.lodge@svpni.co.uk

Liam Barnett

Liam died on 24th April 2015 after a period of indifferent health. Despite being in pain a lot of the time, he remained his usual cheerful and welcoming self.

Liam grew up in Irvinestown and throughout his life his readiness to get involved and to serve in his community was evident. He was an active member of his local church, helping with church duties, fund raising events and transportation between neighbouring parish and community halls.

In 1985 Liam joined St Molaise Conference and remained a dedicated volunteer for the next ten years.

He experienced great sadness in 1991 when his beloved wife Teresa was killed in a road accident. They had worked as a team in previous years organising events in aid of charities including Cancer Research. In the years following her death he found comfort in the companionship of his sister to whom he gave great support during her years of failing health.

His time spent as caretaker in St Paul's Primary School from 1981 to 2001 were probably among his most fulfilling. Children loved his easy and friendly manner and staff members were grateful for his readiness to contribute to the smooth running of the school.

On behalf of the St Molaise branch of St Vincent de Paul and on behalf of the many young people whose daily life was brightened by his cheerful welcome each morning, we offer our condolences to his sister, Annie, to his nephews and nieces and wider family circle.

Our Lady of Knock, pray for him.

IN MEMORY
OF LIAM

Finance Matters

Raymond Brady
Regional Treasurer



2015 Annual Report returns

In accordance with the Society's reporting regulations, all conferences/councils/shops/special works are required to complete an annual report on their activities. The Society is governed by strict statutory regulations and we are legally required to produce a full Statement of Audited Accounts for submission to the Charities Commission and inspection by the general public.

National Management Council are insisting on "Full Compliance" and your completed Report (Tier 2 & 3). along with cheques and supporting documents, must be returned to your Area Council President:-

**NO LATER THAN
FRIDAY 26th FEBRUARY 2016**

Please pay careful attention to your **Internal Transactions**.

Your Overseas Support Levy should be included here and not as an External Twinning payment. Other Internal payments include Christmas Cards, Stationery, AGM, Items from Vincent's Shops, Nepal & Refugee Appeals, payments to Clare Lodge etc.

Over 90 activities are now using the online "Agresso" method each month to record and view transactions and financial reports.

If your conference would like to start using the system, or learn more about how it works contact:-

Ciarán Liggett on 02890-750156
or email ciaran.liggett@svpni.co.uk

To facilitate the audit we have asked your Area President to liaise with the regional office in the gathering of this information and would kindly appreciate your fullest co-operation in this matter.

AGRESSO LIVE	
Annual Report 2015	
Conference ID:	
Conference:	Location:
Area Council:	Region:

FOR CONFERENCE TREASURER USE

Activity: (✓ tick relevant boxes)
 Visitation Shop Special Works Area Region

Agresso Checklist:

- All transactions for all Bank/ Building Society/ Credit Union/ Post Office/Other accounts have been entered onto Agresso for the year ended 31 December 2015
- All Bank reconciliations have been completed on Agresso up to 31 December 2015 agreeing all bank statements for all bank accounts to Agresso
- Agresso Reports Printed, Dated and Signed by President and Treasurer as follows (ensure these are securely attached to booklet):
 - Annual Return Report 2015
 - Unreconciled Report
 - Intershare Returns Report
 - Reports Printed for All Conference Activities

Audit Requirement Check: (see Page 3 of this booklet for details)

- Audited Accounts Completed and Enclosed (If Applicable)
- Independent Examiner Report Completed and Signed on Page 4 (If Applicable)
- Not Applicable

Check List for Essential Documentation Required to be Included in this Booklet where applicable:

- Bank Statement for ALL Bank Accounts, Credit Union Accounts or Accounts with Other Financial Institutions showing the balance at the year ended 31 December 2015
- Restricted Funds details listed page 2
- Supporting Documentation for all Legacies or Requests received in 2015 greater than €10,000/£7,500
- Supporting Documentation for all State Grants (Capital in nature or Other) received in 2015, greater than €25,000/£18,000
- All Documentation for Motor Vehicles or Office Equipment Purchased (Greater than €5,000/£3,750) or Sold/Disposed of in 2015
- Supporting Documentation for Property additions, including those Donated/Bequeathed to the Conference in 2015
- Completed the Internal Control Questionnaire (Section 1-4 Applicable to All Conferences)
- Sign Off Form Completed (Including Cash Collection Total) and Signed (see page 11).
- Levy and Twinning Levy Paid

For Consolidation Use Only:

 Society of St Vincent de Paul 