



*March 2023*

Vincentian **Wisdom**  
Quotes • Charism



## CALENDAR

### **Event**

Lenten Day of Reflection – St. Catherine of Siena (Mass at 8 :00 AM)

Saturday 3/4, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

### **Meeting**

Board of Directors Meeting - FRC

Tuesday 3/14, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

### **Meeting**

Spirituality and Formation Committee

Tuesday 3/14, 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

### **Event**

National Mid-Year Meeting, St. Louis, MO

Wednesday 3/16-3/19

### **Meeting**

District Council Meeting, St. Mary, Walnut Creek

Saturday 3/18, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

### **Event**

Easter Sunday, 4/9

### **Meeting**

Board of Directors Meeting - FRC

Tuesday 4/18, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

### **Meeting**

Spirituality and Formation Committee

Tuesday 4/18, 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

### **Training**

Ozanam Orientation, St. Anne, Byron

Saturday 4/29, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

St. Anne, Byron

## **Bob Liles Corner**

### **BOOK REVIEW – THE LEAST OF US** **by SAM QUINONES**

Quinones gives the personal stories of people affected by fentanyl and meth. He jumps around between people, and it starts slow, but it draws you in and there are several big takes that I got from this book. He writes how the manufacturing process for meth has changed over the last five to ten years and it is now different due to impurities. The new meth messes with the brain a lot more than the old meth and makes the users paranoid and schizophrenic along with other mental disorders that may take years to recover from.

He postulates that the increase in homelessness is due to how the new meth is wrecking people's brains.

He also talked about how a judge changed his viewpoint on failed programs. In the case of drug rehab, the judge decided that failure is part of the nature of rehab. Just like quitting cigarettes or staying on a diet, it may take multiple failures before a program finally works with an addict. Unfortunately, the same is true for the people that we help. We are better equipped to help someone who had a string of bad luck and just needs to get out of hole. When someone has lived a life of making bad decisions, it is very hard in one home visit to change their lifestyle. Unfortunately, we have to make the hard decision on whether we have the time to hold that person's hand for the next year or to help others that are waiting for assistance and who might get right back on their feet after a little help.



## **THE LEAST OF US by SAM QUINONES Cont.**

Interesting excerpts from the book:

*Decriminalizing drugs also removes the one lever we have to push men and women toward sobriety. Waiting around for them to decide to opt for treatment is the opposite of compassion when the drugs on the street are as cheap, prevalent, and deadly as they are today.*

*We used to believe that people needed to hit rock bottom before seeking treatment. That's another idea made obsolete by our addiction crisis and the current synthetic drug supply. It belongs to an era when drugs of choice were merciful. Nowadays people are living in tents, screaming at unseen demons, raped, pimped, beaten, un-showered, and unfed. That would seem to be rock bottom. Yet it's not enough to persuade people to get treatment. .... Today rock bottom is death.*

*We need to use arrests, but not as a reason to send someone to prison. Instead, criminal charges are leverage we can use to pry users from the dope that will consume them otherwise.*

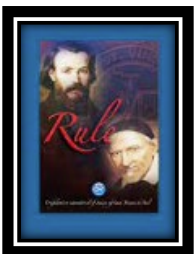
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*“Give something, however small, to the one in need. For it is not small to one who has nothing. Neither is it small to God, if we have given what we could.”*

St. Gregory Nazianzen

**Bob**

## **THE RULE 3.3 MEETINGS OF THE VINCENTIAN MEMBERS**



The Members meet as brothers and sisters with Christ in the midst of them, in Conferences that are genuine communities of faith and love, of prayer and action. Spiritual bonds of friendship between members is essential, as is the common mission to help the poor and marginalized. The entire Society is a true and unique worldwide Community of Vincentian friends.

## **MARCH 18th DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING AT ST. MARY CHURCH**



It will be our first in-person meeting since the pandemic started. It was slated to be at the Food Bank, but construction there has forced us to move it to **St. Mary's Church, 2039 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Walnut Creek 94596** *Mass is available at 8:30 AM for those that can make it.* The meeting is from 9:30 AM -11:30 AM. I believe that one advantage of in-person meetings is that there are better discussions. So, there will not be a speaker this month.

Please come with a problem that your conference is having, for input on how others handle it, or come with something good that your conference did that might be applicable to others.

## **EXPIRATION DATES ON FOOD**



Sometimes people donate food to pantries that are out of date. Do you have to throw it away? Not always. Obviously, if it is a bulging can or clearly rotten then it needs to be discarded. Here are some guidelines from an article in USA Today.

- **The USDA says dates are not an indicator of product safety**
- **Only infant formula is required by federal law to be dated**
- **Find out what commonly used food phrases really mean (it's probably not what you think)**

Grocery expiration labels can be intimidating, especially for dairy and meats. Manufacturers give their best guess as to when food will reach its peak quality with phrases like “best by,” “use by” and “sell by.”

But officially, the USDA says dates don't indicate product safety. Only infant formula is required by federal law to be dated. "Date labels usually indicate when food will be at its optimal freshness," said Nina Sevilla, program advocate for the food waste-fighting Natural Resources Defense Council. "If you have food a couple of days past that date, it likely means it's still OK to consume." To curb unnecessary waste, the NRDC is calling for federal action to standardize food date labels. Until then, here's how to decipher what you might find at the grocery store, plus how to press pause on ripening with your freezer.

### **What commonly used food phrases mean**

- **"Best if used by/before"** When food is estimated to be at its best in terms of flavor or quality. **It is not a safety date.**
- **"Sell by"** this tells the store how long to display the product for sale for inventory management. **It is not a safety date.**
- **"Use by"** This is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. **It is not a safety date**, except for when used on infant formula.
- **"Freeze by"** This indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. **It is not a safety date.**

But some people don't want anything to do with food that is beyond its expiration date. But it is still best to not throw it away. One conference solved this problem by putting all food that was past its date in a separate box.

They put a sign on it that said something like this: FREE FOOD - TAKE ALL THAT YOU WANT IT IS PAST THE DATE STAMPED ON IT - BUT IT IS STILL SAFE TO EAT

Many people rejected it, but others grabbed all they could get. So, the ones fussy about the date got food they wanted and the others that don't care got extra food, and nothing had to be thrown away.

**Bob**

## **CONFERENCE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

THE PROPOSED DATES FOR THE INITIAL CONFERENCE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE SUBMISSION IS COMING UP IN MARCH.

Links to the documents that your conference needs to help your conference see which areas it is strong and which it could use some work are on the DC website at the bottom of the Conference

Operation webpage: [www.svdpc-cc.org/conference-operation/](http://www.svdpc-cc.org/conference-operation/). Start now by reviewing each of the questions with your conference.

## **VINCENTIAN DAY OF LENTEN REFLECTION**

**WITH SR. PAULE FREEBURG**



**ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA – 606 MELLUS ST., MARTINEZ, CA 94553**  
**MARCH 4 – JOIN IN FOR ADORATION and MASS – 7:30 TO 8:30 AM**  
**BREAKFAST 8:30 - LENTEN REFLECTION 9:00 AM TO 2:00 PM**

### **HELP OUR NEIGHBORS GET MEDICAL COVERAGE**

Diana Honig, Healthcare Task Force Co-Chair, Multifaith ACTION Coalition

The Multifaith ACTION Coalition is partnering with Monument Impact and Healthy Contra Costa to offer free education, outreach, and pre-enrollment to help people across Contra Costa County access the CARES program. Outreach Coordinators from Monument Impact (Promotores) or Healthy Contra Costa (Community Health Advocates) are available to come to St Vincent de Paul food distribution events and set up an information table. The Outreach Coordinators not only provide information on CARES eligibility, but they can also pre-enroll people into the program and help them to pull together the necessary documents to ensure successful enrollment into CARES.

For more information about the CARES program and who is eligible, we have developed outreach flyers in English and Spanish, which are available in the member's section of the SVdP website ([svdp-cc.org](http://svdp-cc.org)) in the **Help Offered by Other Organizations** section. We would appreciate St. Vincent de Paul making the flyers available at your locations countywide and offering them to the Parish Administration at each affiliated church.

If any Vincentians (or affiliated churches) would like to set up an education/outreach event, please contact the following individuals, depending on where the event is located:

#### *East/Central/South County*

Alejandra Villagran at [alejandra@monumentimpact.org](mailto:alejandra@monumentimpact.org) 925-682-8248 ext 2400 and Lorena Cruz at [lorena@monumentimpact.org](mailto:lorena@monumentimpact.org).

#### *West County*

Anna Ostrander at Healthy Contra Costa [aostrander@richmondccf.org](mailto:aostrander@richmondccf.org) 510-680-3133 ext. 20

Questions? Feel free to contact Diana directly at [djhwhittle@gmail.com](mailto:djhwhittle@gmail.com) or 530-848-3290

## **SVdP of CONTRA COSTA COUNTY IS GOING STRONG AND GROWING STRONGER**

The last few months at St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County (SVdP), have been really fulfilling for me and a testament to the power of the Vincentian calling.

In late January, I was privileged to attend a commissioning and recommissioning celebration for the Vincentians of the conference at St. Joan of Arc. More than 20 Vincentians were commissioned and at least that many were recommissioned. There was also a special recognition of John Talliac, and 50-year+ Vincentian at both St. Joan of Arc and the Hope Conferences and Ed McMillan, former Stores Committee chair and leader of the Toolbelt Brigade! It was a joy to be a part of the fellowship that followed, breaking bread, sharing stories and getting to know some of the new Vincentians.

On February 25, I had the opportunity to learn with 51 other Vincentians at a Home Visit Workshop hosted by our Conference at St. Anthony in Oakley. Fellow participants included Vincentians who had just attended their first Ozanam Orientation a few weeks prior at Queen of All Saints as well as veteran Vincentians who wanted to hone their skills after being away from making home visits in the past few years. Some conferences are just starting to make home visits again, and the excitement to be with our neighbors where they live and walk their journey with them was notable.

In order to keep supporting the zeal of our Vincentians, we have secured funding for two part-time positions of Vincentian Support Associates. These two staff members would help Stephen Krank, Vincentian Services Manager, support our conferences. One would be focused on East County conferences and the other on West County conferences. We are hoping to fill these positions with bilingual candidates (Spanish and English) to better serve our neighbors and support our Spanish-speaking Vincentians, particularly in our Spanish-speaking conferences. If you are interested, or know someone who may be interested, please contact Stephen Krank at 925-439-5060 ext. 28 or [s.krank@svdp-cc.org](mailto:s.krank@svdp-cc.org).

We are also hiring for the position of a bilingual (Spanish-English) receptionist at our Family Resource Center in Pittsburg. Any interested persons are welcome to contact me at 925-439-5060 ext. 19 or at [c.ramirez@svdp-cc.org](mailto:c.ramirez@svdp-cc.org). In order to keep serving our neighbors in need with the high-caliber, trained Vincentians that we have, we need your help to fill these three key positions so please spread the word or visit our website at [www.svdp-cc.org](http://www.svdp-cc.org).

Finally, as we continue in our Lenten journey, take a moment to reflect on what brought you to the Society and the Vincentian family. Do you know someone who may have the same love of our mission but just needs the invitation to join us?

Lenten blessings, ***Claudia L. Ramirez***  
***Executive Director***

## Hope Conference Funding Availability

### \*\* STATUS UPDATE \*\*

The Hope Conference currently has funding available for the following expenses:

- General assistance: *limited* rent, transportation, medical, etc.
- Utilities: water and gas / electric only; garbage does not qualify (most recent 90-days only)

Please email the Hope Conference to confirm prior to submitting a case.

Date of last update: 2/1/2023

## HOPE FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The Hope Application, Release, and Forms necessary to submit your completed applications are available on our SVDP Contra Costa website <https://www.svdp-cc.org/>.

You can see if there have been any changes in funding status by going to the *BLUE Hope Conference Funding Availability \*\*Status Update\*\* Box*. If you haven't been on the Members section of the website, go to the **Members** Dropdown Menu and select Assistance Applications. Hope Conference will only accept the new application and release form moving forward.

## CATHOLIC FUNERAL & CEMETERY SERVICES



On January 31, 2023, SVDP Contra Costa County was invited by Kindlen Robles, Director of Funerals and Cemeteries, to join in with Bishop Barber and CFCS to bless a the new St. Thomas Mausoleum at St. Joseph's Cemetery in San Pablo. In his presentation, Kindlen spoke about CFCS and its relationship with St. Vincent de Paul and how our ministries work together to provide services and resources for disadvantaged and low incomes families during some of the most challenging times for already struggling families in the Diocese.

Kindlen stated, "It is so important during such difficult times for our neighbors to be able to access support when they do not have the resources to bury a spouse or family member." Please share this resource and another tool for our Vincentians serving our neighbors.

Kindlen Robles, Director of Funerals and Cemeteries – Diocese of Oakland, can be reached at [krubles@cfcsmission.org](mailto:krubles@cfcsmission.org). Office (855) 481-4081 x 0345

# CONFERENCE MEAL SUPPORT



**SPANISH INTERPRETERS NEEDED  
AT ST. VINCENT DE PAUL  
IN PITTSBURG**

Help the sick & uninsured in your community receive access to medical care. Volunteer as a Spanish Interpreter at the Rotacare Pittsburg Free Medical Clinic at St. Vincent de Paul. Volunteer once per week or once per month!

Spanish Language Interpreter:  
Wednesdays, 4pm - 8pm

Spanish Language Appointment Scheduler:  
Wednesdays, 1pm - 3pm

Contact Info:  
[www.svdpp-cc.org](http://www.svdpp-cc.org)  
[pittsburg@rotacarebayarea.org](mailto:pittsburg@rotacarebayarea.org)  
Contact Clinic Operations Manager: (925) 439-2009



The Dentists on Wheels Pittsburg Free Dental Clinic at St. Vincent de Paul

**FREE DENTAL CLINIC**  
For All Eligible Uninsured Adults  
Clinic Open Thursdays  
2210 Gladstone Dr.  
Pittsburg, CA 94565

**APPOINTMENTS REQUIRED!**  
Visit [DentistsOnWheels.org](http://DentistsOnWheels.org) to fill out the patient application. Applications required for appointment.

Free Exam & X-rays  
Prescriptions and referrals are kept top secret!  
Volunteer Dental or dental hygiene students to provide services without insurance



**MD, RN, NP, MA, LVN  
Volunteers Needed!  
Help us Help Our  
Neighbors in Need!**

Be a Medical Missionary in your own community!  
Only 3 hours once a month or every other month!  
(Wednesday evenings)

Learned providers needed - Rotacare Pittsburg Free Medical Clinic at St. Vincent de Paul provides free medical care, prescriptions, and diagnostics to uninsured adults. We provide supportive coverage, dedicated exam rooms, and very grateful patients!  
(Please be 22 or older)

Interested?  
Email to: [pittsburg@rotacarebayarea.org](mailto:pittsburg@rotacarebayarea.org)  
or visit [www.svdpp-cc.org](http://www.svdpp-cc.org) to learn more  
or call 925-439-2009

Rotacare Pittsburg  
Pittsburg, CA  
2210 Gladstone Drive, Pittsburg CA 94565

## Vincentians,

Each week since our Free Medical Clinic began and we began to partner with RotaCare of the Bay Area, we host a meal for our volunteer Nurses, Interpreters, Doctors, PAs, and Staff that provide free medical care here at the St. Vincent de Paul Family Resource Center. As the Medical Clinic and services have grown, thankfully, so have the number of Conferences and individual volunteers wanting to participate in providing the meals.

Currently, we can cover all but the fourth Wednesday of each month, which is the reason for every year; I appeal for Conferences willing to participate by preparing the meal for the twenty volunteers and bringing it to the Family Resource Center or sponsoring the purchase for the Volunteers.

Last year we had the privilege of adding Free Dental Care for our neighbors in need. Through a partnership with Dentist on Wheels, we are now providing care each month for the same number of patients we were able to care for each year. The scope of the care has moved from our first focus, "the elimination of pain," to preserving the existing teeth and oral health care. The quality of care has created a backlog that fluctuates from 300 + to 400 applications on our waiting list. Again, all our Dentists, Oral Hygienists in partnership with Dentist on Wheels, are volunteers, with the Clinics taking place every Wednesday and Thursday.

We want to offer the same for the Volunteer staff and Dentists lunches twice a week. We have ten volunteer staff each day the Free Dental Clinic is open. (Includes the Dentists, Oral hygienists, and Dental Assistants).

If you are willing to support the Clinic dinner on the fourth Friday of a month for twenty volunteers (each of next 12 upcoming months are open) or can provide the Dental Clinic volunteers a lunch ten volunteers once each month, or once in 12 months contact Stephen Krank. [s.krank@svdp-cc.org](mailto:s.krank@svdp-cc.org)





## ORIENTACIÓN OZANAM

La Orientación Ozanam es un taller de un día que cubre los elementos esenciales de lo que significa ser un Vicentino.

La Orientación cubre temas como:

- ❖ Nuestra Historia
- ❖ Espiritualidad Vicentina
- ❖ Entendiendo la Pobreza
- ❖ Como y porque nosotros hacemos Visitas Domiciliarias

### Orientación Ozanam

**SÁBADO 6 DE MAYO DE 2023**

**Orientación 9:00 am – 3:30 pm**

**Iglesia Católica San Jerónimo  
(St. Jerome)**

**308 Carmel Ave.**

**El Cerrito, CA 94530**

**Desayuno y almuerzo son incluidos.**

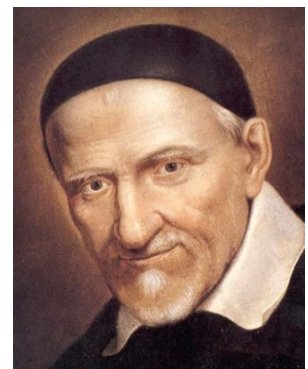
**Detalles para matricularse para el taller serán enviados próximamente.**

Este taller nos proporcionará excelentes ejemplos que se enfocan en como servir y que se ha comprobado que funcionan.

Habrà intercambio de ideas prácticas de Conferencias que han aprendido de las buenas y malas experiencias. Este taller es la mejor manera de introducir a los nuevos miembros a la Sociedad.

“Tenemos que estudiar de tal manera que el amor corresponda al conocimiento.” (XI:116)

*Vincens DePaul*



## OZANAM ORIENTATION



Please RSVP to:

Shawanna Costanzo, Formator  
Spirituality and Formation  
Committee

[shawanna57@gmail.com](mailto:shawanna57@gmail.com)

**On April 29, 2023, join us *in person*  
for an Ozanam Orientation from**

**8:45 am – 3 pm**

**Hosted by the St. Vincent de Paul**

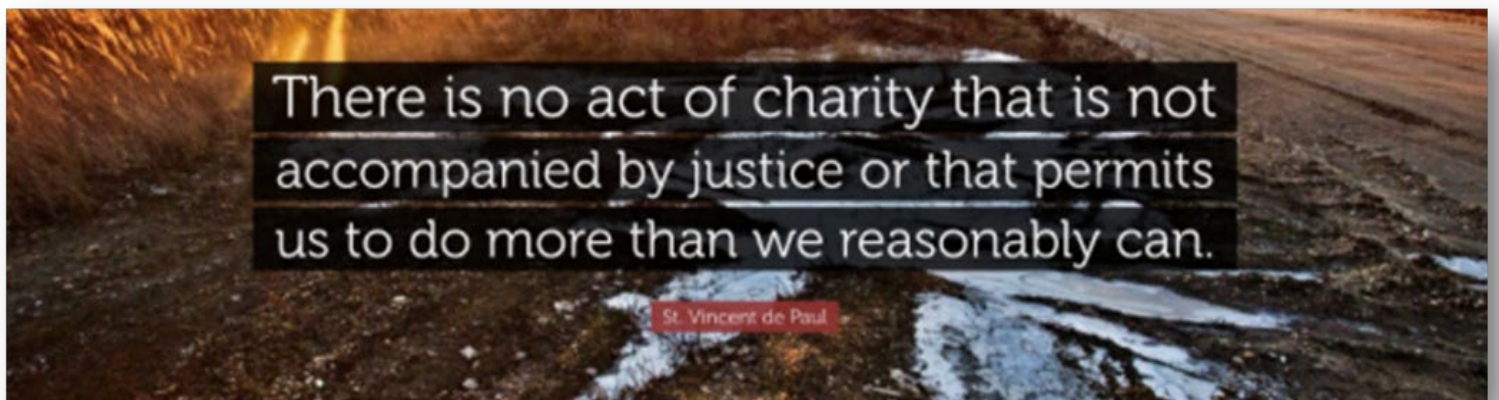
**Community of St. Anne Catholic Church**

2800 Camino Diablo Road, Byron, CA 94514

(Continental breakfast and lunch provided)

The Ozanam Orientation is an opportunity for Vincentians to learn, connect with one another, and to develop a deeper understanding of and appreciation for Vincentian life.

The Ozanam Orientation is a one-day workshop that covers the essential elements of what it means to be a Vincentian.





This Lent, commit to our global human family through daily **prayer**, weekly **fasting** and **almsgiving** with

## CRS Rice Bowl

*What you give up for Lent changes lives globally and locally.*

- 75% of the donations from Rice Bowl go to Catholic Relief Services to be used for humanitarian assistance and development projects in over 100 countries around the world.
- **25%** of the proceeds from Rice Bowl are **kept locally**, most of which goes to feed the hungry through grants to East Bay nonprofits, like **13 St. Vincent de Paul parish conferences** last year. To see the list of **2022 CRS Rice Bowl Grant recipients**, please click [here](#).

For information and assistance in promoting Rice Bowl in your parish, contact the CRS Diocesan Coordinator at [mmckimmey@cceb.org](mailto:mmckimmey@cceb.org).

**FOR LENT FOR LIFE**