



March, 2025

Vincentian **Wisdom**
Quotes • Charism



Event

3/5 Ash Wednesday

Event

National Mid-Year Meeting
3/5 to 3/8 St. Louis, MO

Event

Vincentian Youth Meeting/Tour
Saturday, 3/8, 9:30 AM-11:30 AM
Family Resource Center, Pittsburg

Meeting

Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, 3/11, 9:30 AM-11:30 AM
Family Resource Center, Pittsburg

District Council Meeting

Saturday, 3/15, 9:30 AM -11:30 AM
Food Bank of Contra Costa
and Solano, 4110 Nelson Ave.
Concord, CA 94520

Meeting

Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, 4/15, 9:30 AM-11:30 AM
Family Resource Center, Pittsburg

Training

Ozanam Orientation
Wed., April 16, 9:15 AM- 3:30 PM
Immaculate Heart of Mary
500 Fairview Ave, Brentwood, CA

Events

4/18 Good Friday
4/20 Easter Sunday

Bob Liles Corner

Home Visits - Why I do them

A reporter watched Mother Teresa of Calcutta as she cleaned the maggot-infested wound of a man on the street, only to say, "I wouldn't do what you do for a million dollars." Mother is supposed to have replied, immediately, with a bit of a wry smile, "I wouldn't either."

I am not a people person and not very talkative at get togethers. Which may explain why I dread doing home visits. I joined the society to work the food pantry. Greet someone with a smile, give them a bag of food and then say "God bless you" as they leave. The first two visits I did were disasters. We did not help them as they were scammers. I have been in homes where there was no place to sit. Where the table we met at was covered with open bottles of hard liquor. Where they yelled at me to leave. But I have never felt unsafe.

I have met people that put me to shame with their humility and faith in God. And some that I know that I changed the course of their lives. So I keep doing them.

If you have never done a home visit, why not do one as part of your Lenten experience. I'm just asking for one visit. If you don't know someone who does them then call Steve Krank and he can direct you to the closest experienced home visitor. And attending the HV workshop is not a requirement.

5.2 Autonomy

(Rule in formation) by Vincent de Paul

The Society is legally autonomous as to its existence, constitution, organization, rules, activities and internal government. Vincentians freely choose their own officers and manage the Society's activities and assets with full autonomy, in accordance with their own Statutes and the legislation in effect in each country.



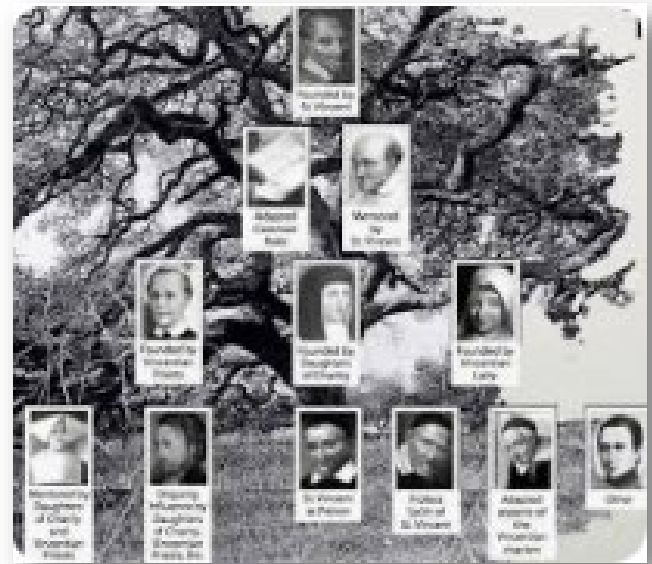
What is a Vincentian?

Members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul – known as Vincentians – are women and men who faithfully serve those in need through their local SVDP Conference. Vincentians serve more than 5 million people annually in rural, suburban, and urban communities across the United States.

Vincentians represent every age, race, and income. Without the classic blue shirt on, it would be hard to tell them apart from the people they serve! Vincentians share their blessings of time, talent, and treasure with those who need help and hope. We understand that service to a neighbor in need is an encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ. We know that poverty, suffering, and loneliness are present for millions in our communities.

Vincentians witness God's love by embracing all works of charity and justice. We make no distinction in those we serve because, in them, Vincentians see the face of Christ. See some of the ways we serve.

Vincentians strive to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to neighbors in need. All Vincentians are part of an international society of friends united by a spirit of poverty, humility, and sharing. They are nourished by prayer and reflection, mutually supportive gatherings, and adherence to a basic Rule. To quote our patron, St. Vincent de Paul: "Charity is infinitely inventive."





Prayer in Honor of St. Louise de Marillac

Loving and merciful God,
you filled the heart of **St. Louise de Marillac** with deep
faith, unwavering hope, and tireless charity.

Through her example, you have shown us how to serve
Christ in the poor, the sick, and the forgotten.

St. Louise, faithful disciple of St. Vincent de Paul,
you embraced the call to serve with humility and love.

Teach us to see Christ in those who suffer,
to act with compassion,
and to give without counting the cost.

Guide us in our struggles, strengthen us in our weaknesses,
and inspire us to work for justice and mercy.

Help us to be instruments of God's love in the world,
serving with a joyful heart, just as you did.

St. Louise de Marillac,
patron of social workers and all who care for those in need,
pray for us, that we may walk in your footsteps,
bringing light, hope, and love to those who need it most.

Amen.

Did you get two Vetera Monumenta?

By Bob Liles



You should have. One from the District Council and one from your conference. Why Two? The district council tries to send every Vincentian a copy, but we can't keep up with the monthly changes in conference membership, so we ask the conference presidents to send it to everyone. Unfortunately, we cannot rely on every conference to forward it to every person at their conference. So, we must use a belt and suspenders strategy to ensure everyone gets it. If you didn't get two, please notify the person that you did not get it from that situation.

Something New at Contra Costa County SVdP

By Joyce Ohanesian

Contra Costa County SVdP has a Micro Loan Program (MLP) to provide Neighbors, who are stable enough to repay a loan, an effective alternative to high interest loans and those awful “pay day loans”. With the help of the Home Visit Team and a member of Team MLP, our Neighbors who need a loan to meet an unexpected expense may not only receive a low interest loan but can learn more about money management and at the same time improve their credit score. Many SVdP Councils and Conferences across the country have Micro Loan Programs available, so this is not really something new, only new to us.



At this time loans are available to residents, or those employed in the central area of Contra Costa County, under an agreement with Diablo Valley Federal Credit Union. Team MLP is working to expand the geographic area for these micro loans. Attached to this newsletter is a flyer about our Micro Loan Program and Team MLP members to contact for answers to your questions. Or, if you wish, Team MLP can come to your Conference to discuss this new program.



Special Invitation – Transforming Assistance: St. Vincent de Paul Micro Loan Program

As Vincentians, we are called to serve our neighbors in need with love, dignity, and practical assistance. On **Tuesday, March 18, 2025**, as part of the **Third Tuesday Vincentian Resources Zoom Call (10:00 AM)**, we will introduce **The St. Vincent de Paul Microloan Program**—an initiative that will **enhance our ability to connect neighbors with critical support**. This resource is **designed for those we serve, by those who understand their needs**.

Join us as we explore how this program can be a **game-changer** for our Conferences, making it easier to provide direct, meaningful help while ensuring our neighbors receive the best systemic support available.

Why Should You Attend?

- ✓ **Learn** who this program is for and how it aligns with our mission.
- ✓ **Gain a clear understanding** of how to help neighbors take full advantage of it.
- ✓ **Discover** how your Conference can integrate this tool into serving our neighbors.
- ✓ **Engage** in an open discussion on how we can maximize its impact together.

Let's continue strengthening our Vincentian network and **walking in friendship, service, and hope**. We look forward to seeing you there!

3rd TUESDAY- RESOURCES FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

**St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County Micro Loan Program –
March 18, 2025**

This session will review how and why you should find, identify, and build personal relationships with our local partners.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn how to connect and participate in providing valuable assistance and community support tools to those in need!

*Resources Every Third Tuesday at 10:00 AM. Come by with a Question, or just come by –
You May be the Answer for Someone.*

<https://bit.ly/TuesdayZoomForum>

Meeting ID: 925 439 5060

Passcode: Ozanam



*The Society of St. Vincent de Paul
of Contra Costa County*

St. Vincent de Paul Micro Loan Program

**Low-Interest Loans to Give a Hand-Up
to People and Families in Need**

— FEED
— CLOTHE
— SHELTER
— HEAL

- St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County helps families from falling into a cycle of debt by providing low-interest loans.
- Loan amounts range from \$500 - \$2,000 at VERY low interest rates.
- Get help with payday loans, car repair, security deposits, medical bills, , or other one-time needs.
- Applicants must contact their local SVdP conference.
- Applicants must have a reliable, documented income source for 4 months, & receive financial coaching.

Please leave a message for:

Anne Crisp: Annecrisp@yahoo.com or (925)787-0857
Ron Costanzo: Rcostanzo@astound.net or (925)487-4986
Joyce Ohanesian: Joy1936@comcast.net or (925)513-7124
Shawna Costanzo: Shawna57@gmail.com or (925)200-5952





1ST TUESDAY- FRED TALKS

Discover Fred Talks: Concise, Insightful Videos on Vincentian Heritage, Traditions, and Spirituality

Explore *Fred Talks*—a series of brief, impactful videos, each under five minutes, designed to deepen understanding of Vincentian heritage, traditions, and spirituality. Perfect for sharing with conference members or parishioners interested in the mission of St. Vincent de Paul. Produced by Tim Williams, National Vincentian Formation Director.

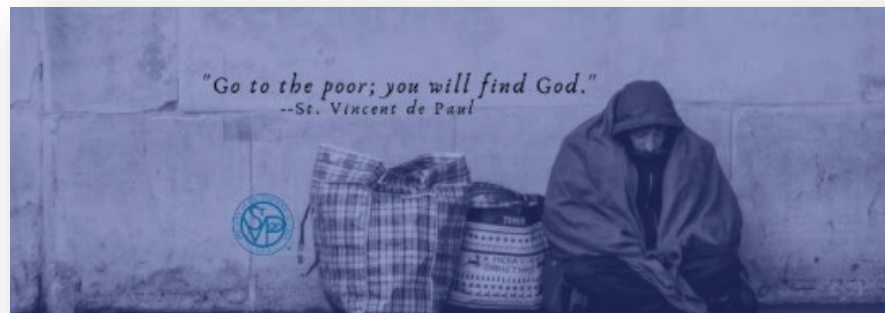
Our Journey Together Towards Holiness

*Every Tuesday at 10:00 AM. Come by with a Question, or just come by –
We may have the Answer, or You May Be the Answer for Someone.*

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A Year in Review: St. Vincent de Paul's Impact in Oakley and the East Bay

Dara Walsh

Over six years ago, Stephen Krank came to Saint Anthony's with an idea that would transform our lives. Arriving in the SVDP bus, he shared the core mission of St. Vincent de Paul: serving the poor and uplifting our neighbors in need. He painted a vision of how our small parish could make a significant impact with limited resources. With little knowledge, we boarded the SVDP bus—and our lives were forever changed.

Stephen's steadfast faith inspired us all, reminding us that "God will provide," and indeed, he was right. Along with fellow Vincentians like Claudia, Ron & Shawna, Costanzo, and Bob Liles, Stephen has profoundly influenced our conference. The dedication of our St. Anthony volunteers is nothing short of amazing and inspirational, and their hearts for service bless us all.



Before 2019, I had no experience with St. Vincent de Paul or its compassionate mission. We began our conference with just six volunteers and no funds, but today—thanks be to God—we have over 50 volunteers and the resources to assist our neighbors with food, housing, and utilities.

Our parish priest, Father Rafael, embraced this vision wholeheartedly, supporting our

ministry through Fifth Sunday collections for over six years. His generosity has been crucial in sustaining the mission of St. Vincent de Paul.

Our parish operates a food pantry on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month, serving over 80 families weekly with the help of more than 40 committed volunteers. These individuals exemplify faith and hard work, and I am honored to work alongside them.

Through our home visits, we are poised to support over 100 families in 2024 with assistance for rent, utilities, and emergency needs. The volunteers conducting home visits demonstrate remarkable dedication. We have even sought housing for asylum seekers and taken a boat to conduct a home visit across the Delta.

Being a Vincentian has been an incredibly rewarding experience. The support, hope, and faith found within this organization are unparalleled, and you will never regret taking part in St. Vincent de Paul.

Reflecting on my first year as St. Anthony's president fills me with awe at the chance to serve. As a Catholic convert, I never would have believed that I could lead a Catholic organization dedicated to helping those in need, but God has a beautiful plan for each of us.

I am profoundly thankful for the chance to serve our neighbors who face challenges such as mental health issues, domestic violence, homelessness, unemployment, and hunger. With resilience, faith, and hope, we stand with those who cannot advocate for themselves. We offer prayers to those in need and provide service to those who seek it, recognizing the face of God in everyone we meet.

As Vincentians, we never know what awaits us in service, but God knows the path laid before us. He places people in our lives for a purpose, and each opportunity to serve is a true blessing. Whether it's helping a mother escape a domestic violence situation or meeting an 89-year-old neighbor at the pantry—who gifts you a handmade crocheted tablecloth as a token of gratitude—these individuals are the real heroes. They embody the face of God.

I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to serve and remain committed as a lifelong Vincentian. Thanks be to God for all the chances to help the poor.

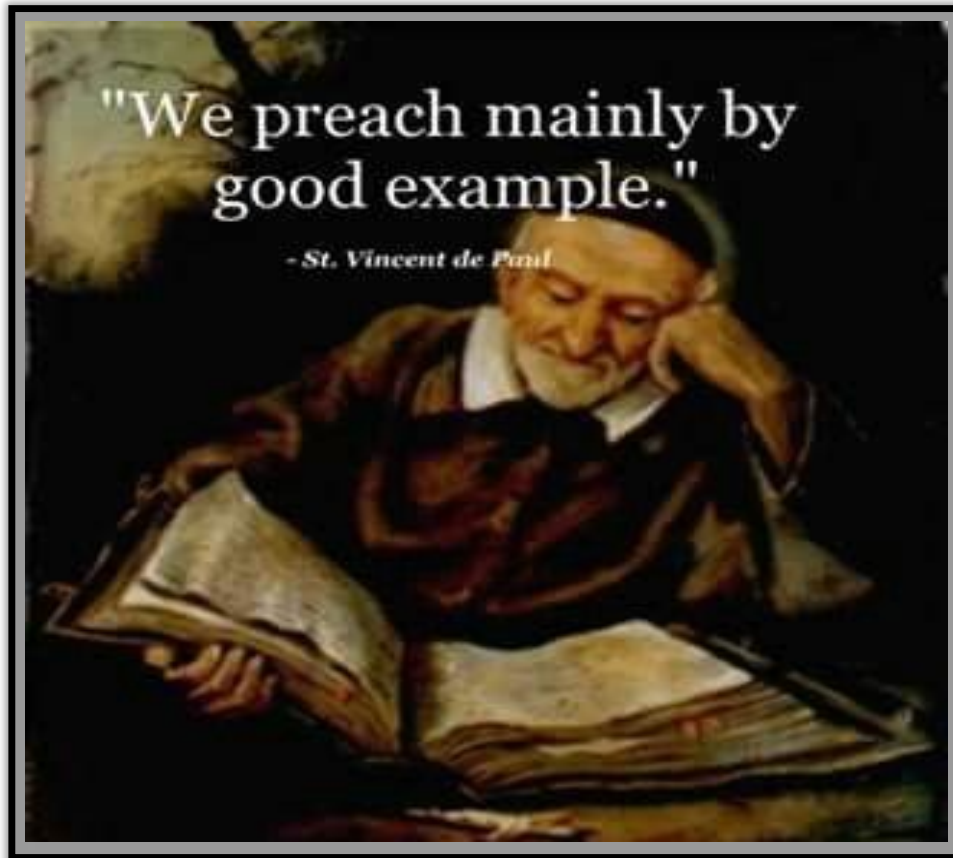
In Vincentian service,

Dara Walsh

President, St. Vincent de Paul,
St. Anthony
Oakley, California



**HOW CAN WE ANSWER THE CALL TO
SEE THE FACE OF CHRIST IN ALL PEOPLE?**



PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN OZANAM ORIENTATION.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2025, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

AT

**IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY
500 FAIRVIEW AVE, BRENTWOOD, CA.
(IN THE CHURCH HALL)**

**JOIN US FOR MASS AT 8:00 AM
CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST & LUNCH ARE INCLUDED**

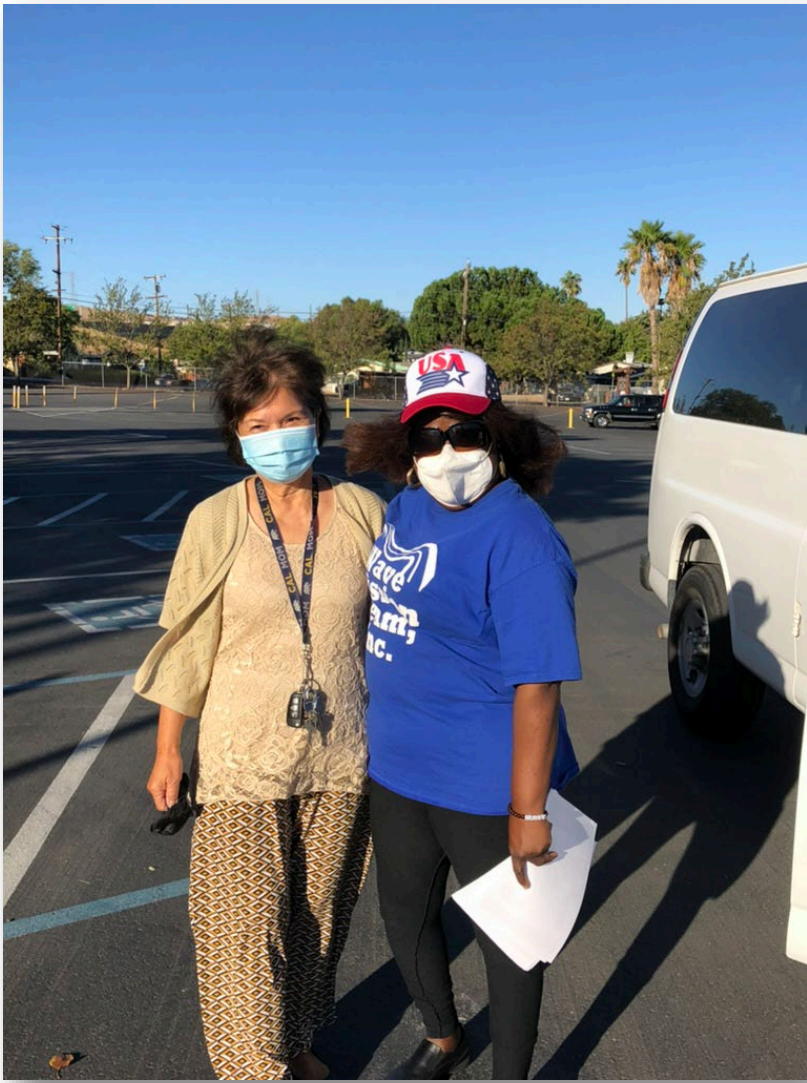
QUESTIONS? CALL JOYCE AT 925-513-7124

REGISTER AT:



[HTTPS://BIT.LY/OZANAMIHM](https://bit.ly/ozanamihm)

PARTICIPANTS MUST REGISTER BY APRIL 12, 2025



Driven by Love, Rewarded by Smiles

By Danny Vu, Conference
President at Our Lady Queen of
the World, Bay Point

Before the sun even peeks over the horizon, the food pantry team is already in motion. The van hums to life, a familiar sound that signals another day of service. The pickup crew moves swiftly, gathering donations from local stores—crates of fresh vegetables, boxes of canned goods, packages of meat, and loaves of bread. There's no hesitation, no complaint—just a shared purpose.

Every mile driven, every box lifted, every grocery bag packed is an act of love. The long hours and aching muscles fade into the background the moment they see the first smile of the day.

One by one, families arrive. Some come with weary eyes after long shifts at work, others with children in tow, tiny hands clutching at their parents' sleeves. Each carries a story—a battle against rising rent, mounting medical bills, or the relentless struggle to keep the lights on. There's James, a father of two who once worked as a mechanic—until an accident left him unable to do heavy labor. His disability check barely covers rent. The pantry is the difference between a warm meal and an empty table. The first time he came, he hesitated at the door, shame heavy on his shoulders. But when he was met with kindness, his burden lightened. Now, he greets the volunteers with a quiet nod of gratitude, knowing he is not alone.

There's Mrs. Johnson, an elderly woman whose Social Security doesn't stretch far enough to cover both her prescriptions and groceries. The volunteers always tuck low-sodium canned goods and fresh vegetables into her bag, knowing how much she loves cooking. She lingers for a few extra moments each visit, sharing laughter and conversation. The pantry is more than food for her—it is warmth, it is community.

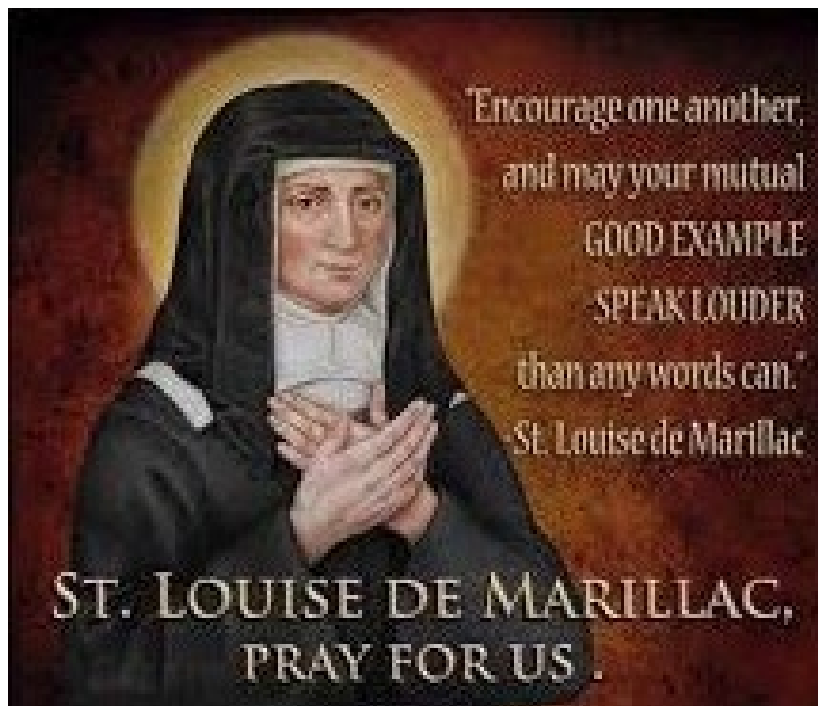
And then there's Tanya, a single mother working two jobs, still forced to choose between groceries and keeping the heat on for her kids. Each week, she arrives with quiet determination, gathering the essentials and exchanging a hopeful smile with Maria. **"One day,"** she often

says, "I won't need this help anymore. And when that day comes, I'll be back to volunteer."

The pantry is more than a place to receive food. It is a place of dignity. A place of hope. A place where no one has to face hunger alone.

Maria watches as people leave, their bags filled not just with food, but with the reassurance that someone cares. This is why they are here—to be a bridge, a helping hand, a reminder that even in the darkest times, there is light.

At the end of the week, as the van finally rests and the last bag of food is given away, the team looks at each other—exhausted but fulfilled. They have fought hunger with love. They have battled poverty with generosity. And in the faces of those they serve, they see something beautiful—hope, shining through every smile.





*The Society of St. Vincent de Paul
of Contra Costa County*

St. Anne's Chapter of SVdP Presents

Strut For A Cause

A Thrift Store Fashion Show Fundraiser

Featuring Clothing and Accessories

From the Brentwood St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store

All Proceeds Benefiting St. Anne SVdP

"Helping Our Neighbors In Need"

Saturday, May 3rd 2025

From 1 to 3

General Admission—\$20.00

VIP Runway seating \$30.00



St. Anne Catholic Church

2800 Camino Diablo Rd.

Byron, CA

Scan QR code below for tickets



LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED