



Society of St Vincent de Paul



Vincetian News

Yearbook 2021

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St Vincent de Paul



The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) was established in Ireland in 1844. It is the largest voluntary charitable organisation in Ireland. Our focus is on a practical approach to dealing with poverty, alleviating its effects on individuals and families through working primarily in person-to-person contact by a unique system of Home Visitation and seeking to achieve social justice and equality of opportunity for all citizens.

The Society promotes community self-sufficiency, enabling people to help themselves. Any assistance offered by the Society is given in a non-judgemental spirit, based on the needs of the individual or family seeking help.

The Society respects the dignity of those who contact us, offering assistance and advice when sought, maintaining their dignity while assisting them towards long-term self-sufficiency in a relationship of friendship, trust and confidentiality.

Our Mission and Ethos

SVP is a Christian voluntary organisation, working with people experiencing poverty and disadvantage. We are involved in a diverse range of activities characterised by:



Support and friendship

Through person-to-person contact, we are committed to respecting the dignity of those we assist and fostering self-respect. We assure confidentiality at all times and endeavour to establish relationships based on trust and friendship.



Promoting self-sufficiency

It is not enough to promote short-term material support. Those we assist are also helped to achieve self-sufficiency in the longer term and the sense of self-worth this provides. When problems are beyond our competence we enlist the support of specialised help.



Working for Social Justice

We are committed to identifying the root cause of poverty and social exclusion and, in solidarity with poor and disadvantaged people, to advocate and work for the changes required to create a more just and caring society.

SVP Services



Home Visits



Homeless Services + Other Centres



Education Support



Resource Centres



Youth Programmes + Services



Budget Counselling



Social Justice Advocacy



Food Distribution



Community Development Services



Young SVP Youth Programmes



Twinning Programmes

How SVP Responds



Home Visits



Online



Services and Resources Centres



Phone

How SVP Helps
167

Conferences across Northern Ireland

18

Area Councils

Who SVP Helps

In excess of

20,000

people
in 2020

SVP Charity Shops

33 across Northern Ireland

60 staff

500 volunteers

SVP Expenditure
in 2020

£3,000,000



Spirituality and the Society by Fr Perry Gildea C.M.

Members often express concern about the spirituality of the Society or indeed a lack of apparent spirituality. Perhaps it is important to examine what we might mean by the spirituality of the Society. It is not essentially the personal piety of the members though that is obviously both relevant and important. Spirituality refers to the fundamental beliefs and principles which both underlie and then inspire the activity of the Society. This requires reflection. It has been suggested that in the early days, shortly after the foundation of the first Conference, that the young members would meet with their mentor Sr Rosalie Rendu who would encourage them to reflect on their experiences during Visitation. She would instruct them in the Vincentian virtue of respect for the poor. Encourage them to see the face of Christ in the poor, above all to avoid being judgemental and always practise kindness in all their dealings with the poor people they encountered.

This is similar to an important process that is part of pastoral ministry. This process is called theological reflection and is at the heart of discovering and maintaining the fundamental spirituality required in all pastoral work. Spiritual reflection is a dialogue between our own personal experience and the tradition to which we belong. In our case, the tradition is firstly the Catholic tradition and its 'option for the poor' and secondly the perceptions of how the option is considered in the thoughts and teaching of St Vincent de Paul and Frederic Ozanam. We acknowledge and profess charity to be an essential element of our Christian existence.

"Love is therefore the service that the Church carries out in order to attend constantly to man's sufferings and his needs, including material needs."

Charity as a responsibility of the Church

*"Love of neighbour, grounded in the love of God, is first and foremost a responsibility for each individual member of the faithful, but it is also a responsibility for the entire ecclesial community at every level: from the local community to the particular Church and to the Church universal in its entirety. As a community, the Church must practise love. Love thus needs to be organised if it is to be an ordered service to the community. The awareness of this responsibility has had a **constitutive relevance** in the Church from the beginning: "All who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:44-5). In these words, Saint Luke provides a kind of definition of the Church, whose constitutive elements include fidelity to the "teaching of the Apostles", "communion" (koinonia), "the breaking of the bread" and "prayer" (cf. Acts 2:42)" (Pope Benedict in *Deus Caritas Est* 19 & 21). This fundamental principle of the Christian and*

Catholic tradition is enhanced by the traditions of St Vincent and the Society. To this fundamental tradition was added the understanding and realisation of the tradition in the thoughts and actions of St Vincent and Ozanam. This has been summed up “The three essential elements of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, from the beginning in 1833 have been spirituality, friendship and service”. (Sickingher 239)

For the purpose of useful reflection, the five essential virtues as proposed by St Vincent and adopted by the early Conference are key. The simplicity, humility, gentleness, selflessness, and zeal, the essential elements of Vincentian spirituality are beautifully expressed in the prayers we say at each meeting. Perhaps a useful reflection exercise would be to discuss how we fulfil the ideal expressed in one or other of the prayers in our Visitation, or our discussions about possible ways of addressing current poverty issues. The five virtues should also be involved in all our discussions. Primarily, of course, all discussion should be in a spirit of charity and mutual love and respect. Reflection on these issues can only improve the quality of our service to God’s poor. Shared reflection on the vocation and ministry of a Vincentian will always invite us to realise the essentials of that vocation.



Introduction by National President, Rose McGowan

After the Past Two Years We Must Return Rejuvenated to Our Core Work

This time last year I wrote in this publication that the past twelve months had been a time that most people wished to forget. Add another year, 2021, and that makes two years that most people wish to forget.

For many, it was missing being with their loved ones, parents, children and grandchildren, for much of the time. For others, it was the loneliness, and isolation, becoming unemployed, struggling to pay bills and, for many, not being able to mourn properly for so many who had died during the pandemic.

But now the tide has turned, the country is opening up again. While we remain cautious and for some, an understandable nervousness remains, hope is returning. Hope that we can put the past two years behind us and resume what we may consider a normal life.

However it will not be the same, for many there has been a gap in their lives which will never be filled; the loved ones gone, the jobs no longer available or the times with friends. For many young people and their families there will be the celebrations, birthdays and graduations, missed.

In time, some of the memories will fade and the hope which I mentioned will take over. We now need to harness that hope and turn it into a strong positive.

Our Society faced similar challenges to many organisations but we managed extraordinarily well to continue to support those who sought our help. That is down to all our members, volunteers and staff who worked so diligently during the past two years. We are extremely grateful to everyone. As I said last year, that thanks extends to those who saw that stepping away from their voluntary roles to protect themselves, their families and those whom they would normally visit, was the right thing to do for them. We look forward to welcoming many of those back to active visitation.

As members and volunteers know, 2021 was an extraordinary year for the Society in terms of calls for help. There were just over 191,000 calls recorded on our CRM system. A record number. While there would have been some people seeking help on more than one occasion, that number would probably be balanced by those whose calls went direct to some Conferences and didn't make it into the system.

One very pleasing aspect of the past two years was the way the public and corporate bodies continued to support us. Despite losing considerable money with church gate collections halted and our shops closed for long periods, we continued to receive support from a strong donation stream and a host of fund-raising efforts.

As a result, we were able to continue to provide help through telephone and online contact with food, vouchers or other needs. Stories of the creativity of our members and volunteers in finding ways to provide help were impressive. From co-operating with other organisations and frontline services, such as firefighters, the army and the police; establishing food banks or individuals cycling around to drop off vouchers.

Now it is back to what we do best and to what we are renowned for, Home Visitation. Many Conferences have returned to active Visitation and many others are assembling their resources to do so in the coming weeks.

We are about responding to need and the best way to do that is by sitting with people, spending time with them and listening. That has been the ethos of the Society from the days of our founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam.

Our mission is to provide support and friendship and this has been difficult to do over the telephone or through emailing or texting.

We are now at every level of the Society; Conferences, Areas, Regional Councils and National Management Council, able to get back to meeting face-to-face again and renewing the friendships with those who found Zoom or Teams meetings difficult or unsatisfactory ways of communicating.

To support Visitation Conferences and other areas of our work; shops, children and family support services and social housing, we have embarked on a national recruitment campaign. The response to date has been very encouraging and with regional campaigns continuing over the coming months we are very confident that we will have the resources to continue to support those who seek our help as strongly and with as much empathy and friendship as ever.

My hope is that we all return to our role in the Society rejuvenated and more determined than ever to serve and advocate for those in need as well as the marginalised in our society.

Welcome by Regional President, Mary Waide

Brightness coming out of darkness is part of the creative thinking behind our beautiful cover, which was designed by Dympna Gallagher, one of our members.

How meaningful for all of us at this time, when we are beginning to feel more optimistic and positive about the way forward moving out of the dreadful fallout of the pandemic which brought the world to a standstill and caused much grief and hardship to so many.



Members have been exceptional in their commitment to giving assistance to those in need and that was not always easy during the past couple of years.

Their dedication and perseverance was unwavering and through that, a huge difference was made to many lives.

Courage is needed more than ever as many have become fearful and anxious about meeting and socialising.

As Vincentians, our core work is in Visitation and we need to safely return to our home visits and to our Conference meetings.

This is who we are and how we work.

We need the support and friendship of our fellow Conference members.

"We should exchange our ideas, our inspirations maybe,

sometimes our fears and always our hopes."
(Frederic Ozanam)

The people we assist need the smiles and friendly faces of the two sympathetic visitors whom they have invited into their homes.

"Those who know the way to the home of their poorer brother, whose feet have swept the dust from his staircase, never knock at his door without feelings of respect." (Frederic Ozanam)

Nationally, a new Assessment of Need guidance has been launched and I strongly encourage Conferences to use this as a basis to ensure we are fully meeting the needs of those who request assistance.

Our Vincent's shops are open for business and the staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to ensure the safety of our customers. As the face of St Vincent de Paul, our shops are an integral and essential part of the Society and we owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

A national recruitment drive began on 31st January and we pray that it will bear fruit and that new members will be welcomed into Our Society in 2022.

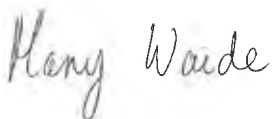
Our publicity team has been working tirelessly to raise our profile to promote our work. We have reaped the benefits, our awareness has grown and donations have increased.

Our staff in Regional Office has been working continually through lockdown and their workload has hugely increased, they all work far beyond the call of duty in their commitment to our ethos and values.

As members of St Vincent de Paul we face enormous challenges. Requests for assistance have tripled. 103,000 children in Northern Ireland are living in poverty. Families and individuals are faced with impossible choices and live with constant stress and uncertainty. It is a great privilege to serve as Regional President and I sincerely thank all the Members and Staff for their continued commitment and dedicated service to the most vulnerable in society.

I am reminded of a piece I read by Mary Anne Stokes, Vincentian Lay Missionaries, where she recalls an address by a homeless campaigner who said **'don't give broken cups to broken people'**.

I am confident that together we will all meet the challenge ahead with the Blessing of our Patron St Vincent de Paul and our beloved Founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam.



Mary Waide

The Deep End

A number of years ago, I began working for a well-known homeless charity. At the induction week we had the privilege of being addressed by a leading campaigner against homelessness in Dublin city. "Do not give broken cups to broken people" resonated from the address and has stayed with me ever since. As acts of charity, many people are often inclined to give or donate old items that they no longer have use for.

Within this there is a sincere act of generosity and perhaps a desire of not letting anything go to waste. However, there is a challenge here to consider the recipient's feelings on being handed worn out clothes, almost out of date food or damaged toys. How perhaps, is this impacting on their feeling of worth in society today? Are they not worthy of some new clothes to regain their sense of pride? Some fresh and tasty food to nourish their bodies? Some new, clean toys, the same as other children their age?

These are superficial examples that point towards a challenge to society to provide services of the highest standards to vulnerable people. History and even recent news stories from both home and abroad have presented infuriating examples time and again.

Good Intentions need to be coupled with thoughtfulness and a determination to give only the best to our neighbour most in need, to show them that they are respected and loved.

Mary Anne Stokes,
Vincentian Lay Missionaries

What I Believe

by Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP

I was born Mary McQuaid on 16th June 1950, in the Mater Maternity Belfast. My parents were John and Lucy McQuaid and my childhood was spent in Mullaghconnor, Dungannon. My father was a teacher and my mother was a full time Mum. My brother Jim arrived 11 months later. (Irish twins). School days were happily spent at The Convent of Mercy, Dungannon, and St Patrick's Girl's Academy. I enjoyed school but wasn't always a star pupil! Following that, my teaching training was done at St Mary's College of Education, Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne. I taught over 30 years in Bradford, Larne and Ballymena and feel privileged to have touched the lives of so many children.

After marriage to Seamus, we settled in Ballymena and had 6 children. Life was, and is still, busy. Maire was born with Edward's Syndrome and lived for 9 weeks. Her short life was and is very important to our family. She was a great gift and filled our home with love. I have 8 grandchildren and they bring me endless joy.

How and when did you get to faith? Did parents/family play a part?

My faith journey started when I was baptised in St Patrick's Church, Belfast. It was nurtured by my good parents and by my teachers. It is being continually nourished by both my fellow St Vincent de Paul members and by the people we visit.

Does this faith play a part or only for Sundays?

I live my faith in my daily life. It is a part of who I am and

how I treat others and approach things. I don't close the door on it when I leave the Church. I have loved my faith since I was a child at school.

Have you ever had a crisis of faith or gnawing doubt about your faith?

I am very happy and content in my relationship with God and have never had cause to doubt Him.

Have you ever been angry with God?

I have never been angry with God. I reach out and trust Him when things get tough. It is at times of trouble that God is closest.

Do you ever get criticised for your faith and are you able to live with that criticism?

I am sure I get criticised but I am unaware. If I am criticised, I would ask for reasons and try to do things a little better.

Are you ashamed of your own Church or denomination?

I have been shocked and ashamed at the abuse scandals in the Church but I'm thankful that safeguarding practices are now rigorous and well established.

Are you afraid to die or can you look beyond death?

I am not afraid to die but would like to remain on earth for another while. Death is part of our journey and hopefully the door opens into a better place. The unknown always causes a bit of apprehension and my Mum used to say "Well nobody came back to tell us!"

Are you afraid of "hell-fire"?

I don't dwell on Hell Fire but it deserves consideration!

Do you believe in a Resurrection?

I do believe in a Resurrection and I would hope we will all be reunited with those we love. I have a picture of people in white robes welcoming me with open arms.

What do you think of people of other faiths or denominations?

I have many close friends of other denominations and I think they are wonderful. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

Would you be comfortable stepping out of your own faith and trying to learn something from other people?

I would be comfortable in stepping out of my own faith to try and learn about others but I would want to step back in and respect that others would feel the same devotion to their faith. I think we should be tolerant and open about the faith of others.

Do you think that the churches here are fulfilling their mission?

We, the people, are the Churches and we can but try to evangelise and spread the Good News. Together it is easy to shift responsibility and say it is someone else's concern. In his Mission, Jesus cared for the poor, the sick and the lonely. We fail if we ignore His example. In St Vincent de Paul we try to see Jesus in everyone we meet.

Why are so many people turning their backs on organised religion?

I think society is averse to rules and regulations and this has a knock on affect. Perhaps some feel marginalised from Churches and we need to keep reaching out.

Has religion helped or hindered the people of Northern Ireland?

Religion can be blamed for our Troubles and sectarianism but how much worse would things have been if we hadn't strong leadership from people like Fr Alec Reid and Rev Harold Good?

Some personal preferences - favourite film, book, music and why?

I tend to read newspapers, as I don't get a lot of time to finish a book. Sometimes I have to go back to the beginning to remind me of the storyline. I like most music but I really love the music of the Seventies. I haven't been to the cinema for a long time but I loved the early version of Little Women with Katherine Hepburn.

The place where you feel closest to God?

The closest I have ever felt to God was in the presence of a young man with a severe addiction. He turned to a ragged picture of Jesus and said: "He is my best friend". I will never forget it.

The inscription on your gravestone, if any?

I have already an inscription on my gravestone. Our daughter Maire is buried in the Crebilly Cemetery, in Ballymena. "My Lord and My God" is inscribed on her gravestone. One day I will join her.

Finally, any major regrets?

No, I don't have any major regrets because you learn from your mistakes and move on.

What I Believe with Mary Waide was first published by Belfast Telegraph.

St Vincent de Paul Regional Board

Mary Waide, Regional President

Regional President Mary Waide has been a member of SVP Blessed Virgin Conference in Ballymena for 20 years. She has had the privilege and experience of working in a very large vibrant and active Conference with dedicated and committed members. On joining, she felt the warmth of the spirit of the Vincentian Family, which is so important in our work. Mary believes everyone goes into a meeting as equals. There is no hierarchy in SVP as everyone simply has different responsibilities.

Patrick Friel, Regional Treasurer

Currently Regional Treasurer, Patrick joined SVP after attending an inaugural meeting in the new Christ the King Chapel in Strathroy, Omagh, which was opened in 1979 to serve a large new housing estate nearby. An old dormant Conference was resurrected in the parish of Knockmoyle and Patrick is still a member of that Conference. He has been President and Treasurer and is currently Area President in Omagh Area where there are 8 Conferences and two successful shops. Patrick also acted as Regional President during 2020.

Henry O'Loan, Regional Vice President

Henry joined St Mary's Glenravel on 1 January 2007 and became President of St Mary's Glenravel in January 2014.

He was subsequently elected as Area President for Mid Antrim in December 2017. He is also interested in adult faith development having joined the Adult Faith Development Pathways programme in Drumalis Retreat Centre in 2006 which he found engaged him in living his faith as a true Christian. It has enabled Henry to be a better visible sign of Christ and to be able to bear witness to his boundless love.

Anne Irwin, Regional Vice President

A friend invited Anne to become a volunteer of her local Conference 18 years ago. She realised there was a level of poverty that she hadn't been aware of, prior to becoming a volunteer, and felt good giving something back to society by spending a couple of hours a week visiting those in need while providing food, electricity, coal etc. Before becoming Area President in 2019, Anne was Treasurer and originally had responsibility for 10 Visitation Conferences. Anne keeps in regular contact with Conference Presidents via phone, face-to-face and Zoom meetings.

Anne McLarnon, Regional Secretary

Just before she retired in 2015, Anne joined SVP. She wanted to help as she was aware of hardships many face from her previous work and chose SVP because of its Christian ethos. Early in 2017, Anne was invited to be Secretary of the Area Council, which was a great learning experience. North Down Ards is a very active area with 6 Visitation Conferences making it easier to keep in touch. The Conferences are always busy and the shops in Kircubbin are busy, generating a great sense of community in the town and an area hub for people dropping in to browse and chat.



St Vincent de Paul Regional Board

Fr Perry, Spiritual Advisor

Fr Perry is the Spiritual Advisor for the Region. He has a Doctorate in Moral and Pastoral Theology from the Alphonsianum in Rome and a Masters in Liturgical Studies from Notre Dame, USA. Fr Perry formerly lectured in All Hallows College, Dublin, and in St Mary's College, Twickenham. He has extensive experience as a Spiritual Director and University Chaplain as well as having served as a Parish Priest in London. Fr Perry is a member of the Adult Faith Development team at Drumalis, developing and delivering programmes in collaboration with St Mary's University College, Belfast.

Brendan McKernan

Currently Area President for Armagh and Craigavon Area, Brendan has been a member of the St Patrick's Keady Conference for 14 years. Brendan has worked in retail for a significant part of his life, starting work in his local supermarket aged 14. He has also worked in Special Education and Fundraising. Brendan currently works in a Parish administration and fundraising role. He is looking forward to meeting members across the Region in the coming years.

Peter McVeigh, Twinning and Prisons

A member of SVP for over 40 years, Peter has responsibility for the Regional Prison Conferences. He represents the Region at the National Twinning Committee and has participated at Regional Board and Council for more than 10 years.

St Vincent de Paul Regional Staff



**Pauline Brown,
Regional Manager**
T: 028 9075 0150
E: pauline.brown@svpni.co.uk

Pauline manages the Regional staff team and supports the Regional President, Board and Council. She is responsible, along with the Regional Board, for the strategic management of the Region including, people, finances, property and projects. Pauline also supports and provides member guidance and development. She is responsible for media, networking, lobbying and the development of external relationships.



**Colm Crummey,
Regional Accountant &
Treasurer Support**
T: 028 9075 0155
E: colm.crummey@svpni.co.uk

Colm supports the Regional Manager, Regional Treasurer and Head of Finance & Shared Services. He is responsible for Regional Office accounting and payroll. Colm prepares budgets, financial analysis and forecasts and he reports to the Regional Board and Council on all regional balances. Colm assists in capital projects, property administration and ensures legal compliance in line with charity regulations.



**Ciaran Liggett,
Special Works & Treasurer
Support Officer**
T: 028 9075 0156
E: agresso.support@svpni.co.uk

Ciaran is responsible for Treasurer Training and provides Agresso Support to all Treasurers across the Region. He also processes all annual financial returns and quarterly bank balances and account information providing a report to the Regional Treasurer. Ciaran administers the Regional Oil Stamps Scheme and manages the Gift Aid, credit card donations, Blue Envelopes and all fundraising campaigns.



**Joann Barr,
Membership Support Officer,
Derry Office**
T: 028 7137 7311
E: joann.barr@svpni.co.uk



**Shauna Murray,
Membership Support Officer,
Belfast Office**
T: 028 9035 1561
E: shauna.murray@svpni.co.uk

The Membership Support Officers work with Area Presidents within the Region and provide support on a range of membership matters. These include, processing new member applications, AccessNI checks and organising training. They also support Area Presidents in their role on quality assurance, member compliance, record keeping and data cleansing on CRM. They assist with the recruitment and retention of volunteers.



**Thomas Reilly,
Information Support Officer,
Regional Office**

**T: 028 9035 1561
E: thomas.reilly@svpni.co.uk**

**Christine Gaston,
Information Support Officer,
Regional Office**

**T: 028 9035 1561
E: info@svpni.co.uk**

The Information Support Officers manage the referrals on a daily basis and provide administrative and technical support to members. They are responsible for the CRM database within the Region. Both Christine and Thomas provide support to the Region as a whole and manage the stocks and supplies for Regional Office.



**Niamh Mulholland,
Youth Development
Officer**

**T: 028 9075 0159
E: niamh.mulholland@svpni.co.uk**

Niamh is currently on maternity leave.



**Sarah Goodwin, Youth
Development Officer**

**T: 028 9075 0159
E: sarah.goodwin@svpni.co.uk
(Maternity Cover)**

Sarah promotes and supports the SVP Youth Development Programme through Young SVP Conferences in schools. She raises awareness of the work of SVP and fosters support through the building links with schools and Conferences. Sarah provides young people with the experience of helping others, volunteering, of making a difference to someone and offering them personal and social development.



**Anne Crossan,
Regional Retail Manager**

**T: 028 9075 0153
E: anne.crossan@svpni.co.uk**

Anne is responsible for business development for retail. She delivers on the National Retail Strategy and oversees operations of all Vincent's shops within the Region. Anne manages the teams of shop staff and volunteers. She is also responsible for stock rotation, recycling, customer service and satisfaction.



The Role of An Area President

What is the Purpose of an Area President?

An Area President provides support and guidance to the Regional President and Conferences in quality Visitation and all other activities, in accordance with the ethos and vision of the Society. An Area President is part of the Regional Council which is the decision making body of the Region.

An Area President should be:

- A member of a Conference for a minimum of two years
- Willing to step down from officer role of own Conference
- Willing to visit Conferences regularly

An Area President should:

- Embrace and promote the ethos of the Society
- Have good leadership skills
- Have good communication skills

What are the key tasks and responsibilities of an Area President?

- To be active by attending monthly Regional Council meetings
- To regularly visit Conferences in the Area for which you are responsible
- To record and hold Area Council meetings - minimum six times per year
- Appoint officers to an Area Board in accordance with the Rule to assist the Area President
- To develop good working relationships with the Region's Member Support Officer (MSO)
- To set up new Conferences where a need is identified within the Area
- To ensure Conferences comply with 'The Rule'
- To ensure compliance with legal requirements and SVP policies and procedures, including SVP Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- To ensure visits happen in pairs (preferably mixed pairs)
- To ensure there is two-way communication between Regional Council and Conferences
- To identify a successor for Area President in an appropriate timeframe
- To ensure finance is managed at Area and local level including fund sharing.



Spotlight On Area Presidents

Gerardine Kielt, Mid Ulster



When did you join SVP?

2004

How did you become Area President?

During the course of 2021, Teresa Darragh, the outgoing Mid Ulster Area President, invited nominations for the role of Area President. I was proposed and seconded at an Area meeting held in Magherafelt on 13 October 2021.

Tell us a little about your Area and your role

I am just starting out in my role as Area President and I see my role primarily as a co-ordinator. Mid Ulster Area

is a large geographical area made up of Magherafelt, Bellaghy, Kilrea, Granaghan, Maghera, Cookstown, Draperstown, Greenlough and Lavey Conferences. Having been President of St Patrick's Conference Magherafelt for a number of years I have gotten to know the SVP office bearers throughout our area and we have worked well together. As the pandemic subsides, I hope to be able to call Area meetings, inviting delegates from each of the above Conferences to attend and if this is not possible then we will meet via Zoom. Through these group meetings and meetings with individuals, where appropriate, I will inform, support and advise on matters relevant to SVP in our area. If any problems arise, I will do my best to help resolve them.

What do you think the future holds for SVP?

I feel there are a great number of challenges for SVP into the future. The principal source of regular income in our area has traditionally been church gate collections. These have been curtailed because of the pandemic. Even when the pandemic comes to an end it is unlikely that church collections will return to pre-Covid levels, as more and more people avail of online church services. However the deficit from church collections has been offset by an increasing number of donations by Blue Envelopes etc. Although the ever-increasing cost of living will also put pressure on family budgets so it's likely that they will have less to spend on voluntary donations. All the indications are that poverty is on the increase, so there will be greater need in the community for SVP. Therefore we will have to develop other ways of generating income for our work. In my previous role as President of Magherafelt SVP I worked very closely with Mid Ulster Council to access funding from various Council programmes. I see this approach becoming more important as time goes on.



A Month in the Life of Anne McLarnon, SVP Regional Secretary

The office / role of an Area President is very diverse, challenging, and interesting and as North Down and Ards Area President I adhere to the role as described; “to provide support and guidance to Conference Presidents and Conferences in quality Visitation and all other activities in accordance with the ethos and vision of the Society”. There then follows a list of twenty key tasks!

However, Area Presidents may be called upon to engage on many other activities and events throughout the span of their office and I continually learn a lot about the Society, meeting many people who are dedicated and hard working in the service of those in need.

A typical month for me can include Chairing Area Council meetings with local Conference Presidents, supporting Conference Presidents when needed, keeping members updated on developments within the

Society and organising events with the help of the Area Council. I also attend and, as Regional Secretary, take the minutes for Regional Board and Regional Retail meetings. I had the privilege of arranging the 125th Anniversary Mass for St Comgall's Conference Bangor whilst also juggling Christmas deliveries as a member of the Visitation Conference and receiving a generous donation from St Columbanus College for our Annual Appeal. I also represented the Society and spoke at a fundraising coffee morning at the invitation of

students of Belfast Metropolitan College. I wrapped up warmly to give support and encouragement to the swimmers participating in our 'Into the Sea for SVP' fundraiser from the beach! It looked like great fun and I would like to congratulate so many who braved the cold and took part to raise money.

I meet with the shop manager and volunteers to offer support and keep up to date with the progress of the business at least once a month and I help sort clothes with the volunteers. During Second Hand September I had the opportunity to welcome the Mayor of Ards and North Down on his visit to our Vincent's shop in Kircubbin.

After almost two years of attending meetings online it was a real honour to meet members at SVP roadshows in Armagh, Ballymena, Ballynahinch, Belfast and Omagh and, as we gradually transition to face-to-face meetings and visitations again, I'm looking forward to leaving the screen behind and reconnecting with the most vulnerable in our community.



Belfast Met fundraising coffee morning



Into the Sea open water swim fundraiser



**Brendan McKernan,
Armagh and Craigavon**

What I Believe

I am the Armagh and Craigavon Area President. Raised in Keady, I happily still live in the town I love where the people are kind and caring.

I am one of 7 children and my mum Veronica works in retail and in true motherly fashion she is always there for all the family with her advice and constant love. My dad Brendan passed away in 2011 at age 57, he was a wonderful dad and brought so much happiness.

I was lucky to have grandparents living practically next door growing up and my grandfather was a keen gardener, musician and storyteller. I have very fond memories of times spent with him. Both grandmothers were bakers and I enjoy trying to replicate their recipes from time to time - unfortunately with limited success!

Recently I became the proud uncle of a niece and nephew, the blessing allows me to relive my childhood to some degree which is wonderful.

I was educated at St Mary's Primary School and St Patrick's High School in Keady. Not the most academic but I made my way through to an acceptable level thanks to the teachers I was blessed with having, one of which I am glad to count as a friend. I count as a blessing the friendships I made with my classmates in secondary school, a

wonderful group of people who I always enjoy catching up with on occasion, even after almost 25 years.

I have had a varied career, working in retail then as a classroom assistant, a short stint in fundraising and now in admin, each job has brought different challenges and rewards and all have given me the privilege to meet new people.

How and when did you get to faith? Did parents/ family play a part?

I was baptised into the Catholic faith as a baby. My faith was taught to me by the example of my parents and grandparents as well as the teachers in school. I was lucky to have met many wonderful priests and was influenced by the Sisters of St Clare who have been in our town for over 160 years.

Does this faith play a real part in your life, or is it only for Sundays?

I try to live my faith each day, through the way I live and in the way I treat people, I fail miserably at times but I know the only thing I can do is try to do better and believe that God will forgive my mistakes.

Have you ever had a crisis of faith or a gnawing doubt about your faith?

No. While I may have drifted away from God at times He always calls me back and I am grateful for his love.

Have you ever been angry with God, and if so, why?

I had a brief time, perhaps an hour after my grandmother died, when I felt let down by God. My grandmother was ill with cancer, she was given months to live and I remember I had a school trip to Knock shrine in Mayo. My grandmother insisted I go and enjoy the day pilgrimage, I agreed and told her I would ask God to heal her. Her reply was instant - never pray that God will heal someone just that He will do the best he can for them. I did as my grandmother asked, came home and told my grandmother about Knock and she died peacefully a few days later. I was devastated and for a short time felt that God had let me down, until I heard the words of my granny in my mind reminding me that I asked God to do the best for my granny on that occasion but what was best was not what I wanted. To this day I always am reminded that what God wants may not be what I want but it is in God's plan and the best for the person.

Do you ever get criticised for your faith, and are you able to live with that criticism?

I have a large mixture of people that I meet, some from other faiths, Christian and non Christian, people who believe and people who don't. We have varied discussion and on occasion people may criticise my beliefs. Something which always comes to mind is the paragraph in St Matthew's gospel which reminds us to take the plank out of our own eye before removing the splinter in another's.

Are you ever ashamed of your own church or denomination?

I am very proud to be Catholic and I always think of the priests and religious sisters and brothers who care for the millions of people throughout the world, especially those who have and continue to risk their lives helping the poorest and deprived people in the world which I think so many people have forgotten about.

Are you afraid to die, or can you look beyond death?

When my time comes I will of course be saddened to leave the family whom I love however I know I will be going on my journey back to my dad and grandparents.

Are you afraid of 'hell-fire'?

No, I think of Psalm 23, the Lord is My Shepherd. It's the Psalm I read just after my dad passed away, it is a beautiful Psalm and reminds me "if I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear". I know at the time of my death the Lord will be with me. He has never let me down in life and I know He will not in death.

Do you believe in a resurrection, and if so, what will it be like?

Totally, I believe we will all be with our loved ones with no worries, no sickness, no illness - just happiness like the family trips we took to the beautiful beaches in my childhood. I sometimes wonder when I look at the ocean or the forests is God giving us a taste of heaven.

What do you think about people of other denominations and other faiths?

I believe everyone is entitled to live their faith freely. I have many friends of different faiths.

Would you be comfortable in stepping out from your own faith and trying to learn something from other people?

I have gone to ceremonies in other churches and am happy to do so, I learn a little about their faith and many of my friends have learnt a little about mine.

Do you think that the churches here are fulfilling their mission?

I think we can get confused at times and forget that we as individuals are the Church, therefore the people together are the Churches. I think we try to do what is right and I think we have many great leaders but the world changes rapidly and it is difficult to always make the changes at the right time. Sometimes we get things right an example being, under the guidance from Pope Francis, that many of us are looking for ways we can help the environment and realising that we must care for it better.

Why are so many people turning their backs on organised religion?

I don't believe they are; I think people are turning away from a lot of things because they don't feel they can make the time. At a time we all knew our neighbours, many of us now don't because we are too busy to say 'hello'. I think people are too busy for lots of things but I still believe their faith and loyalty are there just waiting to be restored.

Has religion helped or hindered the people of Northern Ireland?

Helped, all Church leaders have consistently prompted peace through their preaching to the faithful asking people to live out the Gospel message of love and kindness. I recently watched a documentary on the impact of the visit of Saint Pope John Paul II to Ireland, his words on that day asked: "On my knees I beg you to turn away from the paths

of violence and return to the ways of peace", there were many clergy from all dominations asking for the same but sadly were ignored. I think those who have hindered are those who decided to use violence as a means to get what they wanted. I think for many they ignored their religion, they obviously missed out on "Thou shall not kill". It's sad to think that so many families did not grow up with parents because someone decided their opinion was wrong.

Some personal preferences - favourite film, book, music and why?

I'm not really a reader of books, nor big into films. I do however like the old comedies like Laurel and Hardy or Abbot and Costello.

The place where you feel closest to God?

In my voluntary work with St Vincent de Paul I am privileged to meet many people in need, and many other SVP members, I always feel that when I am involved in this work I am building up my friendship with God. Whether I am bringing support to a family in crisis or chatting to another person, I feel like I am talking to God as we are all made in His image.

The inscription on your gravestone, if any?

My friends know I like to talk so they will understand why I could never have an inscription on my grave, it would simply be too long.

Finally, any major regrets?

None, I don't believe there is any benefit looking to the past, it only holds us back from enjoying the present in my opinion.

What I Believe with Brendan McKernan was first published by Belfast Telegraph.

Councils Celebrate St Vincent de Paul

Council buildings across the Region were illuminated to honour St Vincent de Paul Day on 27 September. These included:

Antrim and Newtownabbey:

Antrim Civic Centre, Mossley Mill and Ballyclare Town Hall clockface

Ards and North Down:

Ards Town Hall, Newtownards and McKee Clock, Bangor

Causeway Coast and Glens:

Cloonavin

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon:

Armagh Gaol, The Palace Demesne, Armagh; Banbridge Old Town Hall and Craigavon Civic Centre

Derry City and Strabane:

Council Offices, Strand Road, Derry

Fermanagh and Omagh:

Enniskillen Castle, Enniskillen and Strule Arts Centre, Omagh

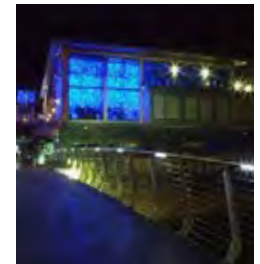
Newry, Mourne and Down:

Down Leisure Centre, Downpatrick and Newry Town Hall, Newry

A special reception was also held by the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim Council to celebrate St Vincent de Paul Day and recognise the work of SVP in the local community.



Regional Focus



St Comgall's Celebrates 125 Years

St Comgall's Conference Bangor celebrated 125 years of service to the local community. The Conference has been assisting with friendship, financial and material help to people in need throughout the area since 1896!

The first Conference in North Down was founded in 1893 in Newtownards and subsequently the Society established five more Conferences, including St Comgall's, in the North Down Ards area to meet the needs of the local communities.

The current Conference has active members serving Bangor west with Holy Redeemer serving Bangor east through Groomsport and Donaghadee. All members are volunteers. To acknowledge the anniversary, Canon Gunn, Parish Priest, celebrated a special Mass for current and past members of SVP. Canon Gunn spoke of the work done throughout the years by the Society for those in need, remarking how

needs have changed in that period and the importance of continuing the work started by the founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, in 1833. Minute books were on view from 1895 which have now been placed in the archive at SVP Regional Office.

Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said: "I would like to congratulate the members of St Comgall's in Bangor on their 125th anniversary. I appreciate that SVP has been presented with unimaginable challenges since the pandemic began and I am well aware that the members of St Comgall's have risen to the challenge and continued to provide essential assistance in our local Bangor community to those in need. It fills me with pride that they have had their long service, dedication and commitment to SVP recognised by Canon Gunn at this special Mass."

At the Mass, members were also recognised for their long service including Cecilia Curran, Vincent Jamieson and Finola Coyne.



Members of St Comgall's SVP Conference with Canon Gunn

Where It All Began for St Comgall's

Patricia Norrington, member of Most Holy Redeemer SVP Conference, Ballyholme, and Area Treasurer, reflects on the history of St Comgall's Conference from its humble beginnings.

The first regular meeting of St Comgall's SVP Conference met after Mass on Sunday 30 June 1895 in St Comgall's National School under the chairmanship of the President, Edward McGonagle.

Six active members attended, along with Mr Donnelly, who was Vice President of St Patrick's Conference, Belfast, and was there as a member of the Central Council, Belfast. Mr Donnelly attended the first three meetings until the Conference was well established. Edward McGonagle, who lived in Dufferin Avenue, Bangor, worked as Assistant Superintendent at the Post Office. James Mahon, a Solicitor, who lived in Sandy Row (Queens Parade), was Vice President, James Loughrey, Fruiterer and Poulterer, of Bridge Street, was Secretary, and Mr Hurl was Treasurer. The other members were John Quinn, P McCann and Patrick Murphy. Patrick Murphy lived in Main Street and ran Refreshment Rooms. He was originally from Co Louth. At the first meeting, Charles Leckey, a Plasterer by trade, who lived with his family on Brunswick Road, was admitted as a member. The church door collections raised 8s 4d to which the members added a further 3s 6d. The following week a permanent collection box was placed in the church.

Bangor was a much smaller place then and had only a population of 5,903 at the 1901 census. There weren't many telephones around so the members brought



Patricia Norrington has been researching the history of St Comgall's from records kept since the Conference began 125 years ago

information to the meetings about anyone they heard about who was in need of help. Later, some families seeking assistance directly approached the Conference. There were no benefits around then and the old age pension, given at age 70, had yet to be introduced.

The final resort for poor families at that time was to enter the workhouse where families were split up, men on one

side and women the other. Only very young children could stay with their mothers. The workhouse for Bangor was in Newtownards which later became Ards Hospital. So poor families, or families where the breadwinner was out of work due to ill health, were helped with a regular donation of 4s or 5s a week. There was a special fund for clothes and boots. Boots were provided so that men could go to work and children to school. In the winter, coal and blankets were distributed. At Easter, several dozen eggs were delivered to the needy poor of Bangor.

In the early years, the Conference paid for two funerals, one of a child from a poor family and the other of a young woman who had been working in service. The religion of the people helped was recorded and aid was given irrespective of what denomination they belonged to.

Bangor was part of Newtownards Parish up to 1903 and during the 1890s Bangor Conference also covered Donaghadee and Ballyboley. On 9 August 1896, it was recorded that a circular from Central Council of SVP Belfast had been received, notifying the Conference that their half yearly contribution of 6s 9d was due.

Three more members joined during the first year. They were Thomas O'Driscoll on 4 August 1895 and James McKeown and James Gildea on 22 March 1896. James McKeown had opened his Fishmongers and Poulterers shop on Ballymagee Street (High Street) in 1891 and James Gildea lived on Victoria Road.

On 10 May 1896, the President of Central Council, Belfast, along with three other members, paid an official visit to the Conference to express their satisfaction of the work accomplished. The sanction for the foundation of St Comgall's Conference, Bangor, was read. At the meeting

on 12 July 1896, the President read out the letters of aggregation received from Paris.

On 13 June 1897, a letter from the Parish Priest, Fr Peter McKenna, was read out. He was requesting the assistance of members of the Conference in the collection at the church door and in showing the congregation to their seats.

In 1898 two members of the Conference died. John Quinn, who was employed by the Town Commissioners as Bangor's Water Inspector, died suddenly of a heart attack on the evening of 22 July. He had been extinguishing the bandstand lights after the band parade. The bandstand at that time was situated where the McKee clock now stands. Dr Gorman, who lived opposite, rushed over but was unable to save him. Then on 30 December 1898 the President, Edward McGonagle, died of a Thoracic Aortic Aneurism which he had suffered from for the past year and a half. The Vice President, James Mahon, had also left the Conference as he no longer lived in Bangor. A deputation from the Conference asked Fr McKenna if he would step in as a temporary President, to which he readily agreed. Four months later, at the meeting on 14 May 1899, Michael Sheils was appointed as the new President. During 1900, the practice of referring to fellow members as brother was gradually introduced. Michael Sheils remained the President for over 19 years until his death from flu on 23 December 1918. His death occurred during the second wave of the so-called Spanish Influenza which killed more than 23,000 people in Ireland. Michael Sheils was a Farmer and JP who lived at Springhill Farm.

At the meeting on 19 January 1919, Patrick Joseph Grant was unanimously elected as the new President. Patrick Joseph Grant lived in Dufferin Avenue and later moved to Osborne Park.

Council Recognition for COVID-19 Response

Three members of SVP have been recognised by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council for their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Patricia McKeown, PJ McClean and Tom Mulholland were presented with awards in recognition of their outstanding commitment to SVP in Kilmore, Newcastle and the surrounding areas.

PJ McClean said: "It was such a lovely surprise to be invited by the Council to accept this award. It was a humbling experience and as there are so many people in our Conferences who deserve this accolade, I was honoured

to accept it on their behalf. Since the pandemic began we have all risen to the challenge and continued to provide assistance in our community to those in need. Even though we have not been able to offer Home Visitation we still continued to provide practical help to anyone requesting it, irrespective of the circumstances."

Congratulating Patricia, PJ and Tom on their awards, Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said: "I am only too aware of the outstanding work that our Conference members have been carrying out since the pandemic began and how they have adapted to the ways in which they have been providing vital help and support. It fills me with pride that they have had their dedication and commitment recognised by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council with the presentation of these beautiful awards."



Emergency Services Referral Initiative Extended

A new community referral initiative, which launched in Banbridge and Dromore, has extended to include the Armagh, Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown areas, with SVP and PSNI working in partnership to assist vulnerable people locally. Aimed at providing practical assistance to those in need, the collaboration enables police officers to refer and signpost people to contact local SVP volunteers and avail of the help they require. The initiative is supported by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council.

Welcoming the initiative, Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said: “Across the Region SVP has worked closely with PSNI on an informal basis for as long as I can remember but I welcome the formation of this formal partnership for providing a vital service to local people in Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Dromore, Lurgan and Portadown. I would commend the local police officers and SVP Conferences who have developed this initiative and it is my hope that we can extend the initiative right across the province.”

Speaking at the launch of the initiative in Banbridge and Dromore, Pat Foy, District Commander, PSNI, said: “I first became aware of the assistance provided by St



Launch of Emergency Referral Initiative in Banbridge and Dromore

Vincent de Paul early in my career, when I saw firsthand the practical support they offer. We are committed to the Chief Constable's priority for neighbourhood policing and I am proud that we can officially launch this initiative in the Dromore area as this partnership between SVP and PSNI is an example of neighbourhood policing at its best. I look forward to seeing this initiative developed throughout the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon area and beyond."

Speaking at the launch of the initiative for Armagh, Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown, Barney O'Connor, District Commander T/Superintendent, PSNI, said: "Practical collaborations like this new initiative are invaluable for those seeking help. The relationship

developed through messages exchanged on the Nextdoor App between our PSNI Neighbourhood Team officers and local SVP representatives on the ground. It can take time to secure help with statutory agencies so being able to work with voluntary charitable organisations like St Vincent de Paul on a 24/7 basis is vital for providing help to people when they need it most."

Patricia Gibson of Policing and Community Safety Partnership, said: "I would take this opportunity to commend the great work being done by SVP and PSNI, especially during the pandemic. This new initiative between SVP and PSNI to provide support to help people to get on their feet will certainly make the community better."



Launch of Emergency Referral Initiative in Armagh, Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown

Loreto College Donation

St John's Conference members Anne Irwin and Sean McGillan spoke to Year 12 RE students at Loreto College, Coleraine, and received a generous donation of £1,300 for the Society.



SVP in the Media

SVP board member Patrick Friel took the message of how SVP can help the most vulnerable in our communities on to the screen when he spoke to North West BBC NI Reporter Keiron Tourish for BBC Newsline.



Other media opportunities during 2021 included members being interviewed on their local community radio stations to raise awareness of the support that SVP offers in their local areas. Spreading the message at a grassroots level can be vital in reaching those most in need.



Brendan McKernan being interviewed by Robin Murray for Bounce FM

SVP in the Media

SVP Portadown Conference member Eunan McCreech's ordination featured in Armagh



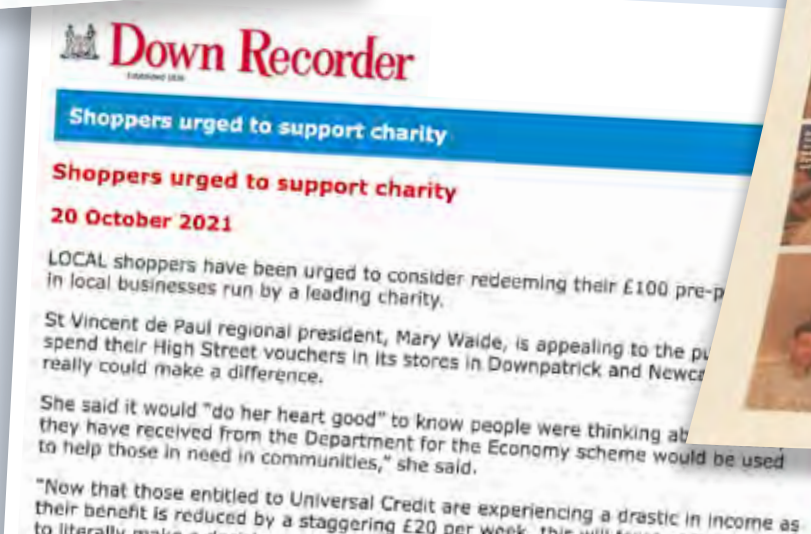
Mary Waide was interviewed by BBC Radio Ulster's Sunday Sequence on International Day for the Eradication of Poverty



Irish News featured the launch of the Annual Appeal

Members' Roadshow featured in The Irish Catholic

Mary Waide urged shoppers to use their Spend Local card wisely, as featured in Down Recorder



SVP Portadown Secretary Ordained

Portadown SVP Secretary Eunan McCreesh is one of five newly ordained Deacons and has been congratulated by SVP Area President for Armagh and Craigavon, Brendan McKernan.

Brendan said: "Eunan has been a very active member of St Vincent de Paul since joining the Society two years ago at one of the most challenging times in our history. We are grateful that he has been able to devote so much time and energy to SVP when he was also on a spiritual journey to become a Deacon. We would like to congratulate Eunan and wish him God's blessing as he embarks on this role of service in the Church."

Eunan, who is Head of Music at St Catherine's College in Armagh, began his diaconate journey five years ago with a year of discernment exploring whether becoming a Deacon was something he should pursue.

Joining SVP opened Eunan's eyes to the most vulnerable in our society. He said: "One thing becoming a member of SVP has taught me is the depth of poverty that exists

even in our own local communities. It is overwhelming how grateful people who receive support from SVP are. As well as providing a listening ear and a kind response, I have been fortunate enough to offer help to fellow humans in need which I believe is Christ's wish for us. Although we don't live in an overly charitable world, being a member of SVP has made me acutely aware of the needs of others."

During a trip to Dublin to visit a composer friend Eunan stopped on O'Connell Street and took a homeless person to a nearby hotel, paying for his stay, afterwards realising that this simple act was something that had brought him great joy, he said: "I hadn't planned taking a homeless person off the street. Something moved within me to instigate change. While looking for somewhere to stay, we were both abused verbally. I realised and learned what it is like to be marginalised and rejected. Afterwards, when I found a place for the homeless man, I felt an overwhelming emotional sense of joy. It is so true that if we give we will receive abundantly."

Speaking about his journey into becoming a permanent Deacon, Eunan added: "I can't say it's all been plain sailing. It has had its ups and downs and I have been filled with doubt at times but I am very much looking forward to serving the Church, initially in Drumcree Parish, offering a way of encouraging others to be more involved in the Church and bridging the gap between clericalism and layism. I am keen to work especially with young people to engage them as the Church evolves."

Eunan is also a member of the Synod Core Group in the Archdiocese of Armagh, a global initiative which gives people the opportunity to voice their opinions and share ideas of what they would like from the Church.

Eunan McCreesh is congratulated on his ordination by members of SVP Portadown Conference



St Vincent de Paul Celebrated During Feast Mass

In the year of St Joseph, this year's Feast Day Mass, celebrating St Vincent de Paul, was celebrated with St Joseph's Centre for the Deaf at St Vincent de Paul Parish Church on Belfast's Ligoniel Road.

Attended by 30 parishioners, the Mass was streamed live and was presided by The Most Reverend Noel Treanor, Bishop of Down and Connor, and celebrated by Very Reverend Patrick Devlin, Chaplain to the Deaf in Down and Connor Diocese, with preaching from SVP Spiritual Director Fr Perry Gildea.



Fr Perry addressed those in attendance and those watching online at home and Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, read from Numbers 11 and Psalm 18.

In Fr Perry's sermon, he spoke of how God surprises us and how St Vincent de Paul was great at having a gift of being open to suggestions, ideas and guidance. He was also open to awareness, inspiration and encouragement and Fr Perry said that these are gifts the members of SVP should be open to.

Fr Perry said: "St Vincent de Paul is our guide, instructor, inspiration and the one who enlightens us. Every day brings a new problem, a new challenge or a new difficulty for the Society or for individual members of SVP and we should look to St Vincent himself for guidance. We have much to be grateful for on this Feast of St Vincent and much to be grateful for in the gospels and the scriptures which help us to penetrate the cloud that is often between us and what God really wants us to do."

Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said: "It was a privilege to welcome Bishop Treanor to preside again this year at our Feast Day Mass. I appreciate that the deaf in our community can feel isolated so it was a particular personal honour for me to witness the joining together of St Joseph's Centre for the Deaf and SVP on this special day for Vincentians around the world."

The Mass ended with a video highlighting the work of St Joseph's Centre for the Deaf over the past 40 years. It can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPgbvHZSmVk>

Regional President for SVP North Region, Mary Waide, is pictured with Very Reverend Patrick Devlin, Chaplain to the Deaf in Down and Connor Diocese; The Most Reverend Noel Treanor, Bishop of Down and Connor; and St Vincent de Paul Spiritual Director, Fr Perry Gildea





Archbishop Celebrates St Vincent de Paul Mass

Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of all Ireland, celebrated a special St Vincent de Paul Mass on St Vincent de Paul Day for members of SVP in the Armagh and Craigavon Area, at St Therese's Church in Banbridge.

He described the response of SVP members in the area to COVID-19 as 'amazing' saying that he had witnessed how they were filled with the spirit and willingness to help others. He said: "I want to thank you, the members of St Vincent de Paul, for providing a lifeline during the pandemic. The work you do is truly the work of God."

Following the Mass, he congratulated new SVP Conference Presidents who have been elected to represent their area and presented certificates to local members who had completed training in Mental Health First Aid.

Brendan McKernan, SVP Armagh and Craigavon Area President, addressed the assembled congregation, and said: "I just want to use the opportunity to say thank you to you, the members of SVP, for the tireless work that you do to support those in need.

"Especially since the start of the pandemic, I can sum up what SVP has done in this area of Armagh in one sentence, "we did as we have always done". We continued to provide help to those in need, quietly, in the background. We supported people while maintaining their dignity and respect.

"As our founder Frederic Ozanam said: "Charity must never look to the past but always to the future, because the number of its past works is still very small and the present and future miseries that it must alleviate are infinite"."




Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of all Ireland, with Sr Elise Gorman, Area Spiritual Director; Rosemary Cunningham, Area President of Newry and Mourne; Peter Cairns, President of St Patrick's Banbridge; Brendan McKernan, Area President of Armagh Area Council; Eileen McKenna, President of St Patrick's Portadown; Marianna Mackey, New President of St Brigid's Newry; Mary Rose Elliott, New President of Sts Peter and Paul Lurgan; Peter McVeigh, Area Vice President of Armagh Area Council and Twinning/Prisons; Anne Mallon, President of Tullysaran; John McKeown, New President of St Joseph's Maghaberry and President of St Colman's Dromore; Malachy McKernan, President of Holy Family Seagoe; Roseanne Murphy, New President of St Patrick's Keady; P J McClean, Area President of Kilmegan Area Council representing Regional President North Region, Mary Waide

SVP Celebrates Christmas



Regional President Mary Waide and Regional Manager Pauline Brown launching the SVP Annual Appeal with Santa



The 2021 Annual Appeal launched with the Society expecting requests for help in the run up to Christmas to be higher than any witnessed in recent years. In fact, calls for help tripled on those received in 2020 and in the first week of December, more than 1,000 calls were received by SVP's Belfast office alone.

More people requested help with food, fuel and white goods and those faced with impossible choices, who are faced with financial difficulties every day of the year, were in need of assistance for placing presents under the Christmas tree so their children did not wake up to an empty Christmas.

Speaking about the dire situation some families found themselves in, Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said: "We received more calls than we had experienced in recent years and more requests via our website from people who would not normally speak out and seek help.

"As well as taking more than 1,000 calls in our Belfast office alone during the first week in December, people were also contacting us by email, phoning our Derry office and calling our almost 100 helpline numbers in local communities across Northern Ireland.

"Some people found themselves being faced with the decision of whether to put food on the table, heat

the home or buy presents for their children as Christmas approached. While a third of children are living in poverty in Northern Ireland, we were not just being asked for help by people on low incomes trying to make ends meet, we also received requests from people who had been plunged into poverty and were living in extreme pressure due to rising energy costs, an increase in the cost of living, the reduction in Universal Credit and the impact of the pandemic."

Mary added: "At the time of year when we remember Christ's birth and which should bring joy and create magical memories for children, parents were struggling and in the depths of despair. The generosity of our local people in communities across the province shone through by making donations to SVP to help their neighbours. We accepted phone and online donations so SVP could provide families with vouchers, empowering them to prioritise what they chose to buy."

Paying tribute to the dedication of SVP members, volunteers and staff for their incredible support, Mary said: "I would like to thank all those who were involved in ensuring that families received the help they needed. For the empathy they possessed in ensuring that the needs of those requesting assistance from SVP were met with dignity."

Annual Appeal Support in Kind

As well as the very generous donations from viewers of the Late Late Show on RTE which raised a grand total of €1.5m for SVP Ireland, Blue Envelopes provided vital funds for distribution across the Region and interview opportunities with local community radio stations helped raise awareness of the Annual Appeal.

SVP Conferences across the Region were overwhelmed by support in kind from schools and organisations that went the extra mile for the Annual Appeal including:

Ardbarron Trust Ltd
Assumption Grammar School
Ballinderry Fun Run
W&R Barnett
Cliftonville Football Club
Grand Lodge of Free Masons of Ireland
Errigal Contracts
Kilkeel Development Association
T J McGurran
Mackle Pet Foods
Maddigans Food Court
Newry Chamber
Newry Lions
Norbrook
PSNI
John Robinson Ltd
Rotary Club Belfast
St Aidan's, Derrylin
St Comgall's Primary School
St Malachy's Primary School
Shortts
Skinworks Belfast and
tattoo artists in Dublin and Dungannon
Tattoos for Toys
Whitemountain
Ulster Garden Villages

130 Mournie Households assisted by St Colman's Conference

Christmas 2021 proved to be another busy time for St Colman's Conference in Mournie. Despite lower Mass attendance due to the pandemic, the generous parishioners of Upper and Lower Mournie donated some £4,000 in response to the SVP Annual Appeal. The students of St Louis Grammar topped this up with a special collection and raffle while pupils of St Colman's, St Columban's, Grange and Gaelscoil na mBean, designed special Christmas cards to accompany gift vouchers which the Conference bought from local businesses and delivered to households in need.

Bangor Schools Support Annual Appeal

Once again, St Comgall's Guides and Brigini and the pupils of St Malachy's Primary School and Comgall's Primary School generously supported SVP's Annual Appeal. Conference Members Dympna Bannon and Margaret Stewart received a cheque for £230 from the school on behalf of SVP and Patricia Connery, Conference Vice President, collected a cheque for £100 from St Comgall's Guides and Brigini. Those involved in the fundraising were thanked for their generosity, thoughtfulness and continued support for the Society.



St Colman's Generosity

St Colman's High and Sixth Form College, Ballynahinch, presented a cheque for £500 to SVP members.



Ballymena Collections

Ronnie McFall from Tesco Ballymena arranged an SVP Collection on 18 and 23 December with a total of £1,283 raised. SVP Ballymena is very grateful to Ronnie and the local Tesco store for their continued support and help.



St Killian's

Representatives of the College presented a cheque for £2,946 to SVP to help with the vital work of the Society at this time of great need.



Murphy and Mitchell Families Treat the Neighbours for SVP

Mary Waide congratulated Emily and Emma on raising £39.18 for SVP. The girls and cousin Jonah Mitchell set up a warming hot chocolate stall for their neighbours on Deramore Drive, Ballymena.



Sweet Donation from Blessed Trinity College

Students enjoyed a chocolate fountain, festive treats and purchased lego to raise funds for SVP. Regional Manager Pauline Brown was presented with a cheque and thanked the students for their innovative fundraising efforts.



Dunclug Donation

Alistair Beacom, Principal of Dunclug Primary School, Ballymena, presented SVP Ballymena with a contribution from their non uniform day towards helping families faced with impossible choices at Christmas.

Sacred Heart College

Sacred Heart College Omagh donated £803 to SVP in Omagh for distribution to local vulnerable families. Students are pictured with Ms Cullinan, Principal Mr Gormley, and Patrick Friel of SVP.



Rotary Club Backs Annual Appeal

Rotary Club Ballymena President, James McClure, presented SVP Ballymena with a cheque to help families faced with impossible choices in the local community.



Uniform Free for SVP

Pupils from St Columcille's Primary School, Ballymena, enjoyed a non uniform day. Everyone brought £1 and they presented SVP with a cheque for £500.



North Down College Supports SVP

St Columbanus College Bangor presented £2,585 to SVP for the Annual Appeal.



Cliftonville Players Are On the Ball

Raighain (7), grandson of Pauline Brown, Regional Manager of SVP, is the biggest football fan ever and he had the joy of meeting his hero Levi Ives who was joined by fellow Cliftonville Football Club players Chris Curran, Captain, and Joe Gormley, to receive a donation with his grandmother and sister Callie (3) for the Annual Appeal. The club donated £100 in cash and 19 x £10 vouchers.



Aquinas Grammar Donation

Aquinas Diocesan Grammar in Belfast presented SVP with £2,310 of vouchers and cash donations!



Digging Deep for SVP

Brendan McKernan appeared on UTV Live to talk about how the more than £40,000 raised by social media followers of Digg Mama would be spent to help local families with home heating oil just in time for Christmas.



Joint Family Appeal with The Salvation Army

With one in four children impacted by the pandemic and living in poverty, demand for support from the long running joint Family Appeal was expected to be at a record high in 2021.

The Family Appeal has benefited from the enormous generosity of the public who have donated thousands of toys for more than 40 years however, due to the pandemic, the usual toy collection was replaced by the opportunity for people to make an online donation.

Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said: "More than ever, the stark reality is that families in local communities up and down the country were making impossible choices of whether to put food on the table or put presents under the tree."

Mary thanked those who had supported the Family Appeal in making it so successful previously and added: "Protecting the dignity of those in need is paramount and this virtual appeal helped us ensure that no child woke up to an empty Christmas while empowering parents to choose and prioritise how best to make use of donations this winter."

In 2021, the joint Family Appeal with The Salvation Army raised £21,463.82 including gift aid from

online donations. Local television station NVTV promoted the Appeal and a number of corporate organisations lent their support including:

CCEA
Chartered Accountants NI
Cybersource
Speakers Office, NI Assembly
Lagan Construction
Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

A fundraising event hosted by event management students at Belfast Metropolitan College raised £250 for the Family Appeal and for the fourth consecutive year, Education Authority supported the Appeal with online donations.



Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, is pictured with Major Jacqueline Wright of The Salvation Army, and Sara Long, Chief Executive of Education Authority

Stuff A Bus

Supported by U105 and Belfast Live, the Translink fund-raising campaign once again took an online approach raising £103,742.27 in its fifth year. This total included gift aid and funds raised by The Education Authority.

Belfast Live

Pauline Brown, Regional Manager of SVP, joined Major Jacqueline Wright of The Salvation Army, for a live interview on facebook with Belfast Live to promote the campaign.



Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, is joined by her grandchildren Sophie, James and Fintan at the launch of 'Stuff A Bus'

Belfast Central Mission

Providing festive joy for more than 20 years, the joint SVP and Belfast Central Mission Appeal raised a total of £10,088.25 from donations made by Department for Communities staff. Elizabeth Quinn represented SVP at the Appeal's launch with Nicky Conway of Belfast Central Mission and Tracy Meharg, Permanent Secretary for Department for Communities.



The Difference SVP Makes

I reluctantly called SVP for the first time on a Friday afternoon. After receiving my benefits and paying all my bills: oil, electricity and mortgage; I was left with just £10. I had nothing else. This was to last me until the next Friday. I was so desperate I had a knot in my stomach. I called SVP and they provided me with vouchers for food and fuel. With SVP's help I was actually able to breathe easy again.

This is truly the Christmas spirit, made our day, thank you!

We're all isolating with COVID-19, so we can't leave the house. You have saved our children's Christmas.

How did you get my name? Oh, it doesn't matter. Thank God you did. My family cannot visit because of COVID-19. Thank you.

I was in a difficult situation having no income for over a month as COVID-19 had affected my small business. Down to my last few pounds I actually had to borrow money from my children aged 13 and 16 to buy bread, milk and cheese. I have never had to approach a Charity in the past and have donated regularly to charities when I can. I swallowed my pride and called SVP. I explained my situation and the person on the phone was understanding and considerate and promised to have some help for me that very day. Everyone treated me graciously and without judgement allowing me to accept support without shame.

“ This is truly the Christmas spirit, made our day, thank you! ”

SVP has solved a lot of my worries, and home will be a happy one this Christmas!



TO SVP

SENDING A HUGE "THANK YOU"

FROM EVERYONE IN HOMEPLUS NI 115 WINDYBANK STREET AND ALL THE ASYLUM & REFUGEE YOU HAVE TOUCHED AND THE ONES YOU ARE SET TO TOUCH. WE APPRECIATE ALL YOUR KINDNESS & HELP YOU ALL ARE GIVING.

HOMEPLUS NI

Tarina Kash - Singapore
INDIA
saha - Algiers
F. SEUN - Nigeria

Recruitment Campaign Launched

Following a record number of calls for help to SVP in 2021, the Society launched a national campaign seeking volunteers at the start of 2022.

During 2021 a total of just over 191,000 calls for help were made to the Society throughout Ireland. This is 12% up on the number of calls in 2020 and the highest on record for the Society.

The national campaign for volunteers primarily focused on Visiting Conferences with advertising supporting the theme of **'You know who you are - But we don't'** which encourages people to apply to become an SVP volunteer.

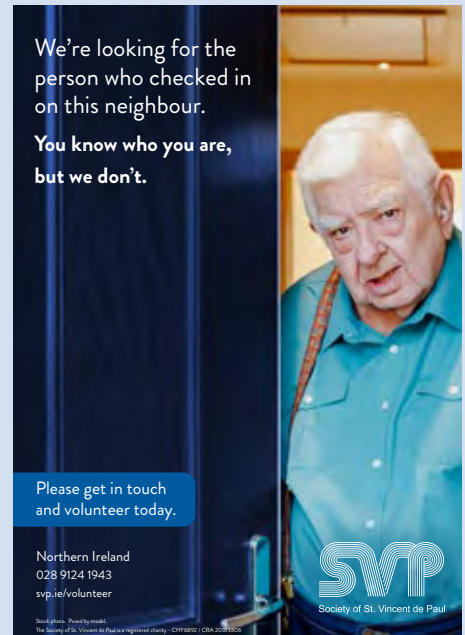
In launching the campaign, SVP National President Rose McGowan said; "The characteristics required of our volunteers include; kindness, compassion, discretion, respect and being non-judgemental.

"Volunteers are our greatest strength, they know the issues in their communities and can address immediate needs as well as helping families and individuals, young and old, move towards self-sufficiency and equal opportunity through friendship and support. Offering a little help at the right time can give people hope for the future. Volunteers sharing their time and skills can change lives forever.

She added: "Volunteering with SVP involves working with and supporting the largest and oldest voluntary charitable organisation in Ireland. Training will be provided and the time commitment, while variable, is usually 3-5 hours weekly."

Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said: "I have been a volunteer with St Vincent de Paul for 20 years and I would recommend it to anyone. I can honestly say it is such a rewarding and fulfilling way to spend your spare time. By becoming a volunteer with SVP you will be helping bring joy and hope to the most vulnerable people in our communities."

Other than Visitation some other volunteer positions required by SVP include Technical Support for Conferences to assist in the capture and recording of important data and shop volunteers to help in the 33 Vincent's shops across the Region.



We're looking for the person who checked in on this neighbour.

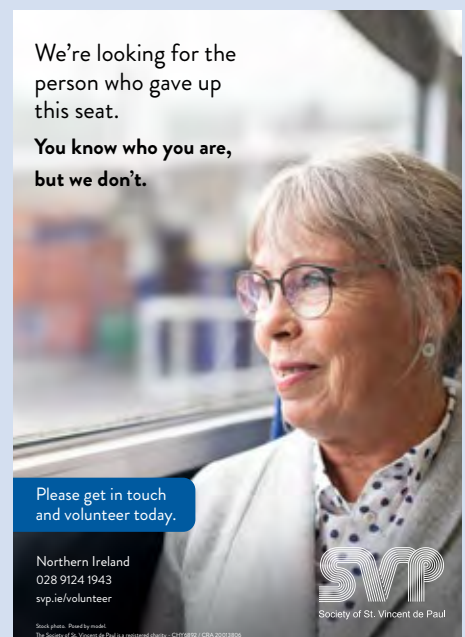
You know who you are, but we don't.

Please get in touch and volunteer today.

Northern Ireland
028 9124 1943
svp.ie/volunteer

SVP
Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Stock photos. Provided by model.
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a registered charity - C1196422 / CBA 2001800



We're looking for the person who gave up this seat.

You know who you are, but we don't.

Please get in touch and volunteer today.

Northern Ireland
028 9124 1943
svp.ie/volunteer

SVP
Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Stock photos. Provided by model.
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a registered charity - C1196422 / CBA 2001800

Spotlight on Volunteering – Meet Valerie and Sean McGreevy

Valerie and Sean McGreevy have been married for 52 years. Valerie is the youngest of 10 and her eldest sister and Sean's mum were friends so they knew of each other but their first meeting was at a bus stop!

They have two sons and one daughter. They have six grandchildren.

We talked to them about their experience of volunteering with St Vincent de Paul.



Valerie, which SVP Conference did you join?

Lisburn Conference

Why did you join SVP Lisburn Conference?

I have always admired SVP members who stand outside the church, week after week, no matter what the weather, but I didn't realise how much else they did. So when I retired and my two closest living grandchildren didn't really need me anymore to collect them from school, mind them on sick days etc, I decided to find out more about SVP. I found out what amazing work they do so I joined right away! For various reasons a new Conference was being

established and I offered to carry out the necessary visits while this was progressing. I couldn't do it alone so my husband joined me, as well as still volunteering in his own Conference. We volunteered like this for around 18 months and then when a new Lisburn Conference was convened the members were all newcomers to SVP so I stayed with the Conference for another year and my husband went back to his own Conference.

What does your volunteering role with SVP entail?

Throughout my time with SVP I have helped out with other Conferences which are in need of help, for example when members are sick or unable to attend. Five years

ago I completed the 'training for trainers' course and I now help train new volunteers. Throughout the pandemic I have been training via Zoom but will hopefully get back to face-to-face training soon. I am also the Treasurer for the West Belfast Area Board and help Conferences to complete their year end returns and help with any finance queries.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with SVP?

Definitely knowing that I have helped someone who, at the time, didn't know where else to turn for help. Sometimes it is financial help, sometimes it is just a listening ear, sometimes it is just letting those in need know that they are not alone and help is just a phone call away.

If you could recommend becoming a volunteer to someone else, what would you say to encourage them to get involved?

I would say PLEASE just lift the phone - your talent, whatever it may be, is greatly needed by SVP. There are so many opportunities to help others and to develop your skills - skills you may not even know you have until you meet someone in need. You are never left alone to answer someone's call, you will always have the help of the Conference.

Sean, which SVP Conference did you join?

Aldergrove and Crumlin Conference.

Why did you join SVP Aldergrove and Crumlin Conference?

SVP was a group of people I had always admired, so when I had been retired for a short while and Valerie brought

home the Crumlin Parish Bulletin, which advertised for new members, I decided to join.

What does your volunteering role with SVP entail?

I am currently Conference President which entails organising and chairing bi-weekly meetings. I pass on any information and correspondence I receive from our Area President and Regional Office to our members at our meetings. I volunteer on the helpline and approve help that is suggested for clients. I attend Area meetings and visit clients (due to Covid-19 I have been undertaking telephone visits only). I co-ordinate and organise fundraising events in Tesco. I organise the enrolment of new members. I manage invoices from our suppliers, arrange payments and handle any queries.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with SVP?

When I come in contact with someone who is desperately in need of support from SVP and we are able to give them the help they need, it is a really good feeling to be able to do something to help that person.

If you could recommend becoming a volunteer to someone else, what would you say to encourage them to get involved?

I would say that there may be a period in a person's life when they need help, and if they don't have a friend or family to help out then SVP is there for them. If you have even a little time, then SVP would be a very worthwhile charity to get involved with.



Prison Visitation



Fr Michael Bingham

Whilst Peter McVeigh has been glad to restart SVP Visitation at Maghaberry Prison, the happiness is tinged with sadness due to the recent passing of Fr Michael Bingham.

Peter said: "Throughout lockdown I was the only person permitted to continue to bring clothes to the prison which were taken from my car and quarantined before being distributed to the inmates. I was grateful that although Visitation had been halted, SVP was still able to help those in the prison with much needed items of clothing. SVP is permitted to donate money to prisoners to allow them to make telephone calls to loved ones every week and now I am thankful that I can also visit the prisoners again. The recommencing of visiting has been tinged with great sadness though as one faithful priest will no longer be making visits to Maghaberry since Fr Michael Bingham sadly died in January."

Fr Michael Bingham was based in Drumcree and was described as an 'unsung hero' for his faithful community work in media across Ireland and England. He died peacefully in Craigavon Hospital on 12 January 2022 aged 81.

Born in Liverpool and having spent 14 years in Columbia and 9 years with Native Americans in Canada, Fr Bingham was a British Jesuit who made Portadown his home for more than 20 years and worked for peace and reconciliation.

He made a huge contribution to the area and to Maghaberry Prison where he has left a lasting legacy. He was also Chairperson of the Drumcree Community Trust where he worked to make a difference to the lives of ordinary people across the community.

The Funeral Mass took place in the Church of St John The Baptist, Drumcree, on 17 January, followed by burial in the adjoining cemetery. Homilist Frank Brady SJ, who lived and worked with Fr Michael in Portadown, spoke of his long and varied life as a Jesuit, referred to his broad experience and ministry around the world and spoke of how he always saw the good in others.

Fr Brady said: "Michael had a great sense of direction. He walked the walk and he talked the talk with us, with young people, on your behalf, to create a hope-filled future for us all. And he was achieving that because we and particularly young people let him in, let him in to our lives.

"You helped him to discover God. You helped him to discover the Father of Jesus and our Father. As he said himself, God, the one who always believes in us long before we ever believe in him or even name him, and long before we believe in ourselves."

Fr Frank continued: "So many have said that Michael could always see the good in others. He was all give, had a heart of gold. And he could get quite angry at what he saw as injustice, but he learned to use that anger to move him peaceably, to do something about it.

"His hope is that we too will discover God, our discovering God to one another as we walk this way together. That we too will discover the meaning of St Paul's prayer as Jesus' love grows in our hearts. God rest you Michael."

Fr Michael Bingham held five masters degrees and was an accomplished cellist. He is deeply regretted by his sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, the Jesuit community in Portadown, Armagh and other Jesuit communities in Britain and Ireland.

Requiescat in Pace.

Twinning Support



Service In Hope

Through the catalyst of the SVP Yendi Cathedral branch, a celebrating Midwife of the Yendi Municipal Hospital donated assorted provisions to the Sang Orphanage. She is pictured here with her youngest baby.

National Youth Group

Thanks to all members of the National Youth Group and especially two sisters who travelled on an eight-hour return journey to the western region of Ghana in support of the first activity of the group.

Representatives including some from OLAM Conference, St Peter's Conference and St Joseph's Worker Conference, visited fishing communities of Tema New Town, where they distributed relief items of disposable surgical masks, 100ml gel hand sanitiser, bottled water and packed lunches. Parcels of warm meals were also distributed to 250 children.

May God richly bless our sponsors and members.





COVID-19 Relief Programme

The success of the COVID-19 Relief Programme was in no small part due to donations for the purchase of PPE from SVP North Region.

After Eucharistic celebration at Daffiama Catholic Church, food, hand sanitisers and preloved clothes were distributed to destitute schoolchildren, including those who are physically and mentally challenged. As part of the COVID-19 relief activities, this was carried out under the supervision of the Diocesan President, Vice President, Secretary and the Honourable Assemblyman, who doubles as an active member of SVP.

The Priest who celebrated Mass, Rev Fr Vernacious, blessed items and said prayers, cautioning beneficiaries to use the items properly.



Back to Business for Vincent's

Lockdowns and restrictions aside, 2021 was a busy year for Vincent's. We were grateful when restrictions eased and we could once again open our doors to the 33 shops which serve as community hubs.

From beautiful blue window displays to celebrate SVP Week, to going green during the Olympics campaign, when managers and teams were challenged to reach for gold in the run up to Christmas. One of the tactics focused on sustainability with Vincent's shops across the Region tasked to make one small change to improve their green credentials. Ideas included changing to energy saving bulbs or introducing some plants instore which looked pretty and had health benefits too!

During Second Hand September, shops received a special visit from their local Mayor on a factfinding mission to discover the importance of the work done by Vincent's in the local communities – some even netted a bargain!

UTV Life viewers were treated to a sustainable fashion feature when reporter Rita Fitzgerald met enthusiastic SVP models showcasing a range of looks on a wonderful waterfront setting.

In late autumn the government's Spend Local pre-paid card proved to be a hit with Vincent's shoppers with 23 shops across the Region welcoming the card. Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said: "With the boost in our purse from the Department for the Economy, it did my heart good knowing that people were really thinking about how redeeming the Spend Local pre-paid card could help those in need in our communities, even with the smallest of gestures, as advocated by our founder Frederic Ozanam almost 180 years ago."

Staff and volunteers really let their creative juices flow during special seasonal promotions like Hallowe'en and Christmas and instore projects included upcycling with wellie boots turned into planters in Ballymena and broken decorations used to create Christmas wreaths in Newcastle. Tracy Scott-Stewart, Manager of Vincent's Kircubbin, celebrated her 100th open water swim at Cloughy Bay Beach with 35 friends who got 'Into the Sea for SVP' raising £850 for local Conferences. And Santa even brought his reindeer to launch his grotto in Keady!

Vincent's Newcastle extended its footprint on the Main Street by moving the furniture department next to clothes.

Christmas Displays

SVP Week Window Displays



Ormeau Road



Enniskillen



Keady



Cushendall



Enniskillen



Cushendall



Ormeau Road



Antrim Road



Wreaths created from broken decorations in Newcastle

Second Hand September Mayor Visits



Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Alderman Graham Warke, is pictured with SVP Conference member Max Cronin and Vincent's volunteers Eamon MacIntyre and Marie McColgan, shop manager Sonia Tinney and volunteer Donna McGlynn



Chair of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Councillor Errol Thompson, is pictured with Pauline Brown, SVP Regional Manager; Patrick Friel, SVP Regional Treasurer; Tommy Moohan, Vincent's Shop Manager; Mary Waide, SVP Regional President and Anne-Marie Hughes, Vincent's Volunteer and Killyclogher Conference President



Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens, Cllr Richard Holmes, is pictured with Eugene Graffin, SVP member; Mary McCurry, SVP Conference President; and Seana Lynn, Vincent's Shop Manager



Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council Alderman Glenn Barr, is pictured during his visit to Vincent's Tullygally in celebration of Second Hand September, with shop volunteer Marta Bartczak



Ballymena upcycling wellie boots

Portadown - COVID-19 safety precautions given the Hallowe'en treatment



Kircubbin instore planting

JOIN US FOR OUR UPCOMING EVENTS AND SALES!

(all events and sales in support of UTV)

TREAT TUESDAY Get all the bits for the perfect Halloween costume!	12TH OCT
FILL A BAG FOR A RIVER With a 50% discount on all bags for the day!	14TH OCT
SPEND & SAVE Spend £20 on any clothing and receive a 20% discount on all purchases over £20!	18TH OCT
COAT SALE Up to 50% off on all coats!	20TH OCT
BRAND NEW LABEL SALE Up to 50% off on all brand new labels!	28TH OCT
TRICE OR TREAT - ALL WEEK! Spend £3 on any clothing and receive a 30% discount on all purchases over £3!	FROM 24TH OCT
SUSTAINABLE SATURDAYS Bring your own bag for shopping and receive a 10% discount on all purchases over £10!	PLUS

Dairy Farm promotional menu

UTV Life Sustainable Fashion Feature



UTV Life models with presenter Rita Fitzgerald filming feature on sustainability



UTV Life filming SVP volunteers for a feature on sustainability

New Vincent's for Armagh and Magherafelt

Co Armagh Environmental Ambassador Emer Rafferty joined SVP Regional President for the North Region, Mary Waide; Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Lord Mayor Glenn Barr; Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of all Ireland; and Revd Canon Malcolm Kingston, to officially open the new Vincent's on Armagh's Scotch Street.

The shop has an extensive range of ladieswear, footwear, menswear, childrenswear and accessories, occupying a prime location in the heart of the Cathedral city.

Mary Waide, SVP North Region Regional President, said: "Our new Vincent's Armagh really has the wow factor! I have no doubt that the range of clothes on display and the choice of giftware and homeware will be loved by price conscious shoppers who are passionate about sustainability. I would like to congratulate the staff and volunteers on their dedication to get the shop ready for trading in time for the festive season and would wish them every success as they serve the local community."



Vincent's on Magherafelt's King Street was officially opened by Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Paul McLean. In its newly relocated premises, customers can browse the latest in Vincent's treasures from fashion to accessories.

Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Paul McLean, said, "I would like to congratulate Peggy McLernon and all the staff and volunteers involved in bringing this new Magherafelt store to fruition. I extend my thanks also for the remarkable work they carry out as part of St Vincent de Paul in general, and for the immeasurable contribution they make to the local communities in which they serve.

"Almost 1,800 dedicated volunteers work tirelessly within the Society to help those in need, including the most vulnerable in our communities. I have no doubt that this new store will be a welcome addition to the already impressive St Vincent de Paul offering, and will be hugely popular with the people of Magherafelt and even further afield."

The relocation of Vincent's is already proving to be a hit with local fashionistas in Magherafelt as sales have increased compared to those achieved in the former premises and we would encourage anyone who has yet to visit the shop to call in and see our staff and volunteers who will make you most welcome and help you find the perfect outfit.



Officially opening the newly relocated Vincent's on King Street, Magherafelt, with Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Paul McLean, are Alana Pitts, Vincent's Shop Manager, Peggy McLernon and Gerardine Kielt, SVP Magherafelt members, and Martina O'Neill, Vincent's Shop Volunteer

Encirc Recycles With Vincent's

Encirc, a Derrylin based beverage supply chain manufacturing company, has joined with Vincent's to primarily provide its 450 staff with a unique way to recycle their uniforms.

A Vincent's clothing bin has been placed in the factory's car park and John Brough, Encirc Team Leader, was instrumental in forging this partnership which is a win win for SVP and the organisation.

John said: "Placing a Vincent's clothing bin in our car park at Encirc was definitely a win win for us and St Vincent de Paul. As well as fitting with our overall corporate social responsibility strategy it provided us with a focus on sustainability. I moved to our Derrylin site from England, where we already have a very successful partnership with

SVP, and it made perfect sense for me to replicate the initiative here in Derrylin.

"Our staff were very enthusiastic about the initiative as they understood the real benefit of having the bin located on our site. As well as helping us reduce what is going to landfill, it helps encourage staff to be mindful of the importance of recycling an old item of uniform before ordering a new one. We use the bin to recycle everything from trousers to boots and t-shirts to sweatshirts.

"From the initial contact I made with Vincent's in Enniskillen to enquire as to the possibility of positioning a recycle bin here at Encirc to its installation, was a seamless process and I'm looking forward to expanding the relationship with SVP."

John Brough of Encirc is pictured taking delivery of a Vincent's recycling bin with SVP representatives Peter McVeigh and Joe Maguire





Meet Vincent's Volunteer Brian Wilson

I began working in the St Vincent de Paul shop in Ballymena in June 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic was at its early stages. I found the experience to be very enriching and it gave me a new outlook on voluntary work and especially voluntary work within a Catholic organisation. My main responsibilities involved receiving and sorting donated items, working at the till, organising the layout of the shop, and cleaning up at the end of the day. I am especially grateful for the positive atmosphere between the volunteers and staff at a time when the restrictions made interpersonal interactions challenging.

One of the first things I found myself doing when I began working as a volunteer was clearing out my own wardrobe and room of the many things which I no longer used. I found it uplifting to think that by giving the items to Vincent's I had the advantage of decluttering my room and mind, whilst enabling people to save money by buying items at a significantly reduced price which otherwise would have been thrown away. In addition, the funds raised through selling my items helped to raise money for people in need. It also diverted funding away from large organisations which so often produce goods using unsustainable methods which harm the environment.

Thinking about the many interconnected ways in which donating to Vincent's helps build a better world reminded me of Pope Francis' recent words on caring for our common home. He says: "It cannot be emphasised enough how everything is interconnected... When we speak of the 'environment', what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live.

We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it." I would often help to cut the grass, brush, and tidy up around the outside of the shop. These simple moments of interaction with nature made me appreciate how being amongst nature really cheers me up and how life-giving a bright and dry day can be.

Whilst I gained a deeper appreciation of nature at Vincent's, I also formed amazing friendships which I hope will grow in the future. It was my first time working in a charity shop but from the very beginning I noticed that the atmosphere was upbeat and proactive. It really felt like each person was making a contribution which was appreciated by the team of staff. I soon formed an especially strong friendship with the shop manager, as we had plenty to share around our shared love of running and the Christian faith. I shared some articles I had written on the Christian faith and found that the SVP team were interested in reading them, encouraging some reflections and sharing our thoughts together.

In previous working environments, I felt it was sometimes necessary to act in ways which weren't really completely 'me'. But at Vincent's I felt like I could just be myself, helping the customers and colleagues, but at the same time being relaxed and enjoying each day with a touch of humour and a balanced attitude. I think that many young people today are struggling to find meaning in their lives and often feel that work is primarily about paying the bills. Working at Vincent's encouraged me to take a different attitude which aims to find meaning and fulfilment in every single day, not looking too far ahead, and instead staying in the moment. St Teresa of Calcutta once said: "Peace begins with a smile", and I came to appreciate this more during my time with Vincent's. When we decide to smile, especially when the shop is very busy and customers present us with challenges, we say 'Yes' to God,

just as Jesus said the ultimate 'Yes' by facing challenges with confidence and trust.

I noticed that Vincent's has many checks around its finances and am aware that it operates in a world where similar shops put profit above everything else. Yet I appreciated the ways in which the shop maintained a faith-based approach. I recently read that Frederic Ozanam posed the question "whether society will go for ever-increasing enjoyment and profit, or for everyone devoting themselves to the general good, and above all to the defence of the weakest". It strikes me that what makes SVP unique today is this commitment to defending the most vulnerable. People would often come to the shop in great need of financial assistance and we were able to greet them compassionately and direct them towards a solution. It also seems clear to me that many of the donations received to the shop were from people of strong faith within the local community. This reminded me of the unique power of the Christian community to work together in charity and this focus on charity brings communities and people together. The words of St Vincent de Paul seemed to come to life: "Charity is the cement which binds communities to God and people to one another".

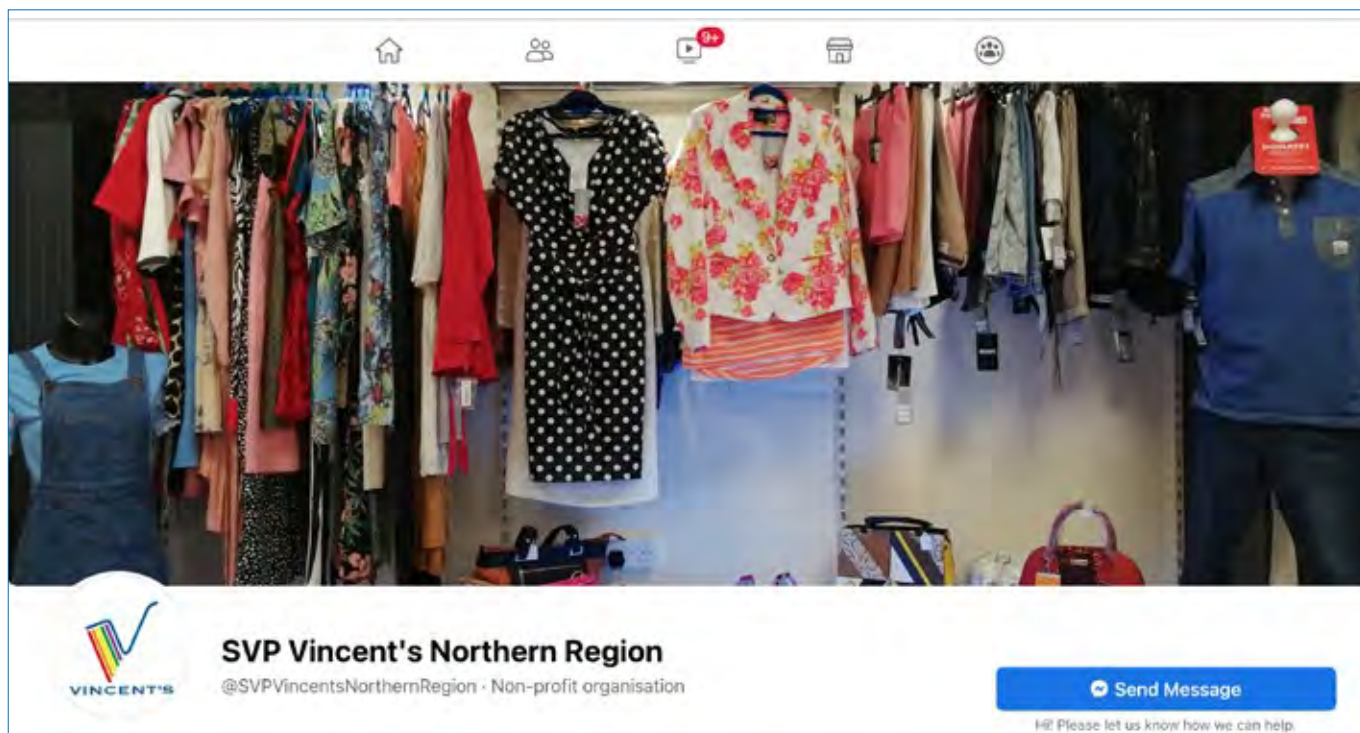
I hope to call in to Vincent's again soon and look forward to seeing the whole team once again. No doubt I will soon be put into action hoovering and cleaning! I appreciate all they do to make volunteers feel valued and pray that the organisation will be led to future success by the Holy Spirit in all its future work.

Brian grew up in Ballymena and left to study Chemistry at Imperial College and the University of Oxford. He worked in the pharmaceutical industry for several years and is now discerning a call to the priesthood in seminary in Spain.

Vincent's North Region Facebook

If you're not already following the North Region facebook, give it a follow today!

<https://www.facebook.com/SVPVincent'sNorthernRegion/>



Vibrant Volunteers

Vincent's Volunteers are a vibrant bunch and their enthusiasm is palpable. I would just like to say a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of them for their commitment and dedication.

Anne Crossan, Regional Retail Manager

Membership

Quality Visitation

"Let us do without hesitation whatever good lies at our hands"

Frederic Ozanam

How do we make a difference in the lives of the people we assist? By providing an holistic, person to person approach, either face-to-face or by telephone.

The cornerstone of quality Visitation is the core work of the Society. Our spirit of friendship, impartiality and confidentiality respects the dignity of the individual. Our values and ethos are at the heart of all we do.

Visitation Prayer

Before undertaking any visit:

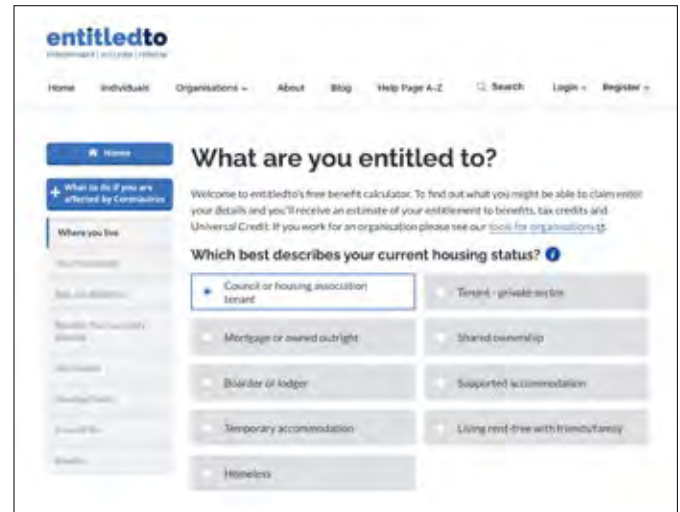
*Lord, I give you my mind that I may think as you think
My eyes that I may see as you see
My ears that I may hear as you hear
My tongue that I may speak as you speak
Lord, above all may I be charitable in all that I do and say
And may the Holy Spirit inspire, guide and assist me
during this visit. Amen*

Assessing Need

Assessing the need of the people we visit is to understand and establish what we can help them with. We should be aware of the recognised cost of living and how much it costs to run an average household, as an individual, couple and with children.

A Benefits Calculator is available on NI Direct website.

This online calculator is a very helpful tool to understand the basic income of certain household types in urban or rural areas. You can find out more about the Calculator by visiting: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk>

The image shows a screenshot of the 'entitledto' website, which is a free benefits calculator. The page title is 'What are you entitled to?'. It includes a navigation menu with links for Home, Individuals, Organisations, About, Blog, Help Page A-Z, Search, Login, and Register. The main content area features a 'Where you live' section with a dropdown menu currently set to 'Council or housing association tenant'. Below this, there are several radio button options for housing status: 'Mortgage or owned outright', 'Boarder or lodger', 'Temporary accommodation', 'Homeless', 'Tenant / private sector', 'Shared ownership', 'Supported accommodation', and 'Living rent-free with friends/family'. A welcome message at the top of the calculator area states: 'Welcome to entitledto's free benefits calculator. To find out what you might be able to claim enter your details and you'll receive an estimate of your entitlement to benefits, tax credits and Universal Credit. If you work for an organisation please see our tools for organisations.' There is also a link to 'tools for organisations'.

Being realistic, when assuring the individual or family of what support is available by expressing empathy, careful listening and encouraging hope, are vital to a successful outcome. Discussion with other Conference members based on the information shared is the best way of finding resolutions, agreeing on the level, type of support and on how many visits may be required, are pivotal to each individual's circumstances. In complex cases, use the support structures within the Society by seeking advice from an Area President or Regional Office.

As the Society's mission is based on support and friendship, promoting self-sufficiency and working for social justice, our assessment of need is always offered in a spirit of friendship and support. Our assistance may be a way of financial support, practical help such as food, fuel, or signposting to other agencies for advice or information, all of which can have a positive impact.

Member Care and Safety During Visitation

One of our cornerstones of Visitation is visiting in pairs, this is to protect the people we visit and also for our members safety.

If the Conference is aware there may be a risk to members when visiting in a particular environment, they should assess the risk prior to the visit and agree any safety measures to ensure the members feel supported and comfortable.

Good Practice

- Visit at a pre-arranged time
- Visit in pairs
- Always inform other members about when and where you are going
- Keep personal belongings to a minimum
- Park cars in well-lit areas
- Always have access to mobile phones with emergency numbers

Guidance

A new guide will be widely circulated during 2022 to help raise awareness of the cost of living and the many challenges families and individuals face in their daily struggle to make ends meet. Rising food, fuel and energy costs are unfortunately pushing so many into extreme poverty, forcing them to make impossible choices.



EVALUATION/RESPONSE	
ASSISTANCE	
- Immediate Need	£
- Self Sufficiency Plan	£
REFERRAL / OTHER AGENCIES	CONTACT DETAILS
- Budget / Debt Advice	
- Finance Support Office	
- Housing Advice	
- Community Advice Centre	
- Health Services	
- Utilities	
- SVP Social Justice	
- SVP Area or Regional Level	
<small>(Please ensure household fills in consent form if required)</small>	
EDUCATION/TRAINING	
Grants	£
Next Steps:	
Next Meeting:	
Conference Case Review Date:	
Completed by:	
Visiting Partner:	Date:
<small>Issued by SVP North Regional Office. Contact info@svpni.co.uk or 020-90351561</small>	

VISITATION

- ASSESSMENT OF NEED
- EVALUATION / RESPONSE

"Let us do without hesitation whatever good lies at our hands."
Frederic Ozanam.

Training

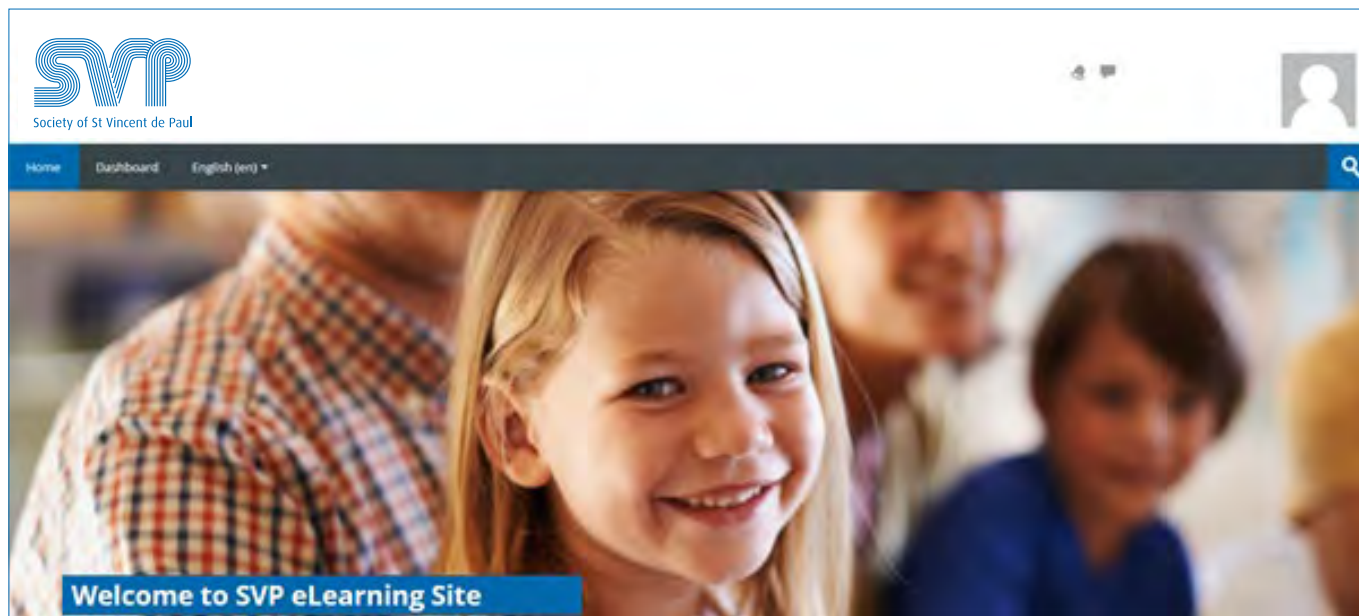
Our Trainers

SVP training courses would not be possible without our wonderful trainers.

As such, we wish to start with a big **Thank You** to all of our trainers who continued to deliver training virtually over Zoom during the pandemic. They have proven adaptive, flexible, tenacious and well humoured throughout the sudden change from physical to online training. COVID-19 had the potential to bring our new member training and on boarding to a halt. Although the trainers made a seamless transition to online delivery and made it possible to keep training new members. Thank you for all of your hard work.

Training Moves Online

Over the past year, we have been presented with the opportunity to progress our training online. This move was necessary to allow members to still receive training during the pandemic. What was born from necessity has become a well-rounded and accessible training offering. Our online training modules give new members the flexibility to complete this aspect of the training in their own time at a location and time which suits their schedule. Likewise, our Visitation Skills training is being delivered via Zoom over two evenings, allowing new members to attend the training from the comfort of their own home whilst still meeting new member trainees from all across the island of Ireland.





What does online training look like for new recruits?

Once new potential members have completed their initial application and vetting, they must be trained before being placed in a Conference. Our initial member training provides a solid base and understanding for new members to start off their journey with SVP on the right foot.

Online Moodle Training comprises five modules:

1. Introduction
2. Poverty
3. History
4. Structure
5. Safeguarding

Visitation Skills Training (Face-to-Face)

This is the final training session before Conference placement, carried out over two evenings. This session highlights practical tools and skills for Visitation and gives the trainees an opportunity to get answers to questions they may have around Visitation and best practice.

In 2022, training will take place from 7.00pm to 9.00pm on the following dates:

11 and 13 April
9 and 11 May
10 and 12 October

*****We also hope to offer sessions in June, July, September and November although we are currently awaiting availability confirmation from our trainers*****

CRM Training

A number of Conferences have been requesting CRM Training. We are currently offering this training on demand and if any members require CRM Training they can contact their relevant MSO, Shauna Murray or Joann Barr, depending on the area and we will be able to advise our CRM trainer to secure a date for a training session. This training is currently being carried out via Zoom.

There are currently two types of CRM training on offer:

1. Full CRM Training – for members who will be updating the CRM (includes hands on practice of completing the forms) – 3 hours
2. CRM Read-only – for members who will be using CRM to view client details (an overview of what can be viewed using CRM) – 1.5 hours

Protecting Our Data

Confidentiality is one of the cornerstones of the services offered by SVP Conferences. We protect the privacy of the people we assist and strive to comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). GDPR came into law across the EU and UK in May 2018.

This law gives individuals more rights over their personal information and requires organisations and businesses who use personal information to keep it secure, not use it for other purposes and delete it when it is no longer needed.

In order to comply, SVP members need to be able to demonstrate that they are taking their data protection obligations seriously.



Keep it safe and secure

Make sure all members are aware of their responsibilities to keep and store personal information securely so that only those who need to see it can access it. This applies to emails, client records, computers and phones.

Only use it for the purpose it was given to you

The personal information you receive can only be used for the reasons it was provided, for example, request for support for fuel, food or white goods.

Delete it when it is no longer required or when we request you to do so

Do not keep records of personal information if it is out of date or no longer needed.

Assist SVP with our data protection responsibilities

For example, if an individual wants their personal information corrected or deleted, you must confirm that you have done this.

Let us know immediately if anything goes wrong

If any personal information provided is lost, stolen or otherwise compromised, you must let Regional Office know immediately.

SVP Members' Roadshow

As there had been no face-to-face member events for almost 18 months, the Regional Board of SVP took the important decision to establish a Members' Roadshow series to re-engage with members at a local level. Although current restrictions limited numbers, the roadshow was a huge success and already plans are being developed for a Members' Roadshow series in 2022.

At each event, representatives from 167 SVP Conferences across the Region were provided with an overview of the Society and how it responded to the tens of thousands who have needed its support during the pandemic, together with its plans beyond 2021. The events also provided delegates with an opportunity to meet Mary Waide who was elected Regional President for the North Region at the beginning of the pandemic.

Following opening prayers and a welcome by Mary, Regional Board members of SVP took to the stage to present various aspects of the Society's work. Following a thought provoking spiritual reflection, board members presented the Society's retail strategy for its 33 Vincent's shops in Northern Ireland, a report of the outreach into prisons, details of how each Conference should report on its finances and new ways of adhering to policies



and procedures for those being assisted by the charity and those providing the assistance. An interactive element encouraged guests to engage in a healthy discussion with board members before closing prayers.

Speaking about the success of the Members' Roadshow series, Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said: "I was absolutely delighted with the success of the first SVP Members' Roadshow series and the wonderful feedback from those who were able to attend. It was important for the SVP Regional Board to get out into our local communities having had such a long time apart from our members face-to-face. Personally, it was a privilege as Regional President for me to meet all those who were able to attend. The focus of the roadshow was to primarily express our gratitude to our members for the sterling work they continued to do on the ground to help those who have needed it most, during the most trying of times, and to share with them our SVP vision for the longer term. The dedication of members of SVP has never been more important than it has been since the start of the pandemic. I know from experience how daunting it has been trying to help the vulnerable in our community without

compromising or risking the health of those who are supporting those in need. As we move forward, it is my hope that our Conferences will continue to go from strength to strength under the guidance of Frederic Ozanam who founded SVP almost 180 years ago."

Members' Roadshow



Members' Roadshow



Members' Roadshow



Members' Roadshow



Armagh Hosts Area Gathering

The first in person Area Gathering since the pandemic began was hosted by the Armagh Area in the Armagh City Hotel, with 60 guests attending an informative evening in preparation for helping the most vulnerable in local communities throughout the area in winter 2021.

Brendan Hennessy of SVP's Membership Support team travelled from Cork to present a session on how to evaluate and calculate the help those on benefits may require. Brendan said: "It's very important for the members in our local Conferences to keep up to date with how best they can help those who approach SVP for help. For instance, I know myself now that my children are teenagers, it would be difficult for me to know the price of a pack of nappies off the top of my head. As a Society we have developed useful tools for our members so they can evaluate and calculate average incomes and expenditures of potential clients without compromising personal information and ensuring their dignity is intact."

Brendan McKernan, SVP Armagh and Craigavon Area President, said: "It was wonderful to welcome so many SVP members to our first face-to-face Area Gathering since early 2020. Whilst we continued to host meetings via Zoom, it just wasn't the same. So for some people who have been members of SVP for more than 40 or 50 years to meet again in person and safely was heartwarming for them.

"It was important to provide those attending with vital information for recommending Home Visitation in the local communities so our members are well equipped when assessing what assistance clients may need. We are facing what we are predicting to be one of the worst winters with increased inflation and rising energy and food costs so we want to be prepared for the rise in the number of people approaching SVP for help and make sure they get the right help at the right time."





Protection of Children and Adults at Risk

The Society is committed to creating a safe, healthy and inclusive environment for all, particularly the children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable, at risk or in need of protection.

SVP is committed at all times to ensuring their safety and welfare through upholding children's rights specifically and human rights generally.

SVP members can prove to be a lifeline for many individuals who are in distress or suffering from abuse.

What does safeguarding mean in SVP?

As members we must

- Protect an individual's right to live in safety free from abuse and neglect
- Prevent and stop both the risk and experience of abuse and neglect
- Remember - Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

What is abuse?

- Abuse is when someone causes harm or distress
- Something that happens once
- Something that happens more than once
- Can be unintentional
- Can be a deliberate act
- Can sometimes be a crime
- Abuse can happen anywhere
- It can be undertaken by anyone

Key safeguarding messages:

- Duty of Care:
- Recognise
- Record
- Report
- Refer

Remember:

- A Child or Vulnerable Adult's Welfare is Paramount
- We treat everyone with Dignity and Respect
- The protection of children and vulnerable adults is a shared responsibility

Support for Members:

If you feel overwhelmed or upset by a Safeguarding concern, you can contact the Society's free, confidential support helpline 24/7/365 on tel: 0808 234 5183

Within the Region you can discuss any concerns with:

Mary Waide,

Chair of SVP National Safeguarding Committee

T: 07845 877393

E: mary.waide@svpni.co.uk

Rosemary Simpson, SVP Member Lead

T: 0773 9085703

E: nirc.safeguarding@svpni.co.uk

Staff:

Pauline Brown, SVP Regional Manager

T: 07921 876230

E: pauline.brown@svpni.co.uk

Joann Barr, SVP Membership Support Officer

T: 028 7137 7311

E: joann.barr@svpni.co.uk

Social Justice

Working for Social Justice – a key cornerstone of our work

SVP is committed to identifying the root cause of poverty and social exclusion in Ireland and, in solidarity with people experiencing poverty and disadvantage, to advocate and work for the changes required to create a more just and caring society.

The National Social Justice Committee exists to:

- promote the social justice mission of the Society among the membership
- proactively seek out information and detail about the issues and trends that members are experiencing in their Visitation/other work
- develop proposed solutions and advocate for policy -
- change to achieve positive outcomes in the lives of those that SVP assists
- input into strategic work for the Social Justice team
- support the North Region Social Justice Committee and work to address social inequality on an all-Island basis

Why we work for Social Justice

Why we work for Social Justice

- 17 per cent of people in relative poverty – 313,000 people, including 103,000 children
- 22 per cent of people experiencing fuel poverty
- 27,745 in "housing distress" and 11,323 statutory homeless
- Before the pandemic, estimated 28% of workers earned below real Living Wage of €8.75
- Impact of pandemic: 26% have experienced reduced hours or pay, 7% have lost their job
- Impact of Universal Credit cut: NI most affected with 34% impacted

I am asking that you look after people who have too many needs and not enough rights – people who demand with reason a greater say in public affairs, freedom from poverty, access to education and security in employment –

Blessed Frederick Ozanam

SVP
Society of St Vincent de Paul

Links between home visits and social justice



SVP
Society of St Vincent de Paul

What type of information can the CRM provide?

- Number of request for assistance: 17,982 in 2020
- Profile of those requesting our help: 44% lone parents, 39% people living alone, 11% couple with children, 3% couple.
- Most common presenting issues: household goods, food, fuel/energy.
- Notes from web requests/ conference members/information officers: more detailed qualitative information on the circumstances of the household requesting help.



Valuable data from CRM helps us to engage with elected officials and civil servants by presenting evidence and advocating on behalf of those we support.

We are able to raise awareness through the media by highlighting issues and campaigning for a more just society.

SVP can build public support for change through campaigns and coalitions.

Building the case for social justice

Regional reports from Social Justice Committee Representatives

Social Justice Network

CRM analysis of requests

Understanding and assisting with complex cases

Producing and commissioning research on poverty and social exclusion

Nationally representative poverty data



In the North Region during the past year SVP has:

- Made a submission to the Committee for Work and Pensions on the impact of the five week wait for Universal Credit
- Made a submission to the Department for Communities on the independent review of the Discretionary Support Scheme
- Joined the “Keep the Lifeline” campaign organised by Joseph Rowntree Foundation calling on Government to retain the £20 uplift in the Universal Credit
- Engaged with the media on social justice issues to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

Meet the member representatives of the Region’s Social Justice Committee:

Orla Conway
Gerardine Cunningham, Chair
Ciara McCullagh
Malachy McKernan
Eugene Reid

Supported by

Mary Waide, Regional President
and
Pauline Brown, Regional Manager

Young SVP



Sarah Goodwin, Youth Development Officer, delivered several online sessions to schools on the subject of an **Introduction to and the Origins of SVP** which were well received in both Primary and Secondary Schools across the Region. She also delivered in person workshops on **Climate Justice and Energy Poverty, Understanding Poverty, Social Enterprise and Sustainable Fashion**. Some schools which supported the Annual Appeal invited Sarah to assemblies where she had an opportunity to thank the students for their generous contributions.

Schools and colleges participating in the Young SVP youth development programme include: Aquinas Diocesan Grammar, Belfast; Belfast Metropolitan College; Blessed Trinity College, Belfast; Drumlish Primary School, Dromore; Enniskillen Model School; Loreto Grammar School, Omagh;

St Colmcille's, Carrickmore; St Columbanus, Bangor; St Malachy's, Belfast; St Mary's, Derry; St Mary's, Draperstown; St Patrick's, Downpatrick; St Patrick's, Dungannon; St Ronan's, Lurgan.

A number of schools have very active Young SVP Conferences and they are doing brilliant work. SVP is looking forward to continuing to work with these schools during future workshops and supporting them to establish new Conferences.

Students at **Loreto Grammar School in Omagh** for example are working on a **Sustainable Fashion** project to recycle a preloved item to make something new. They are linking with Vincent's in Omagh to use some of their materials and eventually hope to collaborate on a window display to show off their creations and inspire others to do the same.

Sarah is also working on reaching out to new schools and online webinars are being developed to engage young people in topics such as **Climate change and Sustainability**.





St Pius X College

Members of St Pius X College Young SVP attended a Volunteer's Week garden party at Laurel Villa in Magherafelt celebrating members of SVP who have devoted more than 30 years to the Society.



Blessed Trinity College

During Catholic Schools Week #CSW2022 Young SVP Students made a collage celebrating some of the wonderful Faith Development activities that have taken place the last academic year in fitting with the College's core values.

Carrickmore Mini Vinnies

Rosaleen Donnelly, Vice President of St Colmcille's Primary School in Carrickmore, runs a Young SVP Mini Vinnies group of children from P6 and P7. There are currently 35 in the group and they undertook a Mini Camino - walking around the parish in the month of November to raise funds for SVP.



Vincent's Armagh

It was a joy to welcome students from City of Armagh High School and St Catherine's College to add to the atmosphere and excitement of the opening of Vincent's Armagh. The students poured their hearts into an emotional rendition of 'Silent Night' accompanied by Dr Eunan McCreesh, Head of Music at St Catherine's College.



SVP Celebrates Volunteer's Week Garden Party

Representatives from across St Vincent de Paul Northern Region joined Fr Perry Gildea at a garden party to celebrate Volunteers' Week and those who have devoted more than 30 years service to the Society.

Speaking at the event, Fr Perry congratulated those who have emulated the founder of SVP, Frederic Ozanam, in their selfless acts of helping those in need.

Throughout the pandemic although not able to meet in person, Conferences hosted Area Gatherings via Zoom with regular meetings taking place across the Region.

Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, said: "It's a privilege to recognise volunteers who have given a lifetime of service to the Society. Without their support in the heart of our local communities across the North, the extent of the work of SVP would not be possible. Undeterred by the pandemic, our volunteers have shown resilience in how they have continued to safely help those in need and how they embraced online meetings to stay connected and committed to society. During this Volunteers' Week, on behalf of SVP, I would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude and thank all our volunteers for their faithful and continued service."

Those who attended received certificates and a memento of their service whilst enjoying afternoon tea in the gardens of Laurel Villa in Magherafelt.





Armagh Garden Party

Representatives from across St Vincent de Paul Armagh and Craigavon Area celebrated those who have devoted more than 20 years volunteering for the Society at a garden party.

Speaking at the event, Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, congratulated those who have emulated the founder of SVP, Frederic Ozanam, in their selfless acts of helping those in need. Mary said: "As Regional President I'm honoured to meet all our wonderful volunteers and it's a privilege to recognise those who have given a lifetime of service in the heart of our local communities across Armagh and Craigavon. On behalf of SVP, I would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude and thank all our volunteers for their faithful and continued service and, in particular, I would like to pay tribute to Annie Jordan who is celebrating 50 years of volunteering with SVP."

Brendan McKernan, SVP Area President for Armagh and Craigavon, added: "I would like to thank all our members who work tirelessly to help others in our Conferences across Armagh and Craigavon. I am especially proud that we have been able to host this event to recognise our long serving volunteers and show them our appreciation of their dedication."

Those who attended received certificates and a memento of their service whilst enjoying afternoon tea in the stunning gardens of Murlan House.



Mary Waide, Regional President of SVP North Region, congratulates Annie Jordan on 50 years of volunteering with SVP





Harry Retires at 91

Harry Mulholland joined the Teconnaught branch of the St Vincent de Paul in 1952, now known as Kilmore Crossgar Conference. Retiring on his 91st birthday, 20 May 2021, Harry and SVP Conference members attended mass celebrated by Fr Brendan Smyth.

Harry was presented with a papal Blessing and his wife Bernie received a bouquet of flowers. Presentations were made by Conference President Patricia McKeown and Vice President Tom Mulholland.



Dates for your diary

April

- 9 April – Drumalis Retreat
- 10 April – Palm Sunday
- 15 April – Good Friday
- 17 April – Easter Sunday

June

- 1-7 – Volunteer's Week
- 1 June – Members' Garden Party

September

- Member Roadshow Series
- 9 September – Frederic Ozanam Day
- 17 September – Drumalis Retreat
- 26-30 – Vincent's SVP Week
- 27 September – St Vincent de Paul Day

October

- 17 October – International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

November

- Launch of Annual Appeal

December

- 25 December – Christmas Day





Cover Story

SVP member Dympna Gallagher explains the thinking behind her inspirational front cover design of the 2021 Yearbook encapsulating the ethos of SVP.



The central image is a version of the 'Tree of Life' with a suggestion of a figure representing the human connection reaching out to those in need. The leaf like shapes symbolise people, large and small, to suggest both adults and children.

The colours are deeper at the outside edge leading into the centre which is brighter signifying hope or a brightness coming out of darkness. The circular image leads the viewer into the centre, suggesting 'light at the end of the tunnel'.

IN MEMORIAM



Anne Burns

It was with great sadness that the members of the Immaculate Conception Conference in Newcastle, Co Down, learned of the recent death of Anne Burns, a much loved and respected past President.

As a retired nurse, her empathy and concern, especially for the lonely and housebound, those hospitalised or living in nursing homes, was an inspiration and incentive to us all.

She was a very active Visitation member at a time when new social housing increased the work of our members.

A woman of strong faith, Anne was, in retirement, a daily mass goer. She even went that extra mile by boarding the early bus every Thursday morning to attend the 'Clonard Novena'.

In recent times, when ill health was a cross she bore with great dignity, her devoted family ensured that her daily routine of mass attendance continued quietly. She awaited that final call that came suddenly in the end on 16 December 2021.

May her gentle soul rest in peace.



Francis (Gusty) McElhone

The members of St Mary's Conference Killyclogher mourn the passing of their dear friend, Gusty McElhone. Gusty was well known throughout the locality as a true gentleman and great supporter of our local Conference.

When Gusty retired in 1996 from a long and successful career in retail, he decided to use his many talents to raise funds for SVP. His wife Anna was then the President of our local Conference, so Gusty was aware of the great need in our community. He came up with the unique idea of selling Christmas trees in the village, with all profits being donated to our local Conference. Gusty and his good friend Brian Mullan became familiar figures selling Christmas trees and wreaths in all kinds of weather. It became a very worthwhile fundraiser and remains so to this day, having just completed our 25th year selling Christmas trees.

Gusty's wisdom and generosity of spirit will long be remembered by all of us who were lucky enough to have known him.

May his gentle soul rest in peace.

He is greatly missed by us all.

IN MEMORIAM



John P. Grant

The members of St Patrick's Conference, Warrenpoint, and the local community mourn the sad loss of John who sadly passed away on 29 December 2021. His Requiem Mass took place in St Peter's Church, Warrenpoint, and he was laid to rest in his beloved Newcastle, Co Down.

John was a dedicated member of SVP for over 60 years and served the community in Newcastle before moving with his family in 1981 to Warrenpoint. Here he served as a member, held the office of President, Secretary and Treasurer, during his time with St Patrick's Conference.

John also took the necessary course required and became a Trainer for new members and was instrumental in forming and starting a new Conference in Burren. He worked with the new Conference members through their early days in what is now a very successful SVP Conference.

John also approached the then Principal of St Mark's High School, Warrenpoint, to start a SVP Youth Conference. The school was receptive to the concept and a Youth Conference was formed. Although the Youth Conference no longer exists, the staff and pupils continue their good work each year by donating a large number of beautifully presented Christmas hampers for distribution in our community.

Above all, John was a caring member who was always compassionate in his dealings with others with true Vincentian values of trust and respect for all living in our community.

We offer our sincere sympathy to all his family and would take this opportunity to thank them for the donation in lieu of flowers in memory of John.

May he rest in peace.



Society of St Vincent de Paul

Northern Region

18 Area Councils

167 Conferences



Derry City

- O L Lourdes Steelstown
- Holy Family Galliagh
- St Columba Longtower
- Our Lady Longtower
- St John Waterside
- Imm Concep Ardmore
- St Peter Strathfoyle
- St Eugene Cathedral
- Good Shepherd Gobnascale
- St Mary Creggan
- St Francis Ballymagroarty
- St Eithne Hazelbank
- The Assumption Culmore
- St Patrick Carnhill
- St Canice Pennyburn

North Derry

- St Joseph Banagher
- St Patrick Claudy
- St Canice Limavady
- St Patrick Dungiven
- St Anthony Mullabouy
- St Anne Faughanvale
- St Aidan Magilligan
- St Dismas Prison

Mid Ulster

- St Lurach Maghera
- St Columba Ballinascreen
- St Patrick Magherafelt
- Imm Concep Cookstown
- St Mary Bellaghy
- St Anne Kilrea
- St John Granaghan
- St O Plunkett Greenlough
- St Brigid Lavey

Strabane

- St Therese Sion Mills
- St Mary & Joseph Strabane
- St Patrick Leckpatrick
- St Patrick Castledegr

Omagh

- St Columba Omagh
- St Malachy Beragh
- Christ the King Strathroy
- St Davog Dromore
- Visitation Termonmaguirc
- St Patrick Drumquin
- St Mary Killyclogher
- St Lawrence Fintona

North Region, 196-200 Antrim Road,
Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT15 2AJ

Phone: 028 9035 1561 Email: info@svpni.co.uk

www.svp.ie

Fermanagh

Blessed Virgin Enniskillen
St Molaise Irvinstown
Imm Con Newtownbutler
Holy Cross Lisnaskea
St Joseph Ederney
St Ninnidh Derrylin
St Mary Tempo
St Nailes Kinawley

East Tyrone

Holy Family Coalisland
St Patrick Dungannon
St Mary Stewartstown
St Bridget Clonoe
St John Moy
St Ciaran Ballygawley

Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon

St Patrick Portadown
St Peter & St Paul Lurgan
St Patrick Armagh
St Joseph Maghaberry
St Patrick Banbridge
St Colman Dromore
St Anthony Craigavon
St Patrick Aghagallon
St Patrick Keady
Holy Family Seagoe
St Mary Tullysaran
St John XXIII Magheralin
St John Paul II Whitecross

Newry & Mourne

St Brigid Newry
St Joseph Newry
Sacred Heart Cloghogue
St John Hilltown
St Bronagh Rostrevor

St Patrick Warrenpoint
St Colman Kilkeel
St Joachim Attical
St Benedict NT Hamilton
St Mary Burren

Kilmegan

St Malachy Castlewellan
Sacred Heart Dundrum
St Malachy Kilcoo
St Patrick Ballynahinch
Christ the King Drumaness
Imm Concept Newcastle
St Patrick Leitrim
St Michael Finnis

East Down

St Nicholas Ardglass/S'ford
St Joseph Killough/Bright
St Patrick Saul
St Mochai Saintfield
Stella Maris Strangford
St Joseph Crossgar/Kilmore
St Patrick Downpatrick

N Down & Ards

St Bernard Clairvaux Kircubbin
St Comgall Bangor
St Patrick Newtownards
St Patrick Portaferry
Holy Redeemer Ballyholme
St Colmcille Holywood

Mid Antrim

St Mary Ahoghill
St Comgall Antrim
St Joseph Antrim
Blessed Virgin Ballymena
St Mary Portglenone
St Mary Glenravel

St Joseph Glenavy
St MacNissi Randalstown
St James Aldergrove
SVP Toome & Duneane

N Ant & NE Derry

Errigal SVP
St John Coleraine
St Malachy Coleraine
St Mary Portstewart
St Patrick Ballymoney
St Patrick Portrush
St Brigid & St Patrick
Ballycastle
St Mary & St Columba
Rasharkin
Sacred Heart Cloughmills

East Antrim

Sacred Heart Ballyclare
St Mary Cushendall
St Patrick Glenariffe
St Comgall Larne
St Nicholas Carrickfergus
OL Lourdes Whitehead

North Belfast

St Mary Whitehouse
St James Whiteabbey
St Gerard & St Mary
SVP Ligoniel
Holy Cross
Sacred Heart
Our Lady Deanby Gardens
Holy Family
St Patrick
Ch of the Resurrection
St Colman Greenisland
St Therese Somerton Road
St Mary Carnmoney

S&E Belfast

St Brigid
St Malachy
Holy Rosary
St Bernadette
St Colmcille B'Hackamore
Imm Heart Mary Drumbo
St Matthew

West Belfast

Corpus Christi
St Luke Twinbrook
St Anne Dunmurry
St Patrick Lisburn
St Patrick Derriagh
St Michael
St Oliver Plunkett
Most Holy Redeemer
Holy Trinity
St John
St Paul
St Teresa
St Peter & St Vincent
Ch of the Nativity Poleglass
St Joseph Hannahstown
Our Lady Queen of Peace
Christ the Redeemer
St Peter the Rock S'Ford
St Pio Prison
St Agnes



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