

THE

AUTUMN 2015



BULLETIN

MAGAZINE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



**CARING FOR OUR
'COMMON HOME'**

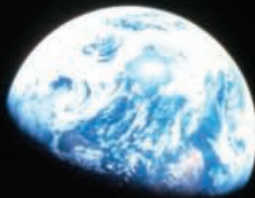
**LIVING ON THIS PLANET AS IF WE
HAVE ANOTHER ONE TO GO TO**

€2.95

THE VOICE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN IRELAND

“Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do.....”

~John Lennon~



OZANAM BULLETIN

AUTUMN 2015
Published Quarterly



This magazine is named in honour of the principal founder of the Society of St.Vincent de Paul, Frederic Ozanam

BULLETIN EDITORIAL ADDRESS

SVP National Office, SVP House,
91-92 Sean McDermott St, Dublin 1
Phone: 01 8386990, Editor's Email:
editorsvpbulletin@gmail.com

EDITOR:
LINDA O'CONNELL

ASSISTANT EDITOR
SARAH EUSTACE

EDITORIAL ADVISORS:
JOHNMARK MCCAFFERTY
JIM WALSH

DESIGN: PICA DESIGN, CORK
PRINTED BY: W&G BAIRD LTD
GREYSTOSTONE PRESS, ANTRIM

CIRCULATION: 12,000

ADVERTISING RATES ON
REQUEST TO THE EDITOR

RELEVANT ARTICLES ARE
WELCOME. SEND TO THE EDITOR.



www.facebook.com/SVPireland



www.twitter.com/SVP_Ireland

Contents

4	GEOFF MEAGHER REFLECTION
5	PLANNED TAX CUTS – CORMAC STAUNTON
6	WE NEED TO INVEST IN WHAT MATTERS IN BUDGET 2016
7	FOCUS ON SAFEGUARDING IN SVP
8	CARING FOR OUR 'COMMON HOME' - POPE FRANCIS' NEW ENCYCLICAL
10	CLIMATE JUSTICE AND ENERGY POVERTY
12	PRESIDENT HIGGINS CLIMATE CHANGE
14	THE BULLETIN INTERVIEW
16	LAUDATO SI.....ANOTHER SILENT SPRING?
18	CAN WE BE THE FIRST GENERATION TO END POVERTY?
20	MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT
22	ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CLIMATE CHANGE
24	SVP VISION TRAINING
26	ANNUAL APPEAL
28	COLLEGE / THIRD LEVEL CONFERENCES - AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE YOUNG SVP PROGRAMME
30	CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE POOR
32	A PERSONAL VIEW ON SOCIAL JUSTICE
33	HOLIDAY HAVEN - CLARE LODGE REOPENS
34	IRISH RURAL LINK
36	JUST NOW
38	MABS
40	AN END TO MONEY LENDING
41	NATIONAL AGRESSO ROLL OUT AND SUPPORT
42	SVP NATIONWIDE
51	IN TRIBUTE

One of the most influential 'environmental' photographs ever taken was of the earth rising over the moon on Christmas Eve 1968 by astronaut William Anders during the Apollo 8 mission - see across. This god's-eye perspective, emphasizing as it does the beauty of Earth and its fragility, had a huge emotional impact.

"Back in the 60's it gave us a sense that the world was a place we all shared together; we couldn't see any borders from space", Anders said.

Almost fifty years on, we can only imagine what he must have felt as he looked up at his home world, a planet now inhabited by over 7 billion people.

An environmental movement, given new impetus in the sixties, has long since urged people not to turn their backs and ignore what was happening on the planet. It is our duty as humans, they contended, to look after each other, the environment, the very Earth on which we live, irrespective of where we are from or what our background. After all this is the only home we have, they reminded us; we don't have another one to go to and it cannot cope with the use mankind is making of it.

What has happened, however, is that, despite incontrovertible scientific proof of a human impact on climate, large parts of the 'first world' have been living in denial, maintaining a lifestyle that continues to produce unsustainable amounts of greenhouse gases. This is already having a huge impact on the planet, giving rise to climate change affecting all: humans, animals and plants.

If something is not done immediately to address this situation (and some would say it is already too late to fully

mitigate the effects of already increased mean temperatures) the world will be faced with a new migration phenomenon: 'climate refugees'. Resources such as food, water and shelter will become so precious as to be fought over in a way that oil and minerals were in the past.

When Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission spoke to the European Parliament in early September he explained how, so far this year, over 500,000 people have made their way to Europe, the vast majority of that number fleeing from wars in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, the chaos in Libya and dictatorship in Eritrea. "We Europeans should remember well that Europe is a continent where nearly everyone has at one time been a refugee. Our common history is marked by millions of Europeans fleeing from religious or political persecution, from war, dictatorship, or oppression. There is no religion, no belief, no philosophy when it comes to refugees" said Mr. Juncker.

Images of the horrors of this exodus, particularly the photograph of the body of a three-year-old boy lying on his tummy, head to one side, eyes closed and sleeplike on a Turkish beach, made us all realise that there is nothing remote about this latest crisis and that its impact is as unsettling as it is immediate.

In this edition you will read several articles covering the climate crisis and the impact it is having on the vulnerable and you will recognise how, in the context of today's refugee emergency, a fringe green issue has become a mainstream moral one facing us all. Starting with the calls of Rachel Carson in the early 60's to take stock of how we are treating the planet, you can then read Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment, Laudato Si, criticising "the harm we have inflicted" on the Earth and continue to President Higgins' speech "The Power of Ideas for Climate" at the Summit of Conscience in Paris.

Is there still hope that we can act and change? Another article by Audry Deane, SVP Social Justice, will describe how leaders from all over the world came together in the United Nations at the end of September to sign a new global agreement. These Global Goals aim to end poverty, to fight inequality and to tackle climate change.

The 17 objectives outlined show what needs to change in order to build a better, fairer world for everyone. Irish NGOs, including SVP, played a strong role in the shaping of this new document by writing to the Taoiseach before the summit to pledge their support for these SGGs and to request an Irish Action Plan stating how Ireland intends to tackle inequalities to get better and fairer outcomes for all.

Irish religious and lay people have an incredible history of assisting in overseas development. As the present group of warzone refugees knocks on Europe's front door, we in this country can again take the lead and not be found wanting in our response to the crisis.

The over-riding point of this issue, however, is that this present emergency, deserving as it is of our fullest attention in weeks and months ahead, may be only a tragic prologue for what is to come in a climate-changed world.

Linda O'Connell

NATIONAL PRESIDENT
GEOFF MEAGHER

OPINION

MORE DEMAND FOR SERVICES



This is the time of year when our 10,500 Members spread across 1,200 Conferences throughout the thirty two counties , together with our support Staff, experience a vast increase in the demand for our services. Back to school and college, the approaching colder weather and in many instances over hanging debt issues all contribute to that increased demand. I again thank our dedicated Members and Staff who always respond to the need as best they can. As I mentioned in a previous Article the Society is encouraging our Members to work , where appropriate, with those in need with the aim of getting them back to self sufficiency. Such an approach does involve more time by our Members in really understanding the need but the results of success are tremendous, particularly for the person being helped. Our dedicated Area Presidents are visiting their Conferences , understanding the needs on the ground, and giving ongoing advice and support.

The challenges faced by the Society are many and varied. These challenges potentially will be added to over the coming months as refugees arrive in Ireland. Already Conferences and Members, either as part of the Society or individually, are involved in various support activities for refugees. The National Management Council of the Society has already agreed that we will play our part with supporting the settlement of those who come to Ireland, in whatever way that help is appropriate. We do recognise that those coming will need supports in many ways that are outside the expertise of Society Members , however we will be there when needed. The Society urges Government to be open and generous in their support and we are critical of the slowness of European Governments to act in a unified and effective manner to manage the crisis. It is also worth noting that the International Society of Vincent De Paul in Paris have provided both direct and indirect help to refugees and refugee camps in various countries, this happens quietly long before issues receive international attention and will continue long after the publicity has waned, when the real work of support often starts.

In recognising the need to provide support for those who come to Ireland we must not forget our own. We continue to have a homeless crisis that despite much comment and promises continues to get worse. This needs a once and for all combined attack by all of the agencies involved to agree a coherent plan that addresses the issue, this needs to be backed up with the necessary resources and timelines. The Society again is quietly playing it's part in meeting the need, as well as our Conferences supporting directly those who are homeless and / or living in hotel accommodation we provide over three hundred bed nights of accommodation in our fourteen hostels spread across the country. In addition much comment is made that austerity is at an end and consumer spending is up. Whilst that may be true for some ,our Members continue to meet people weekly where making ends meet continues to be a challenge, that particularly applies to many people in work on low to middle incomes. Demand on our services is as high as ever and the majority of our Conferences do not have sufficient resources to meet the need.

Whilst demand is high we are confident of the great generosity of the Irish public towards the Society, this has never waned . We are grateful for that ongoing support and it makes the work of our 10,500 Members across the country possible every week of the year.

Geoff Meagher
National President
SVP Ireland

Planned Tax Cuts Likely to Increase Inequality

Cormac Staunton, Policy Analyst at TASC, the Think-Tank for Action on Social Change

The Government's Spring Statement was seen by some as a bit of a damp squib, with very little detail about economic policy. However, drilling down into what the two Ministers said, we see that there is a clear intention being laid out.

Size of Tax Cuts

The sheer scale of the tax cuts announced highlights a significant lost opportunity. Despite recent increases, Ireland's income taxes are still low-to-middle compared to OECD countries (see diagram below). By choosing to cut taxes further, the Government has chosen to forego €2 billion in additional tax revenue over the next three years.

This is income that could otherwise be spent on health, education, public transport and public housing. That sort of investment could really be used to tackle some of the inequalities highlighted in TASC's publication *Cherishing All Equally*. And it could have been achieved without raising taxes on anyone.

Setting the Parameters

The Government have stated that it will allocate between €600 and €750 million in additional expenditure in 2016. However, as Minister Howlin stated in his speech, this is largely to keep up with rapid demographic changes. While there will be a 'National Economic Dialogue' with civil society to discuss spending, it is not clear whether this will include a discussion of the balance of tax cuts versus spending increases

"Those groups have obligations too. We cannot meet all the demands of each and every one. To try to do so would be to bankrupt the State. Proposals for increased expenditure should be matched by genuine attempts to find matching funding, commensurate with the proposal. No party can ignore the general parameters under which public policy has to be made. Our engagement will be firmly rooted within these parameters."

Impact of Tax cuts

Which brings us to the impact of the tax cuts. While the statement made no mention of what the tax cuts will look like, Minister Noonan helpfully stated in later media appearances that "We'll mirror what I did last year. We'll direct the benefits of the tax cuts to low-paid people and to middle-income people. Everybody will get something but we will cap the benefit, as we did last year, so that there aren't disproportionate gains for people on very high incomes."

Assuming that by 'mirror' the Minister meant 'repeat' (rather than 'do the opposite') then we know exactly what the impact of tax changes in Budget 2016 will be on incomes. While there

Cormac Staunton

Policy Analyst

Cormac Staunton holds an MSc in Economic Policy, a post-graduate diploma in Statistics and a BA in Economic and Social Studies, all from Trinity College Dublin. He spent ten years working for the international development and humanitarian NGO Concern Worldwide in a variety of roles in Dublin, New York and Africa. Since joining TASC in January 2014, his work has focused on analysing economic inequality in Ireland, with a particular focus on the tax system



will be some benefit for low and middle income earners, the overall effect of changes to USC and income tax rates and bands will be highly regressive.

In Budget 2015, the majority of the benefit, both in relative terms and absolute terms, went to those between €35,000 and €70,000, with the greater benefit higher up. In fact, last year €70,000 was the income 'sweet-spot' where the benefits in both absolute and relative terms were maximised. An income of €70,000 puts you in the top 10% of income earners in Ireland. For Budget 2016, the government have signalled that they will cut the middle rate of USC from 7% to 6%. While this will help those between €17,576 and €70,000, someone with an annual income of €18,000 will gain €4 per year; while those on €70,000 (and everyone above that) will gain upwards of €500 per year.

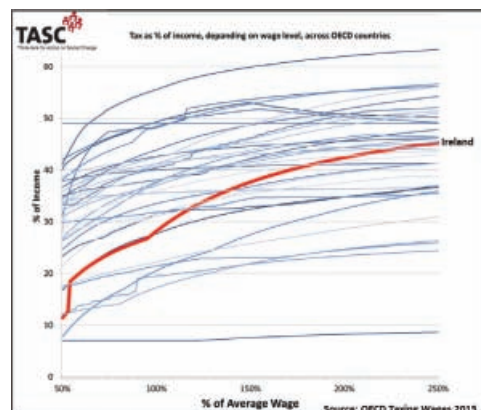
TASC's analysis is consistent with the ESRI research which looked at the effect of all tax and welfare changes, and showed that Budget 2015 lead to income losses at the bottom, but increases at the top.

As the ESRI put it:

"This pattern of losses in the bottom half of the income distribution, declining as income rises, and gains in the upper reaches, rising with income can clearly be described as regressive." While the losses in this picture are due to water charges, the distribution will be similar in 2016 if the government pursues the same tax strategy: those at the top will gain far more than those at the bottom. The government has signalled that it intends to do this every year until 2020.

If they do, we can expect that economic inequality will rise accordingly.

You can follow Cormac on Twitter @Cormac_Staunton



We need to Invest in What Matters in Budget 2016

Liz Kerrins
Social Policy Development Officer



SVP is asking the Irish Government to Invest in What Matters in Budget 2016. But what do we mean by 'what matters'? Surely all Government spending matters to people's wellbeing: health, the arts, agriculture, childcare, elder care, local authorities, justice, community services, housing, social welfare, sport, education, energy, communications - the list goes on.

All Government Budgetary expenditure is important; particularly to the most economically vulnerable who cannot afford to go to the private market for basics like housing, healthcare, education, and who can't always rely on the jobs market for a reliable income. And it's not just social spending that matters, but taxation, the means by which Government funds expenditure.

Budget 2016 is still an austerity Budget

The monies available to Government for national Budgets are finite. The Government needs to develop Budget priorities. As SVP National President Geoff Meagher said in the previous edition of the Bulletin, Budgets articulate our values as a nation. Budgets reflect choices. This is why SVP is asking the Government to make SVP's priorities their priorities for Budget 2016, and subsequent Budgets.

Despite the positive noises currently coming from Government about economic recovery, Budget 2016 is still an austerity budget. The allocated spending for Budget 2015 was €50bn; in 2004, that figure was €87.3bn.

That's quite a drop in spending; and it explains why SVP has been keeping its finger in the dam for the last eight years, supporting those that continue to live with the legacy of previous Budgetary choices.

The Government said in its Spring Statement that it only has the space to increase spending for 2016 by €1.5bn when compared with 2015, half of which they plan to spend on income tax decreases. So there is limited space for additional increases in spending. Indeed, some of this €750m spending increase is already taken up by promises made in the 2015 Budget for 2016, such as the additional €5 in Child Benefit per child per month, which will cost around €70m or so.

SVP wants social investment

You can see from these figures how tight Budget 2016 is going to be. This is why we believe 'what matters' is asking the Government to make wise choices that will truly benefit the people that SVP assists and advocates for. We are asking for Government to invest in:

- housing supply, especially social housing, and for the Government to deliver on its own targets in Social Housing 2020 Strategy;
- quality accessible affordable early childhood care and education (ECCE) and afterschool care (ASC) to support good children's outcomes and help parents, particularly lone parents, access the work force; and
- the energy efficiency of the home of those with low-incomes, including the private rented sector.

Spending money on the above really is an 'investment' that benefits us all, and not just in the short-term. Can you imagine if Irish Governments had put our Celtic Tiger money into social housing? Would we have the current homelessness crisis? If they invested in retrofitting homes, would SVP have spent 46m from 2009-2014 assisting with energy costs? Would lone parents who had their One Parent Family Payment taken in July 2015 and are required to seek employment be in such dire straits if they could access affordable ECCE and ASC?

With the 2017 Election fast approaching, the Social Justice team in National Office is in the process of meeting with political parties to discuss not only Budget 2016, but also Election Manifestos. It is these Manifestos that should, if the party is elected, form the basis for their Programmes for Government. And it is their record on fulfilling their Programme that is currently obsessing Labour and Fine Gael.

It's an uphill battle, but we have to encourage Governments to think longer-term and to think about social investment.

The full SVP Budget 2016 submission can be found at : www.svp.ie/WhatMatters2016

Focus on Safeguarding in SVP

Mandy Nordell, National Safeguarding Manager

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has been working with vulnerable people since it was established in Ireland in 1844. A large range of services and supports are provided – home visitation to families experiencing poverty and social exclusion, hostel accommodation for men who are experiencing homelessness, a summer holiday in Sunshine House for children who need a break, visits to those in hospital or prisons who may not have other visitors or family support.

The Society also works with other organisations to help meet the needs of vulnerable children and adults such as St Vincent's Orphanage in Glasnevin Co Dublin, opened in 1865 and closed in 1973, the Society assisted with funding and building management and the day to day care of the boys was undertaken by the Christian Brothers. In Cork in the 1940's SVP were appointed Probation Officer under the Criminal Justice Administration Act 1914 and worked with the Courts to keep young offenders under the care of the Society in a house at Frankfield Terrace, Cork City (closed now) rather than committing the boys to Borstal. In the present day the Society works in partnership with other voluntary and statutory agencies such as De Paul Trust to provide homeless services for men at Back Lane Hostel in Dublin 2. De Paul Trust provides day to day operations management and an SVP Conference provide a befriending service to the residents.

Regardless of the type of contact The Society has with vulnerable children, families or individuals the safety and welfare of these groups is always of paramount importance to SVP. This commitment is very much enforced by SVP's core values of support and friendship; promoting self-sufficiency; and working for social justice.

Safeguarding is the term used today to describe measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. While the term safeguarding probably did not exist in 1833 when Blessed Frederic Ozanam commenced the work of The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in the Sorbonne in Paris, France – this message of protection and promoting rights was no doubt central to the work of the first SVP visitation members.

In today's world – 2015 – we are all more aware of the risks to children and adults as they have been particularly highlighted by the many inquiries and reports into unacceptable services and approaches to the vulnerable. The first Inquiry of this type dates back to 1993 with the details of the Kilkenny Incest Investigation and then more recently the Murphy Report into the management of child sexual abuse allegations by the Archdiocese of

Dublin (2009), the Ryan Report (2009), investigating abuse and neglect in schools and residential settings run by religious orders and the Roscommon Child Care Inquiry (2010) examining the involvement of the HSE with a family where there were ongoing concerns about neglect, alcohol use, supervision, poor home conditions and safety issues.

Much can be learned from these appalling stories of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, and neglect and legislation and national best practice guidelines have been reviewed and developed to incorporate the recommendations and findings.

Safeguarding in SVP is constantly under review and development also. This process is led by SVP's National Safeguarding Committee chaired by Maire Mc Mahon (National Vice President). The Committee consists of Regional representatives with a special interest in this area who provide advice to the National Management Council (SVP Board of Trustees) on the development of best practice in safeguarding for all activities across the Society's work.

Key areas of safeguarding being implemented by SVP are:

- Good recruitment and selection processes including garda vetting or AccessNI checking to ensure only appropriate persons can become members of SVP and have access to vulnerable families with children or vulnerable individuals;
- Appropriate training for volunteers and employees to raise awareness of safeguarding and abuse issues and how to respond appropriately;
- Regional Designated Liaison Persons who are trained and supported to respond to concerns of abuse or harm identified by volunteers, members and employees and who can liaise with the Statutory Authorities (TUSLA, An Garda Síochána) and share appropriate information – contact details of Regional DLP'S are available at www.svp.ie;
- Guidance on managing activities that involve children or vulnerable adults and codes of conduct for volunteers and staff to ensure appropriate behaviour and safety for all involved;
- SVP National Safeguarding policies and procedures for the protection and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults which are available at www.svp.ie.

The area of safeguarding requires constant vigilance to ensure the safety of all vulnerable people – children, young people and vulnerable adults using SVP services. This message is core to the values of SVP and inherent in our care and consideration for the people we help. Updates in relation to safeguarding in SVP are available at www.svp.ie or contact Mandy Nordell SVP National Safeguarding Manager at 01 8299010 for more information.

Caring for our 'common home'

Pope Francis' new encyclical is a radical call to tackle climate change

Cathal Barry- Journalist with The Irish Catholic and co-author of a new companion and study guide to the encyclical Praise Be To You by Pope Francis

Pope Francis is revolutionising the papacy in more ways than one. Ever since his election in 2013, the Pope has been making subtle but profound changes to the Church he now heads.

Actions speak louder than words in this social media era, meaning that Pope Francis' simple yet powerful gestures have been both well reported and received around the globe. More impressive still has been the Pope's ability to capture the imagination of Catholics and non-Catholics alike through his uniquely styled papal documents.

The Pope's open, straightforward and down-to-earth style of communication even made his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, an international bestseller. Through the use of colloquial phrases, metaphors and musings, Pope Francis has not only altered the Church's message, he's changed the script.

While it is important to note that there hasn't been any modifications in doctrine, there has certainly been a shift in emphasis under Francis. Significantly, by constantly highlighting mercy, he has made clear that he expects the Church to apply its teaching with compassion.

The Pope's newly released encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, is a perfect example of such compassion. Pope Francis begins his much anticipated encyclical on the environment by criticising "the harm we have inflicted" on the Earth "by our irresponsible use and abuse" of God-given goods. Addressed to "every person living on this planet", the document serves as a stinging critique of humanity's treatment of the environment, urgently calling for action. Stating that the Earth is "among the most abandoned and maltreated" of the poor, Pope Francis claims the "violence present in our hearts" is "reflected in the "symptoms of sickness" evident in the soil, water, air and all forms of life.

The Pope warns early on in his encyclical that the destruction of the environment is "extremely serious" not only because God has "entrusted the world" to humanity, but because "human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement".

"Authentic human development has a moral character. It presumes full respect for the human person, but it must also be concerned for the world around us," he says.

Pope Francis sets out an "urgent challenge" to protect the environment from any further destruction, calling on society to work together "to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change". "We need a conversation

which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all," he says.

One glance at this encyclical and we know that we are reading the work of someone free from political and ideological bias and from any manipulation by business and economic interests. It is written by someone who cares solely and passionately about the God-given responsibility we human beings bear for the state of our planet.

The experiences of people on the ground, in every corner of the world, have been given a voice in this document, among them the poorest of the poor who are often voiceless.

Recognising that God's grace can be at work in the secular sciences and we are challenged to hear what they have to tell us about our stewardship of creation, Pope Francis invited the co-operation of over 200 specialists and institutions from around the globe in writing this document. There is no attempt to subject these disciplines to Christian faith and doctrine. Their methodologies and approaches are fully respected. Nor is there any attempt to make claims about the state of the Earth that cannot be substantiated. Pope Francis acknowledges readily that in some cases there are conflicting credible opinions, and that further research is needed.

In terms of Christian doctrine, there is nothing new in the encyclical. In the introduction, Pope Francis reminds us of the various statements on the environment by his recent predecessors. What is new is the sheer breadth of concrete and irrefutable evidence he presents in regard to our complicity in the destruction of the human environment. New also is the sense of urgency that demands from us what Pope St John Paul II called "a global ecological conversion".

Pope Francis refers to St Francis of Assisi, for whom care of the Earth and care for the poor of the Earth are two sides of the one coin. This is the key message of the encyclical. There is an "inseparable bond", Pope Francis tells us, between "concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace".

There is also an inseparable bond between care for the environment, that is, the ecology of nature, and concern about sexuality and the family, that is, human ecology. Citing Pope Benedict XVI, he says that "the book of nature is one and indivisible". Catholics are required to recognise and respect this unity.

Laudato Si' should be read in conjunction with the Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel), which is the programmatic document of Pope Francis' pontificate. In The Joy of the Gospel we are invited to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Laudato Si' makes clear that authentic discipleship requires us to take care of the Earth as our common home.

Pope Francis has always been drawn to a particular method for recognising and responding to various situations as Christians. It is called "See, Judge, Act". Cardinal Joseph Cardijn (1882 - 1967) first proposed this method when he founded a movement for poor workers, the Young Christian Workers.

Pope Francis follows this method in Laudato Si'. He invites us to see, hear and experience the reality "on the ground" for people and their communities. He then provides a judgment, that is, an informed analysis of the situation, along with findings and conclusions, on the basis of what he has observed and following widespread consultation. This analysis is formed in the light of the various sciences but also that of the Gospel and Catholic social teaching. Finally, he proposes actions, concrete changes in our behaviour; that are necessary if we are to be faithful to what we claim to believe. In this he makes an appeal not only to Christians but also to every human being. Laudato Si' is addressed to everyone, believer and unbeliever alike.

A new Companion and Study Guide to the Encyclical Praise Be To You by Pope Francis has been launched.

Centred on the Laudato Si', this new document is the ideal resource for anyone who may be intimidated by the length, breadth and depth of detail in the Pope's 'green encyclical', or for those eager readers interested in unpacking its contents even further.

It's the perfect tool for both personal and group reflection; while it's easy to read style and sub sectioned chapters ensure its accessibility to all readers, young and old alike.

Authored by theologian Fr Eamonn Conway and journalist Cathal Barry, this unique guide is a collaboration between The Irish Catholic newspaper and Trócaire.

The guide itself follows the 'see, judge, act' method, outlining what readers are being invited to observe, what judgements they are being invited to form, and finally, what action the Pope is urging them to consider.

It includes a Forward by Trócaire's executive director Éamonn Meehan, a Prologue by Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, as well as a number of case studies, which give real meaning to the Pope's radical.

For more information or to place an order phone 01 6874095 or email geraldine@irishcatholic.ie

ORDER NOW

AN EXCLUSIVE TEXT AND STUDY GUIDE TO POPE FRANCIS' LANDMARK ENCYCLICAL ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

EDITED BY

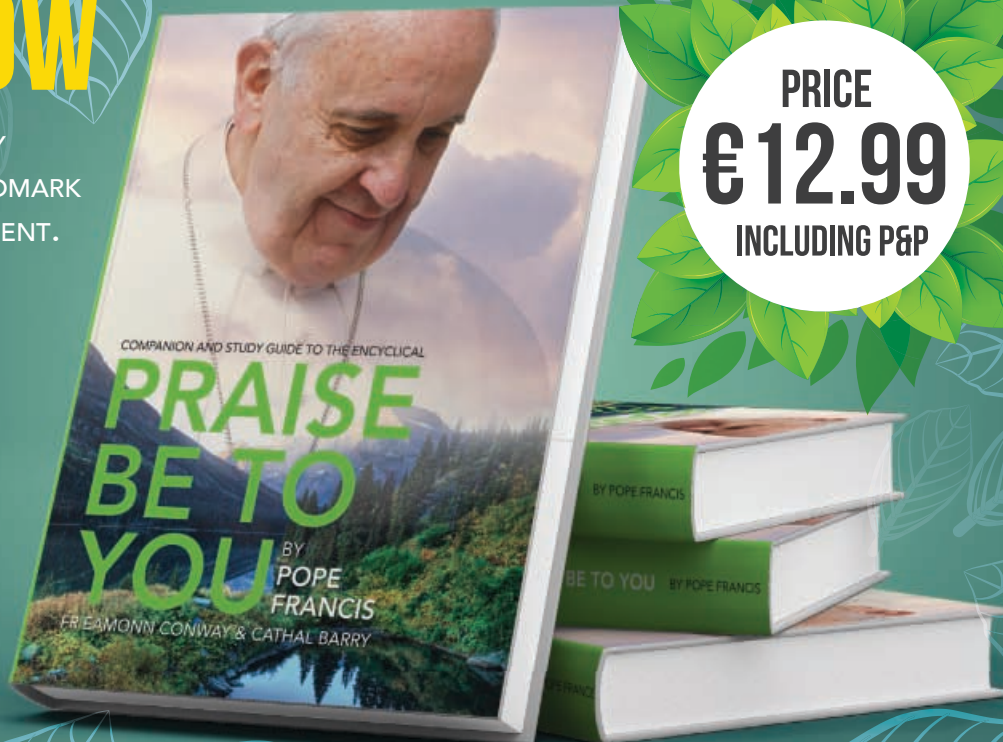
FR EAMONN CONWAY
AND CATHAL BARRY

FOREWORD BY

ÉAMONN MEEHAN
(CEO OF TROCAIRE)

PROLOGUE BY

ARCHBISHOP
EAMON MARTIN



CALL 01 6874095 OR EMAIL: GERALDINE@IRISHCATHOLIC.IE

Climate Justice & Energy Poverty

*Dr Lorna Gold
Head of Policy and Advocacy*

Lorna Gold is Head of Policy and Advocacy with Trócaire, where she has worked for the past 13 years. She is originally from Glasgow and studied Geography prior to working in academia. She heads a team of six policy staff in Trócaire and writes extensively on issues relating to international development from the perspective of Catholic Social Teaching. She hosts a popular blog www.charityandjustice.wordpress.com exploring links between issues of charity and justice.





Over the past few months, climate change has risen once again up the national and international agenda. As the Oireachtas returns after the summer recess, one of the first things it needs to do is to sign into law the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill. This long-delayed piece of legislation will finally set out the framework Ireland intends to follow as it plays its role in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Whilst the law is by no means strong enough, last minute amendments to it following the Trócaire climate justice conference and Pope's encyclical on the environment in June have strengthened it somewhat. It now contains the principle of climate justice – something that could be important if future challenges to the law are to be made on grounds of inequality and poverty. It now has a more independent advisory council.

The issue of a fair energy transition has become a central issue in the fight against climate change. The cost of fuel and the number of people facing energy poverty in Ireland has risen dramatically in recent years. Supports such as the fuel allowance and other measures to combat energy poverty are critical. As the need for climate mitigation plans become more pressing, a key issue will be to ensure that the necessary transition to renewable energy does not impact negatively on those living in poverty.

This is a pressing issue for Trócaire also in our overseas work. Millions of people across the world lack access to sources of affordable clean energy. The majority of the world's poor still rely on basic sources of fuel such as firewood for cooking and heating. This has a damaging impact not only on the environment, but also on their health. Trócaire has several programmes supporting the introduction of safe cooking stoves and solar energy as a cheap and clean alternative – but this work needs to be dramatically scaled up.

Trócaire has recently joined the growing global call for divestment from fossil fuels. If the world is to stay within the agreed "safe limits" of no more than 2C, then scientists tell us that 80% of known fossil fuel reserves need to stay in the ground. This presents a critical justice issue as many of the economies of the poorest countries rely on fossil fuel investment, as well as the subsidiary industries on which they rely, as a major source of revenues. East Africa, for example, is in the middle of a major oil boom following significant oil field discoveries in Turkana and surrounding regions. Any threat to those revenues is also a threat to the jobs and development prospects of millions of people. Any calls on their governments to divest of this valuable source of finance must be matched by willingness of rich countries to compensate for losses and aid technology transfer.

Unless there is a commensurate effort in ensuring access to affordable, clean energy for all, especially the poorest people both in Ireland and abroad, the energy transition, including divestment from fossil fuels, which is essential to combat climate change, could become a further injustice on the world's most vulnerable people.

Please log on to www.trocaire.org/takeaction for details on how to take action on climate justice

'The Power of Ideas for Climate - Making a New Beginning'



Towards the end of July this year President Michael D Higgins was invited to give an address at the Summit of Conscience in Paris organised by French President Francois Hollande.

It is a gathering of spiritual and religious leaders from around the world to answer the question of why people care about the climate.

“Climate change is the great challenge of our time, already challenging most severely those already poor, for whom, if we do not act, it will deliver devastation. Ours may be the final generation with the opportunity to effectively respond to the now urgent effects of climate change. This year thus marks a defining moment for the future of humanity. In this year 2015 we will decide on what must be a shared universal response to climate change - and on a practical agenda for action. We will also this year decide on what should be sought as ‘development’ in the wake of the Millennium Development Goals, in response to global poverty and increasing global inequality”. said Mr. Higgins.

He said people must accept the evidence of science, and unequivocally reject the position of those who would obscure the scientific reality of climate change and that there can be no compromise with truth. “We must acknowledge that the human causes behind climate change have identifiable historical contexts, grounded in forms of development and industrialisation that were based on the exploitation of fossil fuels, with an assumption of infinite growth” stated Mr Higgins.

We owe an ecological debt to poorer nations and need to confront individualism, and insatiable consumption accompanied by unconscionable levels of inequality. The narrow paradigm of progress now threatens the destruction of the habitat, which humans inhabit as well as precipitating unsustainable levels of poverty and inequality in our human communities he believes. Quoting Terri Swearingen he said many “are living on this planet as if we have another one to go to”. Yet at the heart of most cultures there is, disposition towards ethics, a disposition that goes beyond reciprocity, that seeks to transcend, and is in harmony with the wonder of nature” he said.

He told the audience that we need change our behavior and replace it with a new thinking which reconnects us to our planet of diversity, and set a new balance between the discourses of economics, ethics and integrated ecology.

This new thinking he felt is already emerging. “The return of interest to the age-old human institution of “the commons,” the interdependence and shared responsibility it encapsulates, is but one example” he said.

In the spiritual traditions, and I instance contemporary writing such as ‘Laudate Sf, the concept of “ecology of integration” is now prominent, and in turn from the tradition of human rights, the theories of “climate justice” and of environmental rights as



human rights have come forward” said President Higgins. All these spiritual contributions and examples he gave he believes combine to inform a new ethical framework on which a new harmonious and sustainable paradigm not only of development, but of true security can be build.

The actions required to tackle the climate, the president added was the need to be candid about the global capacity to change and the obstacles that are there, and that in many instances it will take moral courage to swim against the tide to change our models of economics and development.

He told the summit that what is needed is an inclusive, humane, non-judgmental engagement with the voices of those most affected by climate change and that we need to place those people at the centre of proposed solutions.

In ending his speech, Mr Higgins warned when history records the actions we take at this moment of truth we will not have the excuse that we did not understand or that we did not know. “We have been gifted, in a global communications order; with the knowledge and the opportunity to act” he stated.

Would it not be the greatest of all human achievements he said if we were to succeed in delivering the benefits of science, the shared wisdom, instinct and intuition of diverse cultures, and the products of reason and faith; and in delivering all of these through new, balanced models of development, ecology and society?

Then we might say, that when facing the fullness of our challenge, we made the decisions that offered a shelter that protected the vulnerable of the present, and at the same time, offering creative and imaginative possibilities for future generations.

Let us succeed together.

Speech & Photos source: www.president.ie



JOHN MONAGHAN:

“When everyone hates you, you know you’re doing something right!”



In July, long standing SVP member John Monaghan was awarded The Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice award, the highest papal honour that can be bestowed on a layperson, for his contribution to the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in fighting poverty and to the advancement of SVP's role as one of Ireland's leading organisation campaigning to end poverty and inequality.

The presentation of the award was made at a special mass at the SVP national office in Dublin by The Most Reverend Diarmuid Martin Archbishop of Dublin.

John was kind enough to give up some of his time for an interview with The Bulletin to talk about his involvement with SVP and what it means to him to be awarded the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice.

“After that phone call...there was no turning back!”

John first volunteered with the Society in Leixlip in late 1985 when a friend phoned to ask if he could help to bring some of the older people to the Conference Christmas party. The Society quickly identified the passion and talents that John could bring to SVP, and from that point on there was no turning back! From 1985 to 2010 John was an active member of the Leixlip Conference, and in addition to Visitation work he was also twice appointed to the roles of Treasurer and President.

During this period The Society was beginning to develop and formalise its approach to advocating for Social Justice and in 1998 Noel Clear, National President of SVP at the time, asked

John to set up and chair a National Social Policy Group. The importance of Social Justice was soon elevated within the Society and John was appointed National Vice President by Brian O'Reilly – a position he held until 2012.

John remembers this period as an incredibly busy one, putting together Pre-Budget Submissions, addressing Ministers and the Oireachtas Committee, and appearances on radio and television shows from Morning Ireland at 7am to Vincent Brown at 11pm, and many others in between. The calls came in 7 days a week and John recalls numerous holiday when his mobile often rang with 'urgent' requests from journalists asking for comments on various issues.

“When everyone hates you, you know you’re doing something right!”

John is passionate about the role SVP has to play in addressing issues of social injustice.

“SVP has a distinct voice, based on the ethos and vision of Frederick Ozanam, Saint Vincent de Paul, and our experiences on the ground. And as a non-political organisation we could give out to each successive government! I always think that when everyone hates you, you know you’re doing something right!”

When asked about the meaning of the Social Justice and advocacy work of the Society he said “It is part of our mission statement and isn’t optional for the Society, it is mandatory. This goes back to Saint Vincent de Paul, he said that you can’t be content with just tiding someone over; you have to look at the conditions that got them there and advocate to change them.” And John certainly did that. Along with the National Office Social Justice team, which he helped to put in place, John helped the Society to advocate for changes to Early Childhood Care and Education and highlighted issues around child poverty, energy poverty, and rent supplement well before they were ‘popular’ topics.

“I don’t think it would be unfair to say that we were the people who started talking about these things and we were the people who consistently talked about them, even when the politicians and media were telling us there wasn’t a problem, and now we are seeing these issue come to the fore”

When asked about the impact John had on the work of the Society, John-Mark McCafferty, SVP Head of Social Justice and Advocacy, said “John, the household name of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, elevated the organisation’s profile. While everyone knew of SVP, people were less sure what we did, and until the late nineties, were probably unaware of what the Society stood for from a Social Justice perspective.

“All that has changed - thanks to John. During austerity, John’s voice, and those of the team he established, helped to ensure

that programmes and supports were as protected from cuts as was possible in the stringent circumstances.”

“Bringing a real change to someone’s life”

But it wasn’t all politicians and media calls. John was also an active member of his visitation Conference in Leixlip and when asked for his most memorable day John told us about a family he supported during his time there. “I worked with a family in Leixlip for about 10 years. The parents had some learning difficulties and their son had a speech impediment. We helped arrange speech therapy sessions, we drove them to appointments, we supported the family throughout. My proudest day came when I received a phone call to say that the son had graduated with a degree in electronics. He was the first in his family to go to College. We had helped to break the cycle of poverty for that family and the son is not in the same position that his parents were. Those are the things that stay with you – bringing a real change to someone’s life”

“The Pope had been hoodwinked...”

One of the things you notice when you speak with John is his inherent modesty. No achievements are claimed as his own, rather a group effort, and talk of the award and his work invariably leads to praise of another colleague. This is especially obvious when John recounts how he first heard about the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice award.

“I first heard about the award last November when John-Mark called to tell me that I was being put forward for it. My first response was ‘Thank you, that is lovely, but no thanks!’ I felt that there were many other people in the Society who should get the award, not me. The next I heard about it, the Pope had been hoodwinked and I was to be awarded the medal!

“I couldn’t believe the number of people who came to the ceremony, but this isn’t a recognition for me, it is a recognition for the work that has been carried out by all of the people who have worked for the advancement of Social Justice within the Society over the years.

“I see it as a signal that we have to continue to use our voice to influence change on behalf of those that we help”.

Before he left, we asked John if he ever regretted taking the call from his friend in 1985; “Not at all” He said “It might be a cliché, but I believe that over the years I have gained and learned so much more from the people that I have had the privilege of meeting than they have gained from me.

“When you see the bravery of people in difficult circumstances, the unseen heroes, thousands of them that we meet every night of the week, they are the people who make it all so important.”



Laudato Si.....another Silent Spring?

Gerard O'Mahony

Uniquely the recent Encyclical Laudato Si is addressed not just to Catholics but to "every person living on this planet". Warning that the Earth is "looking more and more like an immense pile of filth" and that the poor frequently remain in the bottom of the pile, Pope Francis condemns the environmental degradation overtaking planet Earth, our common home.

He alerts us to the loss of biodiversity, the over use and accumulations of insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and agro toxins which is leading to the unprecedented destruction of birds, insects and ecosystems. Laudato Si is written in unambiguous language, while its message is clear if not new, solutions remain somewhat unclear.

In his wide ranging document, the Pope is clearly telling humanity that the environment is the basis of our human life and existence; pollution poisons our habitat and the results such as global warming will bring about irreversible damage to the future of all life on the planet.

Will it make a difference? No matter how perceptive, how accurate, and how prophetic..... is it to remain another Encyclical of Rome or a clarion call for a new generation? It is instructive to examine the first plea to humanity on the dangers of pollution which came from a quiet concerned woman living in Maine USA, who is today credited as the mother of environmentalism.

Over 50 years ago, in 1962, a book *Silent Spring* was published to a storm of controversy. Written and researched by Rachel Carson, an unassuming scientist, author and public servant, it raised the very issues which lie at the heart of the pope's current lament for the environment.

Born in 1907 in Springdale, Pennsylvania, Rachel Carson studied biology and genetics and took a job as a scientist with the Fish and Wildlife Service. She loved to write about ocean habitats and a classic book "The Sea Around Us" made Carson famous in 1951. Later she followed up with "The Edge of the Sea" and her literary fame was secured.

She grew worried as she noted the growing research, the anecdotal evidence and the accounts of the build-up of toxins. In particular she focused on D.D.T which was originally developed to cure malaria epidemics during the Second World War. The chlorinated hydrocarbons which include Aldrin, Dieldrin and Heptachlor persist in the environment. D.D.T was widely available over the counter in Ireland throughout the 50s and 60s, it was a cheap insecticide, handy for farmers, widely used yet accumulates in the food chain and attacks the central nervous system.

Carson was determined to investigate! Her book following five years of research first published on September 27th was designed to shock the public into action against the misuse and overuse of chemical pesticides. She contended that "the control of nature is a phrase conceived in arrogance born of a Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man"

The agricultural chemical industry savagely attacked Carson, describing the book as "hogwash". Legal challenges, threats of withdrawal of advertising, distribution of thousands of copies of critical reviews, industry conferences bemoaned the crass assumptions and distortions of *Silent Spring*. Time Magazine worried about Ms Carson's "emotional and inaccurate outburst" yet her supporters described her book as a "biological warning, social commentary and moral reminder; insistently she calls upon technological man to pause and take stock".

Silent Spring eventually led to a ban on D.D.T. for agricultural use, contributed to the establishment of the US Environmental Protection Agency and encouraged the growth in environmental consciousness leading to the birth of a worldwide environmental movement.

Although separated by some 50 years this "nun of nature" and this environmental Pope may indeed be the canaries in the mines. The issues espoused by environmentalists and the concerns for economic and social justice as espoused by Pope Francis are inextricably linked in the encyclical.

Can we ignore the symbiotic symbolism of Ms Carson and Pope Francis? St Francis of Assisi was often portrayed with a bird perched on his hand or surrounded by birds. Rachel Carson named her book after noticing the ensuing silence the absence of birds brings, foretelling a bleak future for the world following chemical spraying of fields and orchards.

Pope Francis has delivered this timely treatise on nature, creation and environmental destruction. It accepts that climate change is largely of human creation. While lifestyle solutions are personal to the individual, the global solutions require serious and far reaching political action at the levels of world realpolitik. we do hear Pope Francis but will world political leaders listen to the Pope in time to avert disaster or will it be silence?

A Sense of Wonder, a film documenting the story of Rachel Carson was recently shown for the first time in Ireland and presented by Kaiulani Lee at the recent Spirit of Mother Jones Summer School in Cork.



Can our generation be the first to end poverty

*Audry Deane
Social Justice & Policy Officer*



September was a month that reminded the world that we are all connected and that, above all else, we are human. The excruciating photos of the small boy washed up on a tourist beach in Turkey went around the globe and reached into all of our hearts. Suddenly the administrative, bureaucratic and political administrative delays which have left thousands of migrants and refugees in unspeakable hardship were exposed as an inadequate response to the scale of the humanitarian disaster that has been unfolding within Europe's borders for some time.

September truly was a momentous month for mankind, but for another more positive reason too. Leaders from all over the world came together in the United Nations to sign a new global agreement to end poverty, fight inequality and to tackle climate change. This time round, these new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which replace the Millennium Goals, are different because they apply to all countries, including Ireland, not just poorer ones 'over there' in the developing world. These goals really are universal. The UN chief Ban Ki-moon has said that we are the first generation that can end poverty and the last that can take steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Our own President, Michael D Higgins has noted that 2015 is on a similar par with 1945 when a post war world reconstructed itself, with new treaties, institutions and declarations.

So now these goals have landed....after an exhaustive process in which many different stakeholders took part and in which Ireland played a key role as one of only two countries in charge

of the overall negotiating process in the UN...they are live. The next challenge is for each UN member state to demonstrate its commitment and desire to deliver on the actual goals. There are seventeen of them, and in due course there will be a technical set of indicators and targets which will show progress, or not, on how they are being achieved. This new internationally agreed framework shows what needs to change in order to build a better, fairer world. Ireland will be held up to account and its progress on achieving these goals will be watched and monitored. Irish Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have played a strong role in the shaping of these new goals and just before the UN Summit, when the SDGs were approved, both domestic and international development NGOs wrote to the Taoiseach to pledge their support for these goals and to request an Irish Action Plan which sets out how Ireland intends to tackle inequalities to get better and fairer outcomes for all its citizens. SVP is part of this alliance and will work alongside others to collaborate with Government to ensure that resources are used in the best possible way to get the results we want.

Ireland's impeccable reputation for overseas development assistance is rightly deserved, built on decades of selfless passionate and practical help from a cohort of dedicated religious and lay people. Now SVP can play its part, alongside its allies and partners, to ensure that Ireland becomes a country which is fair, prosperous and which looks after the wellbeing of all its people, now and into the future.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





SVP NEEDS VOLUNTEERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

CALLING ALL MEMBERS TO ENCOURAGE NEW VOLUNTEERS INTO YOUR CONFERENCE

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you have free time and would you like to do something worthwhile if so join our team of over 11,000 volunteers. We need new enthusiastic and compassionate volunteers to join our Home Visitation Conferences

WHAT IS A HOME VISITATION VOLUNTEER MEMBER

A home visitation volunteer member supports those who have requested assistance by visiting them in their homes with another volunteer member. During the visit the volunteer attempts to understand the need of the individual by listening to them and spending quality time on the visit, it may take a few visits to fully understand the need. The volunteer member may encourage the person we are assisting to access other supports in their community where these are available.

I.T SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS FOR CONFERENCES

We need volunteers to join our Conferences who have I.T. skills and could support the Conference with recording information on our newly introduced client and accounts management systems.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

You can support SVP by becoming a volunteer member of the Society.

TIME COMMITMENT

You only need to have 3 hours available each week

BENEFITS TO YOU

You are doing something worthwhile to assist those who live in your surrounding community

TRAINING

A Training programme is offered to all new volunteer members

WHAT TO DO NEXT:

CONTACT THE MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT OFFICER IN YOUR REGION WHO WILL SEND YOU AN APPLICATION PACK FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK WE DO CAN BE SEEN ON OUR WEBSITE: www.svp.ie/volunteer

CONTACT DETAILS:

REGION	COVERING COUNTIES	Membership Support Officer:
EAST	DUBLIN KILDARE AND WICKLOW	Siobhan Tyrrell East Regional Office Phone: 01 - 8198414 Email: siobhan.tyrrell@svpeast.ie
SOUTH EAST	LAOIS, CARLOW, KILKENNY, WEXFORD, WATERFORD AND CARLOW	Christina Morrissey South East Regional Office Phone: 051 857112 Mobile 086 0412328 Email: christina.morrissey@svp.ie
SOUTH WEST	KERRY AND CORK	Ellmarie Spillane South West Regional Office Phone: Mobile: Email: ellmarie.spillane@svp.ie
MID WEST	CLARE, LIMERICK, OFFALY AND TIPPERARY	Lorraine Moroney Mid-West Regional Office Phone: Mobile: Email: Lorraine.moroney@svp.ie
WEST	GALWAY, MAYO AND ROSCOMMON	Serena Matthews West Regional Office Phone: 091 563233 Mobile: 0862449199 Email: serena.matthews@svp.ie
NORTH WEST	DONEGAL, SLIGO AND LEITRIM	Siobhan Hedigan North West Regional Office Phone: Mobile: Email: siobhan.hedigan@svp.ie
NORTH	FERMANAGH, TYRONE, DERRY, ANTRIM, DOWN, ARMAGH	Maria Fyffe North Regional Office East Area Phone: 028 90351561 Mobile: 077 18588606 Email: maria.fyffe@svpni.co.uk
		Joann Barr North Regional Office West Area Phone: 028 71377311 Mobile: 077 38837891 Email: joann.barr@svpni.co.uk
NORTH EAST AND MIDLANDS	MEATH, WESTMEATH, LONGFORD, CAVAN, MONAGHAN AND LOUTH	Jean Naughton North East and Midlands Regional Office Phone: 041 9873331 Mobile: 085 7454103 Email: jean.naughton@svp.ie

Energy Efficiency and Climate Change

*Brendan Hennessy
Membership Liaison Officer*



There is a real danger when you are a regular contributor to the SVP Bulletin that you end up repeating yourself, knowingly or unknowingly! So I looked back on my previous contributions on energy – and there have been many – and stumbled upon an article that I wrote 4 years ago 'preparing for the colder months' which began:

"It has sometimes been put to me that SVP funds are being used to heat the sky. That unfortunately the money we spend on solid fuel is used in houses that are poorly insulated, draughty and energy inefficient. This can be particularly problematic in the private rented sector."

The majority of the article was about advising SVP Conferences about day-to-day interactions with households in need, promoting pre-payment meters and negotiating with energy suppliers. Thankfully in the meantime, with the assistance of SVP Conferences across the Country, households are more aware of budgeting, Pay as you Go meters are widespread and interactions between customers and suppliers are subject to the Energy Engage Code. This means that SVP policy on energy can shift towards addressing long-term efficiency as our Conferences continue to alleviating immediate need.

Promoting Energy Efficiency

What does energy efficiency mean to you? For different people it can mean different things. To some it might conjure up images of so-called 'passive houses', to others solar panels or cavity insulation. However, there are also many things we can do ourselves to simply reduce our domestic energy, reduce our bills and do our bit for the environment.

In the last edition of the Bulletin John Flynn of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (www.seai.ie) set out the range of full and partial grants that home owners can receive for improving their homes. SEAI have also sought to examine ways by which Ireland can achieve its target to be 20% more energy efficiency by 2020. In a policy report entitled 'Unlocking the Energy Efficiency Potential' they set out 9 different ways for Ireland to achieve its target aimed at both the residential and commercial sector. Amongst its target audiences are 'unaware' and 'disengaged' consumers whom in the absence of further government intervention, the report warns, are less likely to benefit not only from the inherent savings of the 2020 targets but not even those projected for 2025. It is this group that should be the concern of the SVP.

The assumption that simply because people are not actively party to energy efficiency measures they are either unaware or disengaged, negates the other pressures in their lives, or their authority to take the recommended actions. Even amongst those who are 'aware' and 'engaged' there is little sign that Irish consumers are actively switching suppliers to the extent expected by policy makers. So for those people who have

financial pressures, whose real concern is putting food on the table, how do we best help them reduce their energy bills. And, what about those renters who do not have authority to undertake improvements in their home?

The Great Debate

Over the coming year expect there to be a great debate about the value of annual direct payments such as the fuel allowance versus the cost of retro-fitting measures. The sustainability of annual fuel allowance payments valuing over 400m versus the annual retro-fitting budget of approx. 50m is worthy of discussion. However, research for SVP undertaken by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice has shown that despite massive energy bill reductions obtained through retro-fitting, households dependent on social welfare income remain in fuel poverty. SVP has argued that the country's aim should be to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock, but not at the loss of people who are already struggling to survive.

Immediate Actions

I think we all grimace when we hear the word debate, especially if we imagine procrastination! Therefore let us examine some of the immediate actions that can be taken, most of which have already been included in our submissions on the Energy White Paper and the Affordable Energy Strategy.

Education: Our members have experience of visiting households which would benefit from energy education. SVP has said to Government that a community-based 'Community Energy Advisor' programme to deliver on the doorstep guidance and advice to 'hard-to-reach' households should be explored.

Private Rented Sector: Research commissioned by SVP and undertaken by the Public Interest Law Alliance, has pointed to the need for dedicated legislation to ensure energy efficiency standards are obtained in the private rented sector. In tandem with this, private rented properties should have minimal BER ratings. Crucially these proposals for the private rented sector should not discommode present tenants

Target those in most need: Schemes run by the SEAI must be made available to those who are most likely to be in energy poverty and be expanded to include the private rented sector. SVP has consistently argued that addressing energy poverty has benefits far beyond keeping homes warm. The benefits of improved health, wellbeing and environment are not only enjoyed by individuals but are shared with society by reducing health expenditure, addressing income poverty and increasing employment opportunities though job creation in the retro-fitting sector.

My Vision for SVP Training

By Enda Breslin
SVP National Training Co-ordinator

Introduction

In January 2015, I was part of a working group set up at the Global HQ of SVP in Paris with the goal of devising a plan to spread out training to all 149 countries in which SVP operates. It amazed me that out of that large number of countries, only 20 had structured training.

The plan to establish training globally is the brainchild of Ireland's Brian O'Reilly, International Vice President of the Society. It prompted me to express my own vision for SVP training in Ireland, as follows.

Increasing Qualified Trainers

Under the recently published SVP 'Training Policy' all new members undergo 'Induction Training' within three months of joining before they can become active members. However, the current availability of qualified trainers is insufficient to meet this objective in some Regions. **Therefore, there is an immediate need to increase the number of qualified trainers.**

In order for a trainer to become qualified, they must first be an experienced 'Visitation Conference' member and undergo the 'Train the Trainers' course. The programmes include instruction on presentation skills, communication skills, and how to manage nerves, followed by practical practice presentations, coaching and feedback. The desired outcome of this is to develop a member who can deliver the training modules of 'Poverty', 'History', 'Structure' and, most importantly, 'Quality Visitation' to new and existing members. The course can be challenging. Public speaking, especially in front of one's peers, can be daunting. However, the course is conducted with an attitude of support, comradery and fun. I get great satisfaction in witnessing participants, who at the start may have been shy and timid, develop into confident outgoing trainers and leaders. This has a positive impact on, not only the Society, but the individual themselves. **My vision is that each SVP Area will have a qualified trainer who can independently look after the presentation and delivery of training in their own area.**

As "Safeguarding in Home Visitation" is part of Induction Training and requires specially qualified trainers, it would also be my vision that **each Region should have at least one qualified "Safeguard in Home Visitation" instructor.**

Standardising the Training Format

In order to assist in planning and to allow for information regarding training schedules to be made available to all, it is intended that there will be a standardised training format for each region that will include information on:

- The Regional Coordinator and team of Trainers (in the Region)
- A Prospectus of all training courses available
- The Regional Training plan.

The standardised course prospectus format is being prepared at present and will list the courses available to members within the SVP Region and includes the objective and summary of the content of each available course.

Standardising Syllabi

Training in SVP is structured so that the National Training Coordinator working with the Regional Training Coordinators and selected others make up the National Training Committee. In each Region, the Regional Coordinator and his/her qualified trainers make up the Regional Training Team. In addition, there are National Training teams for each of the training courses, as outlined below:

1. Induction/Train the Trainer
2. Conference President Training
3. Area President Training
4. Regional President/Trustee Training
5. Secretary/CRM Training
6. Treasurer/Aggresso Training
7. Safeguarding in Home Visitation Training
8. Youth Development Training
9. Special Works (Shops) Training

Each team headed by the team leader:

- Analyses the requirement/demands in their sphere of training.
- Decides on a syllabus in response to the demand.
- Constantly reviews the training requirement and updates where necessary.

I envisage the Society producing a standardised syllabus for each course under one cover to standardise training and inform trainers/instructors

Distance Learning to Reduce Classroom Time

Some members consider nine hours of Induction Training excessive. Two factors should be considered in response to this:

1. "Safeguarding in Home Visitation" instruction of three hours is essential and in accordance with SVP policy.
2. An International Study Group (Paris, Feb. 2015) considers that 13 hours 'Induction Training' is required (excluding "Safeguarding")

However training time can be reduced by the **introduction of Distance Learning for the modules of 'Poverty', 'History' and**



'Structure', and this is currently being examined. Distance Learning involves an element of self-learning and this can be achieved by means of e-Learning, through the use of the internet, DVDs or the more basic informational booklets. *My vision is that Distance learning be adopted for the modules of 'Poverty', 'History' and 'Structure' and part of the time saved dedicated to the classroom and practical delivery of 'Quality Visitation', our core work.*

New Training Support Role

A Requirement of Distance Learning is to have an advisor or support person readily available to the individual undergoing such learning. In response to this requirement, I see the need for a role within each Conference for a member to oversee training and development within the Conference for both new and existing members. This would not be an Officer Appointment and could be undertaken by the President, a Vice President, a former President or any senior suitable member within the Conference.

I anticipate that this role would involve:

- Monitoring and advising on the training needs of the Conference, including refresher training where required.
- Mentoring and supporting new members and being a contact for those undergoing distance learning of the modules 'Poverty', 'History' and 'Structure'.
- Acting as part of a chain of information on training matters and the development of "Best Practice" within the Conference.

Having a member responsible for training and development in each Conference could *open up a chain of information that would feed down to each individual Conference so that best practice can be achieved in all Conferences, and refresher training introduced where it is required.*

Regular Conference meeting ensure consistency in communications and therefore offer the most suitable option for the training/development role with a qualified trainer in each SVP Area to coordinate training at Area level.

Review of Quality Visitation Training

It has been decided at national level that a *review of 'Quality Visitation' training will be undertaken to ensure it is fit for purpose and that the best service and support to those we visit is being provided.*

The committee intends to seek consultation from within the Society and from other charitable volunteer organisations in addition to the advice of an expert in the educational field to ensure an SVP model of training is developed that best enables our members to do their vital work with those in need.

ANNUAL APPEAL 2015

YOUR YES CAN LAST A LIFETIME

It's coming close to that time of year when the SVP Annual Appeal kicks off. This year the Annual Appeal begins on the 19th of November and continues through to 31st of December. We are urging everyone to support the appeal as it is a hugely important time for the Society.

The Annual Appeal message for 2015 will focus on how... 'your YES can last a lifetime'. This is the message that we will be using to highlight how important the appeal is for the future of wellbeing of so many people living in Ireland today and to urge everyone to support us as generously as they possible can.

The 2015 Annual Appeal will bring to life what SVP volunteers are experiencing every single day of the year – how sometimes all it takes is a tiny incident, an unexpected event or a simple misunderstanding to tip someone into a cycle of poverty – which can last their entire life.

But the opposite is also true. Often a simple friendly word of encouragement, or a timely helping hand of support, can

prevent a domino effect leading to someone being tipped into cycle of poverty and hardship. This is the positive message that will be communicated on TV, Radio, Online, Press and Outdoor advertising from the 19th of November up until the end of the year.

Thank you to all who support our Annual Appeal and best of luck to all of our dedicated volunteers working to make this years' appeal a success.

KEY DATES FOR THE SVP ANNUAL APPEAL 2015

Annual Appeal Begins	19th November 2015
Media Launch	19th November 2015
SVP Collection Sunday	13th December 2015
Annual Appeal Ends	31st December 2015

SVP

TEN DESIGNS FROM THE

DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES €2.50



PLEASE SUPPORT THE **SVP** ANNUAL APPEAL



YOUR HELP CAN LAST A LIFETIME



Society of St. Vincent de Paul

PLEASE GIVE LOCALLY OR ONLINE AT [SVP.IE](https://www.svp.ie)



College / Third Level Conferences

An integral part of the Young SVP Programme



Becca Gallagher, SVP National Youth Development Coordinator

Last year, 2014-2015, there were as many as 15 third level SVP Conferences operating nationwide. Some are well established and integral parts of the college community, others are starting out and others have been strong in the past but require a certain amount of revitalisation. Each College Conference operates slightly differently and organises activities based on needs in their area / what they have done over the years. What is consistent and notable amongst all the different groups is the incredible energy and freshness they bring to the work that they do and I personally find this contagious, working with these groups is invigorating and good for the heart.

The Youth Development Team support college Conferences in a number of ways throughout the year in an effort to consolidate and enhance the services they offer and the experience the students gain through their involvement.

Training

Over the years a number of College Conference specific training sessions have been developed that enhance new and existing members engagement and involvement with the Young SVP Programme. Included in these are;

Colleges Introduction Session delivered to all new / interested students signing up to volunteer with the College Conferences (registered with the Young SVP programme) at the start of the academic year. This session allows new volunteers;

- To gain better understanding of what are they signing up to when they become volunteers / members of SVP;
- It creates awareness that they are becoming part of a bigger, national organisation;
- Develop knowledge of SVPs ethos, values and purpose;
- Creates awareness of both expectations and limitations to the amount / type of volunteering that they become involved in through their college Conference.

This session allows students make informed decisions before going through the member / volunteer application and necessary vetting process.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult training session for all students planning to engage in services that involve interaction with vulnerable adults through their college Conference (eg visits

to nursing homes, soup run / outreach services, working with adults with disability, etc).

Child Protection Awareness Programme training sessions were also delivered to student volunteers wishing to engage in activities / services working with young people (for example homework clubs, sports clubs, TCD Panto, Kids clubs etc).

New Committee Member Training is available to all new committees and officers at the start of the college year.

Events

In addition to the various training supports available there are a number of annual meetings and events that support Conference Officers during their short terms in office (generally speaking Committees change on a yearly basis).

Officers Training / Intersivity Meetings during the year meetings are held for Conference officers who come together from a variety of College Conferences to explore practice and procedures across the different groups. The aim of these meetings is to examine ways to gain a more consistent approach to the work of College Conferences and to develop a clearer support structures from SVP generally, while also building a network within the college groups. These sessions were very successful last year and have been included in the Colleges Calendar for the coming years and future committees coming through.

Intersivity Weekend, 20-22nd February this year saw the 9th Annual Intersivity weekend which, this year was bigger and more inclusive than ever before. A total of 12 colleges and groups were represented (including a group from Young SVP Scotland), with a total of 81 attendants in all.

The hectic schedule for the weekend included a wide array of activities which provided a comfortable balance between workshops, exploration, learning and of course, social activities. Saturday morning allowed smaller groups break out for workshops covering topics such as Recruiting and Keeping Volunteers; Exploring Activities; Good practice working with Young People; and Advocacy / Representing Others. Saturday afternoon included inputs from each of the groups represented

about the work they do and also about the challenges they face. We then had a very interesting presentation from Joe McCann CM on the topic of Vincentian Leadership, which he made very relevant to the work of the students within their Conferences. The final workshop of the weekend was held before lunch and examined how we can forge ahead, in a collaborative, positive way that has SVP at its heart throughout. This session was really useful and has paved the way for much more frank and open discussion regarding the process and practices of Young SVP college groups, the supports needed by them through this and the overall recognition that working together is more effective and of far greater benefit to service recipients.

2016 will see the 10th Annual Intersivity weekend for which planning has already begun...so watch this space!

Continuous and focussed Supports needed

It seems there is always a need for more support, but this is especially true for the College students who are volunteering and delivering services with and for SVP. We need to ensure that experiences of the students, those they are supporting and SVP as an organisation are all safe and positive. Providing clear, comprehensive and continuous support is tantamount to achieving this.

The very nature of the College Conference is different from that of an average Adult / Visitation Conference. The structures are different with; committees / all officers roles being more transient than in adult Conferences with terms of office being just one academic year; members being involved for short periods, generally 1-2 or possibly 3 years; also their activities are different and their approach can also be quite different.

All of this means that we need to maintain focus on providing support to our members in College Conferences that will allow young members remain focussed on the values and ethos of the Society, while also ensuring delivery of services within a best practice framework, along with having the ability to record services / activities provided both accurately and appropriately.

Looking forward;

The work of our College Conference members is genuine and real; these young SVP Members are champions of social justice issues and causes that, while different from what our founder Frederic may have done himself, they reflect his passion and interest in creating a more caring a just Society. These young people are our future and SVP has a real opportunity to support them, their development and also to learn from them. Let us use these opportunities long into the future.



Climate change and its adverse effects on the poor.



Peg Hanafin, MSc. Psych/ Couns

Maarten van Aalst, director of the Red Cross Climate Centre, in his recent report said their agency was already seeing evidence that the poor were the hardest hit in weather related disasters. He also pointed out that climate change would make it much more difficult for poorer developing countries to get out of poverty, as well as impacting on regions in both rich and poor countries.

So what is Climate change and Global warming?

We think of disasters across the world; like earthquakes, hurricanes, erupting volcanoes and freak tidal waves that affect many thousands of people. These only impact on one region at any given time. But a threat greater than anything humankind has faced in recent history is the gradual rising of the earth's temperatures known as Global Warming, which could transform the planet we live on in the future. The weather patterns will become more erratic, forcing great change in seas and on land, leaving more people impoverished by the resulting effects. Climate change means a significant change in the temperatures, rainfall and wind. Climate has changed many times in the world's history, ranging from the Ice Age periods to periods of warmth. These were all natural occurrences; the difference now is that human activities are significantly contributing to climate change through emissions of greenhouse gases.

Greenhouse gases

Greenhouse gas emissions arise from many diverse activities. The most recent figures compiled show that in Ireland agriculture is the biggest contributor to overall emissions at 29.8% of the national total, followed by energy at 21%. The residential sector accounts for 12%, industry and commercial at 14.8% and waste, 2%. These emissions are interfering with air and ocean temperatures, which cause drought, melting ice and snow, rising sea levels, increased rainfall, flooding and other disasters. Ireland is a very small country with a small population, but our gas emissions per person are amongst the highest of any country in the world.

Across the world the planet keeps getting hotter and a new study in the USA reported that the year 2012 was the warmest ever recorded. This shines a spotlight on how those of us who consume excess energy add to emissions that are destructive to all living things, both in the sea and on land and the disruption that may follow from such a lack of awareness as to the damage we are causing. The people that are the cause of high emissions and are causing this potential catastrophe are those in the richer countries and are not going to be the ones who suffer but the poorer countries that have not contributed to this problem. They are the ones that will be most vulnerable.

Disasters

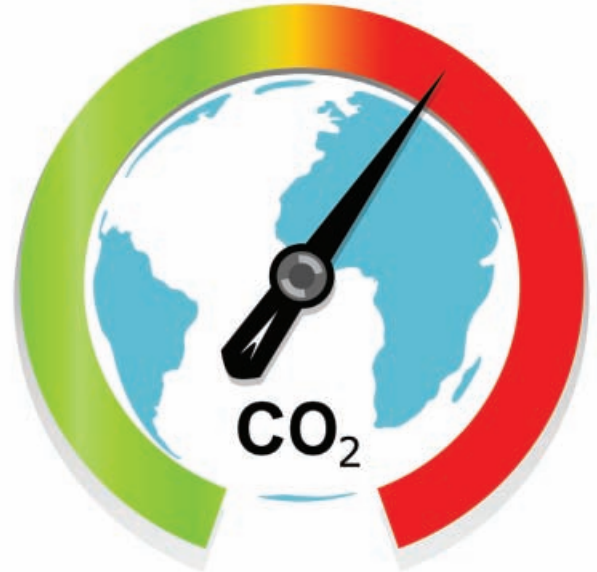
Natural disasters between 2000 and 2009 were three times higher than in the 1980's according to the Red Cross. When we have a disaster that decreases food supplies and damage homes and people are pushed to homelessness, it creates an environment that is susceptible to conflict. We have all seen TV pictures and documentaries showing food unrest and riots, triggered by shortage of food, spiralling prices and clashes over water and the wiping out of infrastructure. Governments are unable to protect people at these times or have the resources to assist them. Research shows that the poor suffer most in weather related disasters making them even poorer.

Vulnerability

People who are socially, economically, culturally and politically marginalised are especially vulnerable to climate change. The poor or those who live in consistent poverty have a higher chance of experiencing the bad effects of climate change. The reduction in crop yields always tends to higher prices across the world. In poorer countries the shortage of food leads to malnutrition and disease. Infrastructures like water systems, housing and settlements, transport networks, utilities and industry along coastal regions are already at risk, where rising seas and freak tides are causing havoc. In Ireland we have seen coastal erosion escalate at an alarming rate.

Pope Francis has issued an unequivocal statement that climate change is man-made and must be tackled by every person. At the G7 summit in Germany this year, attended by seven of the most powerful leaders in the developed world promises to stop using fossil fuels by the end of the century and to cut global emissions by up to 70% of 2010 levels by 2050 were made. According to a UN-Energy report 2.4 billion people rely on Biomass for cooking while 1.6 billion people worldwide have no electricity. In well-off or rich countries the lowering of thermostats, dealing with longer, hotter summers and seasonal shifts maybe the only disadvantage. But for those who suffer weather disasters, unproductive harvests and poor health resulting from climate change which brings famine, drought and a range of deadly diseases, for those on low incomes with meagre or no assets, the urgency of addressing global climate change must be seen to be urgent and immediate. We can all do our bit by becoming aware of how our excesses are affecting the lives of so many old, poor and vulnerable people across the globe. In South Africa solar water heaters and biodiesel have helped improve the welfare of people's homes, these improved technologies also provide job opportunities and skills development which help alleviate poverty.

When we look at ecological systems they have already been transformed. Half of the world's coral reef system have suffered bleaching as a result of warming, the sun can penetrate 30 metres into the sea, so plankton the food of the oceans are also at grave risk. This could lead to depletion of fish and other living animals that the seas are home to. By 2050 over one million



plant and animal species will become extinct due to climate change and global warming. So it behoves us all to take steps to reduce your energy use, improve efficiency and help end global warming. One of the biggest causes of global warming is the carbon dioxide released when fossil fuel such as oil and coal are burned for energy. So as well as saving energy you will save money too, an attractive incentive for us all.

10 easy ways to reduce global warming

We can all help reduce carbon dioxide emissions by making even small changes;

1. Reduce, reuse, and recycle paper, plastic, newspapers, glass and aluminium tins.
2. Use less heat by insulating walls, attic, and hot water.
3. Turn down the thermostat by a couple of degrees.
4. Change all light bulbs to CFLs, which last up to ten times longer than ordinary bulbs.
5. Use the car less and keep the tyres correctly inflated, walk cycle or use public transport.
6. Use less hot water; have shorter showers, use energy saving programmes on dishwashers and washing machines.
7. Use the OFF switch on lights, TV's, computers, video players, etc.
8. Plant one tree, which will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.
9. Don't let heat escape from your house, insulate, and keep windows and doors closed.
10. Encourage others to conserve.

'Waking Ned'

*JohnMark McCafferty
Head of Social Justice & Policy*

The coalition government hosted its first National Economic Dialogue, or NED, in mid-July for two days with various groups including the trade unions, employers, the Community and Voluntary Pillar, opposition parties, think tanks, environmental and cultural groups, the academic community and the diaspora. The purpose of the meeting was for Government to hear the views of representative bodies as recovery takes shape, resources emerge, and longer term plans can be budgeted for and developed.

The first day of the National Economic Dialogue started with the Taoiseach observing that while the economy had improved, people still didn't feel the benefits of the recovery in their pockets. And that's the problem. At the highest level of Government, success is measured in how much cash a family takes home, rather than the quality and the affordability of the services they need - for example housing, early childhood care and education, and public transport.

The scene set by certain Ministers at the sessions meant that participants like ourselves had an uphill struggle to make the case for investment in public services given how the debate was framed by those in power. 'Reckless spending' was mentioned by cabinet members - yet reckless tax cuts are not part of the debate - and were clearly part of the reason we fell from grace so dramatically in 2008.

So the scope for investing in what matters, in early childhood care and education, in affordable rented housing, and in schemes to improve the energy efficiency of our housing, are limited. We need the revenues to pay for services and supports for a fairer society - but these require political vision, commitment, and resisting what's popular in order to do the right thing: developing services on a long term footing.

Ireland is not just in recovery mode but reconstruction mode, given the successive

cuts to local and public services and incomes since 2009. Robert Watt, Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure, set out the money needed for investing in public transport, schools, hospitals and social housing among others. The figures are big, and the money for these needs to be found from somewhere - especially as our population ages, with implications for pensions and the funding of care.

Our volunteers visit people in their homes every week. We have a reach into peoples' lives that is unsurpassed. We hear the stories of people struggling to pay rents; worried about being made homeless. Many workers and their families are in or close to poverty, due to low incomes, high rents, high childcare costs and other essential outgoings. Increased wages help, but for many they rely on Social Welfare supports such as the Family Income Supplement because many employers simply don't pay enough.

In any event, income policy can't do all the heavy lifting - and this is the point I consistently made in Dublin Castle over the two days of NED. Improving the quality and affordability of early childhood care and education will help make work pay - but it will also break the cycle of disadvantage for children, helping them to make the most of their school education.

For some politicians and policy makers, tax is a dirty word - and so is spending. But without tax and spending, we won't be able to expand the economy, never mind meet our social needs. And that, hopefully, will be the debate at a second National Economic Dialogue in the not too distant future.





Holiday Haven - Clare Lodge Centre Reopens With a Vibrant New Look

The Society is delighted to announce that the newly refurbished Clare Lodge Centre reopened to the public on Sunday 27th September 2015 and is one of the few Holiday Centres that will open all year round.

Clare Lodge is more than just a holiday centre, it is a haven of peace and tranquility for people who are in need of a break from the pressures of the day to day life but whom for a variety of reasons, cannot afford the expense of a holiday. Situated in the vibrant seaside town of Newcastle Co. Down Clare Lodge overlooks the Mourne Mountains and the sea. The centre is located just off the promenade and is within walking distance to many local shops, arcades, restaurants, cafes and bars and the Royal Co. Down Golf course.

It can accommodate 42 individuals in 19 en-suite bedrooms comprising of 9 twin rooms, 6 large double rooms and 4 family rooms. The lodge has a large dining hall, lounge area and an outside seating area with a stunning view of the beach.

The centre will continue to provide recuperative breaks for fit and mobile elderly persons, families and single parents with

children across Ireland, in a warm comfortable and welcoming environment. Accommodation is also offered for youth groups, other community and voluntary organisations and anyone in need.

All rooms are wheelchair accessible with a lift for ease of access and include free Internet access, flat screen televisions and tea and coffee making facilities. Clare Lodge offers weeklong breaks Sunday to Saturday, as well as mid-week and weekend breaks on a full board basis, which includes, breakfast, lunch, evening meal and supper. Bed and breakfast and tailored group options are also available on request.

For more information contact:
Brenda McLarnon
Clare Lodge Centre
3 Castle Place
Newcastle Co. Down
BT33 0AB

028-43722849 (0044 if dialling from outside Northern Ireland)
Brenda.mclarnon@svpni.co.uk

RURAL POVERTY HASN'T GONE AWAY

Seamus Boland
CEO Irish Rural Link

On his Late Night Review programme TV 3, Ivan Yates put some challenging questions to a pro rural panel of Michael Healy Rae T.D, Eamon Delaney newspaper columnist - Irish Independent, Allen Meagher of the magazine Changing Times and Mary Hughes of the Irish Planning institute. His contention, strictly for the purposes of debate was and I am paraphrasing; that rural areas are dying of natural causes. It's too costly to live there, services are disappearing, employment is only in the cities, post offices and bank branches are closing because of lack of use. Indeed as a former Minister for Agriculture he outlined a depressing future of significantly less people on the land and painted a picture of villages with no other function than to act as thoroughfares for six wheel tractors to go through. Needless to say the panel disagreed and despite the charge by Mr Yates that they were pedalling false hope, they at least attempted to put a strong case in favour of rural survival. None the less the challenge placed on the table to people who argue in favour of rural communities is a valid one and requires considerable thought.

The available data in terms of how rural regions are affected by unemployment, migration/immigration and poverty makes tough reading. Generally rural regions are two to three per cent worse off in terms of available employment, despite the fact that a large number of young people are leaving their areas and either emigrating or finding jobs in Dublin. Figures produced by Social

Justice Ireland in 2014 highlighted the increased poverty rates in rural areas, citing the fact that over 350,000 people in rural Ireland are at risk of poverty. According to Social Justice these figures are based on CSO figures on income and living conditions, which show that that the number of people living in consistent poverty in rural Ireland has more than doubled since 2008 and now stands at over 194,000 people. This means, according to Social Justice Ireland that over 350,000 people in rural Ireland are surviving on incomes of less than €10,453 per annum.

The practical reality for families affected by these figures is deciding between having enough food and affording necessary school items. It means doing without a car, which is not a luxury in rural areas or sacrificing other essential in the area of health and education. In Irish Rural Link we are constantly aware of families looking for support. Thankfully, we in a confidential way, are able to introduce them to the St Vincent De Paul and other appropriate agencies, in the knowledge that they will receive the best practical help, as well as advice on how they will proceed. However the problem of rural poverty will remain unless there is some real thinking done. It is not that attempts have not been made to do something, as far back as the mid sixties we had the Buchanan Report, which sought to establish concentrated growth centres in strategically selected regions. It was rejected and many experts now believe that had it succeeded all rural



“Eradicating poverty is about ensuring that there is a balanced workforce in terms of age, skills, and education based in all of the regions.”

areas would be significantly close to these growth regions, thereby creating the necessary infrastructure needed to sustain rural areas in the long term. In 1998 the then Government launched the white paper on rural development. Again, a document saying all the right things and in many ways is still relevant to rural communities. That also bit the dust. We then had in more recent years the National Spatial strategy. This was a much diluted Buchanan report, which proposed development based on the establishment of demographic gate ways and hubs across Ireland. It too failed, mainly because in order to implement it, there would have to have been a long term approach agreed by all of the political system, which did not happen. Following that there was the De-centralisation plan, which probably had little hope, but on foot of the current recession had to be abandoned. And currently we have the CEDRA report, chaired by Pat Spillane, which if recent reports are accurate is in some trouble as well.

Although we cannot completely write off CEDRA, it is a fact that all of the other reports failed because the political system did not give the necessary support. The reasons range from a perennial lack of money to the short term focus of parties, who invariably look only to the next election. The net result is that we can only ever get to write a plan, spend some time launching it and talking about it and then quietly forgetting it.

When Ivan Yates and others, mainly economists, suggest that rural supporters face the music and accept the inevitable decline in rural areas, they are challenging for alternative and sustainable ideas that will reverse this decline. In answering them it is clear that a country with 40% of its population living in rural areas, cannot adopt a “do nothing” approach on the basis that everyone will end up in the cities and that will some how solve all our problems.

Eradicating poverty is about ensuring that there is a balanced workforce in terms of age, skills, and education based in all of the regions. It is essential that the distribution of economic activity around the region is based on each regions capacity to generate businesses that are intrinsically linked to the base advantages of that region. The necessary research and development should be part of the ethos of each regional institute of technology with direct linkages to existing and new types of industry located nearby. Once the existence of such a structure is established in each of the regions, then the real job of eradicating poverty can begin.



Irish Rural Link
Nasc Tuaithe na hÉireann



A NUTRITIOUS DIET BEYOND THE REACH OF MANY LOW INCOME FAMILIES IN IRELAND

At this time of the year there is considerable media attention on the cost of going back to school. Uniforms, books and travel costs are major expenditure items for many households during the months of August and September. The challenge of meeting these seasonal costs is particularly daunting for families with low incomes. High expenditure in one area means low expenditure in others. The work of the VPSJ over the years has demonstrated that food is frequently regarded as a flexible element in a household's budget. It is a sad reality in the Ireland of today that one in five children go to bed or school hungry. The proposed Sustainable Development Goals (2015 – 2030), which world leaders will sign at the end of September and which are relevant to both developed and developing countries, identifies the ending of hunger as its second goal – 'End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition for all and promote sustainable agriculture'. Facts and figures point to the relevance of this Goal for Ireland.

This edition of Just.Now focuses on hunger in Ireland and on the cost of a minimum acceptable nutritious diet in Ireland.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

INTRODUCTION

When we think of hunger, we often associate it with developing countries, but unfortunately hunger and food poverty is a reality in Ireland. 13.2% of the Irish population are experiencing food poverty. This is an increase from 10% in 2010. Food poverty is defined as the inability to have an adequate and nutritious diet due to issues of affordability or accessibility. It is measured by the percentage of individuals experiencing one or more of the following:

- Unable to afford a meal with meat, or vegetarian equivalent, every second day;
- Unable to afford a weekly roast dinner (or vegetarian equivalent); and
- Missing one substantial meal in the last fortnight due to lack of money

The VPSJ recently completed two research reports on the cost of a healthy diet. The first report focused on the cost of a healthy food basket for six household types in the Republic of

Ireland, while the second was a pilot study examining the cost of a healthy food basket for two household types in Northern Ireland. This was the first time the VPSJ has been asked to participate in research in Northern Ireland. The research was carried out on behalf of Safefood and the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland. This edition of JUST.NOW focuses on the findings of these two reports, and highlights that income affects the dietary choices that people make, and many low income households would in all likelihood struggle to afford a minimum essential food basket when other costs have to be met

ESTABLISHING THE FOOD BASKETS

The VPSJ use Consensual Budget Standards methodology to establish the cost of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL). This methodology is based on the use of focus groups with inputs from experts where necessary. The focus groups draw up 7 day menus, which are then tested by nutritionists to ensure they meet all the basic nutritional requirements. The final menus provide the basis for the food baskets which are then priced in stores identified by the focus groups.

The menus represent what households need at a minimum level to have a nutritionally adequate and balanced diet, while also reflecting the behaviours and shopping patterns of ordinary members of the public.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND RESEARCH

This research, using the VPSJ MESL data, examined the cost of a healthy food basket for six household types from 2006-2014.

Household type	Cost of Food	Social Welfare Income	% of Income on Food
Two Parents & Two Children (3 & 10)	€125.19	€434.32	28.82%
Two Parents & Two Children (10 & 15)	€150.37	€438.17	34.32%
One Parent & Two Children (3 & 10)	€96.22	€319.52	30.11%
Female Pensioner Living Alone	€62.59	€255.94	24.45%
Pensioner Couple	€82.41	€465.84	17.69%
Single Adult Male	€57.05	€188.00	30.35%

Table 1 Food as a percentage of social Welfare Income for Six Household Types in the Republic of Ireland in 2014

One of the key findings of the research is that low income households would need to spend a considerable proportion of their income in order to be able to afford the food baskets. For example, and as illustrated in Table 1, a two parent household with two children (age 10 & 15) would have to spend 34.32% of their social welfare income on the food basket alone in 2014.

The experience of the VPSJ is that spending on food tends to be one of the least important considerations when low income households are dealing with competing demands on an inadequate income. As a consequence, low income households tend to consume less nutritionally-balanced diets, and suffer from higher rates of diet-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity. Based on the findings of this research it appears that many low income households in the Republic of Ireland would struggle to allocate the expenditure necessary for healthy eating.

NORTHERN IRELAND RESEARCH

The VPSJ conducted a pilot study to establish the cost of a healthy food basket for two household types in Northern Ireland. The two households under consideration in the study were:

- Two Parents and Two Children, 3 & 10
- Female Pensioner Living Alone

Focus groups were established in three different areas in Northern Ireland to draw up menus for the two household types. The menus were then sent to nutritionists for evaluation. The focus groups regarded the final menus as varied, balanced and realistic in terms of their own eating habits and choices. They praised the approach as it reflected their own lived experience and the menus were based on their own food choices. The final menus were converted to shopping lists and priced in stores identified by focus groups.

Household type	Cost of Food	Social Welfare Income	% of Income on Food
Two Parents & Two Children (3 & 10)	€119.17	€338.23	35.23%
Female Pensioner Living Alone	€59.11	€163.69	36.11%

Table 2 Food as a percentage of Social Welfare Income for Two Household Types in Northern Ireland in 2014

Table 2 demonstrates the high proportion of income required to afford the food baskets. In the discussions with focus groups, participants highlighted that food is often regarded as a flexible component of a household's budget and so the amount spent on food is what is left over after other bills such as gas and electricity have been paid. As a consequence, families may end

up buying cheaper processed foods that are high in salt, sugar and calories, but are nutritionally inadequate. As a participant in one of the family focus groups stated:

'Families on benefits could not afford to spend this much on food per week'

Given the very high proportion of income required for a healthy food basket, it is not surprising that between April 2014 and April 2015 over 17,000 people in Northern Ireland received food from the Trussell Trust, an organisation that provides emergency food and support for people in crisis. Food Poverty is more than just what people can and cannot afford to eat. It is also a form of social exclusion in that it can limit people's social interactions as they avoid having friends or family to visit because they simply cannot afford it. It can cause humiliation and distress.

It is hoped that the research by the VPSJ on the cost of a healthy food basket will draw attention to the adequacy of social welfare rates and the struggle of low income households to afford a healthy diet.

Universal - Sustainable Development Goals 2015 -2030

- Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2 End hunger; achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls *
- Goal 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**
- Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

* This Goal includes the target of eliminating the trafficking of human beings for sexual and or labour exploitation.

** Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.



Home Repossession and MABS Central role in the Government's Strategy

By Michael Culloty

Being faced with the possibility of your mortgage lender taking you to court to repossess your home is possibly one of the most stressful experiences a person is likely to encounter throughout life. So stressful that it can, and often does, have a serious impact on peoples' physical and mental health, their relationships and the well-being of their families. It's unsurprising then that some people just can't deal with the situation. They ignore it and hope it will go away. But that's not the answer. Unfortunately, the 'head-in-the-sand' strategy only makes the situation worse; leading to the inevitable outcome - the mortgage lender applying to the court for the repossession of the family home.

I'm sure there are many personal reasons why people ignore their mortgage arrears and avoid engaging with their mortgage provider. Some commentators believe it may be for purely 'strategic' reasons. There is a belief that that there is a group of people out there who could but just won't pay their mortgage because they are out to play the system. Based on my experience in MABS, I'm of the view that there are very few people adopting such an approach. The reality, as most people recognise, is that such strategic default is doomed to failure with possibly very severe consequences for the homeowner and his/her family.

Some progress is being made with the mortgage arrears crisis; many thousands of people who had experienced a problem paying their mortgage over the last number of years have successfully negotiated alternative repayment plans with their lenders. Unfortunately however, many have yet to get their mortgage back to sustainability. These are the cases that are now proceeding to the Courts. One of the notable features of Court repossession hearings is that so few debtors are turning up. In our experience, the vast majority of those that aren't engaging, are families and individuals who are frightened, intimidated, stressed out and lacking in the energy and confidence to engage with the legal process and the reality of their situation.

Once again, this isn't surprising; some lenders have not been as helpful as they could be in their approach to customers in arrears. Some lenders have been too inflexible and haven't afforded people who are genuinely trying to get back on their feet an opportunity to achieve the best outcome for themselves and their families.

MAB S' role in the Government's New Initiative:

For too long there has been a considerable power imbalance between creditor and debtor; particularly the household debtors who, more often than not, have had no recourse to adequate professional advice, and have lacked the tools and confidence to negotiate with powerful financial institutions and their legal representatives.

The Government, last May, announced a suite of measures to be set up in its efforts to address this imbalance between debtor and creditor. Because of the importance of this issue the Government has mandated many departments to cooperate in bringing about changes that will assist those in the later stages of their mortgage arrears difficulty. Among the changes envisaged is a central role given to MABS, by Government, to be the first point of contact for free, independent, confidential and non-judgemental advice and active support for mortgage holders in arrears who have as yet not reached an agreed resolution with their lenders.

This is an expanded role for MABS in that, while MABS advisers, in over sixty offices nationwide, will continue to assist mortgage holders in arrears through the mortgage arrears resolution process (MARP), a new team in MABS will now be dedicated to assisting people, who have come to the end of the MARP process, have not engaged with their mortgage lender or are in danger of having their home repossessed. These dedicated MABS mortgage arrears advisers will assist in evaluating late stage mortgage arrears cases, and developing resolution strategies, as well as challenging, (if appropriate), the final offers made by mortgage lenders. They will investigate all the available



options including those that will bring a statutory resolution to the problem via the Insolvency Service of Ireland (ISI). Where a case is unsustainable they will also provide advice and support on housing options including exploring the relevance of the 'mortgage to rent' scheme.

MABS as Court Mentors

Turning up in court on your own for a repossession hearing can be a daunting and frightening experience and many debtors just can't face it. Those that do are sometimes subject to pressures from individuals and groups, with their own agendas, and without the necessary experience or expertise, giving what can be very misleading advice as to the legal position that should be taken in court. This is just exacerbating the situation for many debtors. As one strand of the Government's initiative to help people in late stage mortgage arrears, MABS, along with the Insolvency Service of Ireland (ISI) will attend Court as 'Court Mentors' on the day of repossession hearings to give

independent advice and support on all of the options available to people in late stage mortgage arrears.

Through its Conference work the membership of SVP no doubt comes into contact with people who are struggling to pay the mortgage, have mounting arrears or have a Court date for a repossession hearing looming. If someone confides in you that mortgage arrears are a problem please let them know about MABS even if the problem is long-lived and the arrears are big. There are statutory and voluntary solutions available for many which may help with the problem. MABS can't guarantee that we can turn every situation around but we will do our level best to guide, help and support people who have a problem with their mortgage and we will work to keep them in their homes where that is possible. Anyone with a mortgage difficulty should be encouraged call the MABS helpline at 0761 07 2000 for independent advice and support.



An End to Moneylending and Credit Unions hold the key to success

Why do people opt for loans from licensed moneylenders when they know how high the interest rates are? That's a question that the media often ask us – and a conundrum that members grapple with as they try to assist people out of debt with the help of MABS. The Central Bank Report on the Licensed Moneylending Industry from 2013 offers some insights. On paper, it seems crazy to pay so much for relatively small loans. The typical APR is 12.5% on the most common loans of €200-€500. Yet, whether you like it or not, the clients of licensed moneylenders usually report a high level of satisfaction with them. The reasons people give for using these services include ease of availability and convenience when it comes to obtaining funds.

About two thirds of customers understand the amount of interest they pay on their loans. Yet there were a staggering 360,000 clients of licensed moneylenders in May 2013.

Why? And how are these numbers sustained? It's the human factor. The personal touch. Usually, clients will be women, and so will the representatives of the licensed moneylenders, who will be known in the communities, walking the pavements, knocking the doors, chatting with cups of tea. A similar model to household visitation practiced by local SVP Conferences across the land. Like our members, they go beyond the hall doors with people, listening and building relationships.

We – and other like-minded organisations - want to beat moneylenders at their own game. People on lower incomes who need, like all of us, to pay for goods, family events, bills or other debts, will always need to borrow for certain things along the way. They don't tend to have savings, so they lack the financial 'cushion' that others take for granted when life takes costly turns. Some form of responsible lending is needed – and indeed is committed to under the Department of Finance's 'Financial Inclusion' strategy of 2011.

An alternative to moneylending is on the horizon. After various

research studies and reports (e.g. 'Creating Credit, not Debt' by Georges Gloukoviezoff earlier this year), it looks like a 'personal micro-credit' service – a lower interest loan provided by credit unions – will be piloted among over 30 credit union areas in October or a little later. The scheme is not yet fully designed, but it's almost there. The main organisations behind the project are the Social Finance Foundation, the Citizens Information Board and the Department of Finance.

Taking a loan of €500 over a 6 months term, a customer will save €5 per week with a credit union loan compared to a typical moneylender, which is a very significant saving to low income family. But will they be able to match the convenience factor of moneylenders?

People will need to know that the service exists and how to access it, and it will need to be as easy to understand and use as possible. If the pilot does not incorporate a 'doorstep' element, it may struggle to gain traction in the target communities, regardless of how cheap the money may be relative to the moneylender - ease of availability and convenience are both paramount. Here's hoping credit union staff will move out of the branches and into communities, giving moneylenders a real run for their money.

In addition, the scheme will need to be marketed both locally and nationally, using various organisations including local members in SVP to identify and 'signpost' suitable clients to this service. Initial customer contact, perhaps by the local credit union, will determine if the potential customer is eligible. Given the client group, the use of the household budget deduction facility, through An Post, will be used, but only where the social welfare payment is in cash. Various things are yet to be fully teased out and finalised. Nonetheless, by the time SVP members start preparing for their Christmas visits, a real alternative to moneylenders will be available – at least in parts of the country served by the thirty or so credit unions actively taking part in the pilot scheme.

National Agresso Roll Out and Support

The world is a changing place and it is becoming smaller. More and more standards and systems are being adopted to enable the smooth and consistent running of organisations. SVP is no different and the new online cloud based Agresso System is simply a tool to make the accounting of our organisation easier for everyone. Agresso is the online treasurer's book. It helps to align the organisation in the modern world and embraces the following specific items:

- Compliance with the Charity Act
- Reporting to Stake Holders
- Supporting Conferences and Members
- Planning and budgeting in times of economic uncertainty

The system is based on a global product Agresso with amendments made to suit SVP. It has been through a testing phase first in Dublin, then in Northern Ireland and last year in the South East. In 2015 six out of eight Regions are actively rolling out the Online Treasurers Book. As of last week there are 427 Conferences Live on the system; that represents 447 books being returned at year end if you include all the activities. Every week sees more conferences join up.

Rollout Administrators have been appointed on a part time or full time basis as the case may be to help make the transition from the manual books. The prospect of moving to a computerised system can be daunting for many people but the Rollout Administrators have experience in accounting and are well equipped to help members through the steps. The period of training generally spans over two to three workshops with some elements being quicker than others. In 2014 a new manual was designed specifically for SVP and includes step by step instructions as well as guidelines from various policies that are relevant to a Treasurer. With training, support by email or

phone and the Treasurers Manual, members should feel fully supported during the early days.

Agresso treasurer's book has great advantages for everyone which include:

- Best practices for reporting and accounts
- Automatic generation of annual report
- Less likelihood of errors, and
- Data stored securely by SVP for everyone's benefit.

All that is required for members is basic computer skills, internet access and of course plenty of training and support. Please contact our local Region or Roll Out Administrator for more information.

Contact Details for Active Regions

Patsy Browne - North East & Midlands Region
patsy.browne@svp.ie Mobile: 086 0213179

Siobhan Heffernan - South East Region
siobhan.heffernan@svp.ie Tel: 051 857112

Anne Ó Murchú - East Region
Anne.omurchu@svpeast.ie Mobile: 086 410 1927

Caroline Manifold - Mid West Region
caroline.manifold@svp.ie Tel: 061 514569 Mobile: 087 4493000

Ciaran Liggett - Northern Region
ciaran.liggett@svpni.co.uk Mobile: 077388-378-71

Frank Leonard - West Region
frank.leonard@svp.ie Mobile: 086 4164035



**we would greatly appreciate
it if you would fill out our..**

Questionnaire on The SVP Bulletin

**enclosed and return by Freepost
or online at**

www.svp.ie/bulletinquestionnaire

KILCOCK COMMUNITY MEN'S SHED OPENS WITH THE SUPPORT OF LOCAL SVP

Liam Farrell, Secretary Kilcock Community Men's Shed



The concept of having a meeting place where men could get together and share experience and skills started in Australia in the 1990's and has spread to the UK and Ireland in recent years. There are now some 270 'sheds' in Ireland with over 6,000 members.

The Kilcock Men's Shed was established in August 2014 and held their meetings in the local soccer club until a premises was kindly provided by the local Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. Since last October, the members have been renovating and refurbishing the premises which now has a workshop and kitchen.

The official launch of the Kilcock Community Men's Shed (KCMS) on August 9th marked the culmination of twelve months of planning, preparation and hard work by the members and, also marks the beginning of a new phase in the development of the group. They now have a well equipped workshop fitted out with a wide range of tools and equipment so that members can develop their skills and learn new ones, while also passing on some of those skills to others. However, Secretary, Liam Farrell points out that you don't have to have any particular skills to join the shed and emphasises the social aspect, saying that "members can just come along and enjoy the craic and banter over tea or coffee".



There is also garden at the rear - which is the pride and joy of the members - and which has a wide range of vegetables and fruit trees as well as colourful plants and flowers, and is well cared for by Michael O'Donoghue.

Chairman Tom O'Doherty said that the support and goodwill of the people of Kilcock has been tremendous and the members hope to reciprocate by undertaking projects that will benefit the local community. They have already refurbished planters and made up a watering tank for the Tidy Towns Committee. With the co-operation of the Kilcock Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, the Men's Shed plan to convert part of the building over Vincent's shop into a training facility and social area.

In conjunction with the Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB), they hope to organise a range of training courses covering such topics as Arts & Crafts; Computers; Gardening etc., They also hope to cover the very relevant topic of men's health and wellbeing.



At the official launch, a garden seat was unveiled in memory of founder member of the KCMS Thomas (Anto) Crehan who sadly passed away while working on the project last October. The seat was made in the shed by the members and it was an emotional occasion for his widow Moira, brother Lawrence, the extended family and all concerned.

Kilcock Men's Shed is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9.30 to 1.30 and new members are very welcome, regardless of age, skill or background. The premises is also wheelchair accessible. Contact 0858606870 or 0872989727.



WE REMEMBER THE LATE MICHAEL O'KEEFFE

SVP recognises Michael by unveiling a Park Bench

On the second anniversary of the sad passing of the late Michael O'Keefe members gathered in great numbers to recognise the high esteem Michael was held in. Michael was so well thought of, laying solid foundations across the region which has seen the NorthEast & Midlands region grow from strength to strength.

Regional President Liam Reilly spoke of Michael's enthusiasm, commitment, passion and legacy. He acknowledged Michael's contribution to the Society locally, regionally and nationally. These sentiments were echoed by Kieran Stafford, National Vice President who reminded us of Michael unassuming personality and his commitment to those in need.

Fr Andy Doyle, a personal friend of the O'Keefe family facilitated in the Park Bench blessing adding some very personal thoughts and prayers for Michael. Prayers of the faithful were read by various members and volunteers across the region. Beautiful music was added by Noel King.

The Park Bench illustrated below is situated in the peaceful Lloyds Park (also known as the People's Park) in Kells and is a lasting memory to all volunteers who have given of their time and talents.

Throughout his 5 years as Regional President Michael spearheaded a number of initiatives that have left a lasting legacy and are the essence of how best to succeed. Michael also played a pivotal role in development of the recent re-structure

of the Society. His dedication and determination for those less well-off in society – you will be forever in our thoughts and prayers.

Our thanks to Gillian O'Rourke Meath West Area President, Alan O'Rourke Regional Treasurer and Mary Lydon, Kilskyre Conference President for organising the ceremony.

As 2015 is the 150th Anniversary of WB Yeats's birthday we remember one of Michael's favourite poems – The Lake Isle of Innisfree.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree WB Yeats 1865 – 1939

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
 And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
 Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee,
 And live alone in the bee-loud glade.
 And I shall have some peace there,
 for peace comes dropping slow,
 Dropping from the veils of the morning to
 where the cricket sings;
 There midnight's all a-glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
 And evening full of the linnet's wings.
 I will arise and go now, for always night and day
 I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
 While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
 I hear it in the deep heart's core.

DROGHEDA MALE VOICE CHOIR CONCERT A ROOF RAISER!

On April the 30th last, the Drogheda Male Voice Choir with special guests Amy Dyer and Alan Hynes, entertained a packed audience at their roof-raising concert in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Termonfeckin. The Church was full to capacity raising much-needed funds for the St. Colmcilles' Conference.

Ms. Deirdre Seery, Conference President in her address welcomed all and extended her gratitude on behalf of the committee to all who contributed or helped in any way towards making the night such a success.

She told them how humbled and appreciative they were to be included as one of the two organisations to benefit from the much needed funds generated from this concert. She outlined the work of St.Vincent De Paul, the many ways people could offer their services, the changing profile of those seeking their assistance and thanked them for their generous ongoing support. She paid special appreciation to the St. Colmcilles' committee and to the Area Council for their total commitment to the work of the St Vincent De Paul. It was a spectacular night to remember for all involved. €3500 was raised!!

St. Colmcilles Conference serves the Pastoral Parishes of Termonfeckin, Clogherhead, Toher and Monasterboice, Co. Louth.

DOWN "TO A TEE" AT ST COLMCILLES GOLF CLASSIC

On May 28th a Golf classic was hosted by the Seapoint Golf Course in aid of St. Colmcilles Conference Co. Louth. This is now the third year in what has now become a very successful event. The committee members worked hard to fill the timetable, whilst our organising sub-committee had everything down 'to a tee' to ensure things ran efficiently. The Area President, Mr Joe Sweeney joined the committee in the evening for great fun and 'craic'. Conference President Ms. Deirdre Seery thanked the sponsors and participants for their generosity, and used the opportunity to inform all about their work in the area. The day ended with a raffle and awarding of prizes. Excellent work all round!!

Drogheda Area President Joe Sweeney is recognised for his contribution to Society



On a warm summers night in Mid May last the great and the good of Drogheda Society gathered in the Highlanes Gallery to honour those whom the Mayor and Councillors of the Drogheda Municipal District felt had made an important contribution to the quality of life in the area.

In all 14 people were honoured - each in their own way had making a difference. SVP was honoured with Drogheda Area President Joe Sweeney who was amongst the recipients.

The Mayor, Councillor Kevin Callan, told the assembled audience that he greatly valued the work of the St.Vincent de Paul Society in the area and said that "they never failed to come to the rescue of people in need". He went on to say "they go about their work in a quiet and helpful manner always respecting the privacy and the dignity of those whom they help". In presenting this award to Joe Sweeney, the Mayor was in essence recognising the unseen work of all the members who gave so generously of their time.

In reply Joe thanked the Mayor for the great honour and thanked the members of the Municipal District for being such good supporters of SVP and hoped this good relationship would always endure.

Joe stated that he was merely the public face of this Society and were it not for an extremely dedicated and motivated team we could not deliver the help we are administrating. "We strive to ensure that anyone who has fallen on hard times is not left without help, to this end the volunteers and staff in our growing network of Vincent's shops and our staff in the Regional Office are all very committed. It is only through partnership and aiming for a common goal that our efforts will bear fruit".

Joe went on to single out for special recognition, former Drogheda Area President Michael Grogan and Area Treasurer Pat Heeney, without whose trojan work and dedication SVP would not be nearly as successful at responding to those in need.

Finally Joe dedicated the award to Pat Curran who died in the early hours of that morning. "Pat represented all that was good about our society. A most compassionate and caring man who always saw the good in people. As Spiritual Director, for the Drogheda Area Council, Pat kept reminding us of the importance of prayer and sacrament in our lives" said Joe.

All in all it was a most pleasant and moving evening and showed that the work of our Society was greatly appreciated by the civic leaders of our community. Thank you all again for your support.

Women Doing it for Themselves!

Staff,Volunteers and friends of Bethany House (Women`s Emergency Accommodation SVP) departed from Longford on the 1st June to take part in the 2015 VHI Women's Mini Marathon.

Either jogging or walking over 20 women took part raising an impressive €2000 which will go towards running the much needed service in the area.

The ladies were joined by Dunia Hutchinson (National Homeless Manager) who also took part on behalf of Bethany House

Despite the inclement weather it didn't dampen the ladies spirits.

Congratulations to all who took part. Great commitment and fun also!! Training begins soon for 2016!!



Member Honoured for 61 years service

The SS Peter & Paul's Clonmel would like to acknowledge the amazing work of its member John Cooney who retired after 61 years service to the Society.

John was a fully active member for all the time he spent in the Society and still helps out even though he is now 'retired'. During his time he was Clonmel Area President and volunteered in the men's night shelter situated in Mulcahy House. John's extraordinary record in helping those in need in his community was honoured by his awarding of the Pope's Benemerenti Medal in recent years by Bishop William Lee, it was a particularly proud day for the Conference as two fellow members Mick Kelly and John O'Neill also received Benemerenti Medals at the same ceremony.

John's wisdom and experience is sorely missed in the Conference but we know he is always close at hand to help if needed. John followed the example of our founder and was a great servant to those in need, we wish him all the best for the future.



Back row Kieran Stafford, Bill Nash, Sr Margaret Quirke, Mary Sullivan, Deirdre McGuire, Jack Somers, John Kennedy.
Front row, Eamonn Griffin, John Cooney, Mary Stafford (Area President).



EIRCODE

Let's make sure people don't get left behind

An Eircode is a smart location code for all Irish addresses. Unlike other countries, where postcodes define clusters or groups of addresses, an Eircode will identify an individual address – rural or urban – and help show exactly where it is located. This means every residential address and business will receive a unique Eircode.

There are numerous benefits to introducing Eircode into Ireland. Not only will it make the delivery of services and goods to households easier, but in the case of a medical emergency, being able to accurately and quickly identify an address can save valuable minutes.

HOW IT WORKS

A65 F4E2

Eircode	Routing Key	Unique Identifier
A 6 5 F 4 E 2	A 6 5	F 4 E 2
Each Eircode is comprised of seven characters that are unique to each mailing address. The seven characters are divided into two parts – a Routing Key and a Unique Identifier.	The first three characters of Eircode, called the "Routing Key" are designed to benefit the parcel/postal industry. It is not directly linked to counties, towns or geographic features.	The second part of the Eircode, called the "Unique Identifier," is comprised of four characters drawn from a carefully selected set of letters and numbers that identify each individual address.

The characters are displayed as UPPER-CASE with a space between the Routing Key and the Unique Identifier.

www.eircode.ie

Hourning Bebe for 25 Years Service



Bernardette Bates "Bebe" received an award for her 25 years service from the then area president Mary Dempsey and Fr. Denis Doyle spiritual director and parish priest of Kilmore.

Bebe has been in St Joseph's Conference in Kilmore Co. Wexford since day one starting off in 1988 and is still an active member of the Conference.

St Benedict's Wins Best Presented Small Management Estate in the Fingal Cleaner Community Awards

The area of Seabury where St Benedict's is located has a community-cleaning group. "We at St Benedict's contribute to this in that we keep our surroundings well presented and two residents in particular maintain the flower bed outside of the scheme. I have encouraged the residents to develop the schemes garden areas to enhance their surroundings" says Pamela, the Schemes Manager. There were already quite a few who are exceptional gardeners and they also got a new group of gardeners from the Daughters of Charity daughters of charity called "Clean Sweep". The group of young men with learning difficulties, and their supervisor have worked together with St Benedict's to develop and enhance the grounds. This year they did a fabulous job on the central bed and lawned it. This has had a very big impact on the look of the scheme and to the view the residents now have out of their windows.

"We have our own gardening competition each year which encourages the residents to do the most beautiful displays" said Pamela.

She went on to say "I heard about the awards and registered St Benedict's. A judge from Fingal came and inspected our scheme, and was very impressed. Now we have won and award for the best presented small Management Estate and we are delighted". The Ceremony was held at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Blanchardstown on Thursday 1st of October at 6.00 pm.

Pamela Farrell (SVP Resident Manager) was there to proudly receive the award on behalf of St Benedict's and accompanied by Dermot O Sullivan gardening supervisor and assistant Enda Bonnar from Clean Sweep and Dana Wiczorek a resident and also winner of best back garden in St Benedict's own internal competition



Backrow L-R: Enda Bonnar, Dermot O Sullivan Frontrow L-R: Dana Wiczorek, David O Connor Lord Mayor of Fingal Co Dublin and Pamela Farrell (Resident Manager)

“Make Plans But Be Prepared For Change” - Summer Scheme a Huge Success at Mountainview Centre, Belfast



Mountainview Centre, Belfast summer scheme aims were to provide good quality play, learning and care experiences and to promote the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of all children who attended.

It was planned and designed to ensure the children would be able to flourish at home and when they return to school. Central to this work was the ongoing objective of increasing the health, wellbeing and resilience of individuals, families and the wider community.

There were 57 local children registered with the scheme this year. The timetable included trips & outings, in-house activities such as Arts & Crafts, cookery, competitions and outdoor cycling, games, water play, gardening and our special messy day.

They would like to thank all the parents who put up with the messy fun learning activities and sent their children in clothes that were suitable for messy play, which was just about every day. Also for the times they had to wait outside until the bus

returned later than planned. By the end of the Summer Scheme they all understood Mountainview Centre's motto of make plans but be prepared for change.

Special thanks to all the volunteers who give so generously of their time to the scheme, the Centre hopes that they enjoyed the experience and look forward to working with them in the future.

Some quotes from parents:

- “This scheme was fantastic, the children learned a lot”.
- “They made things they had never made before, and visited places they had never knew existed”.
- “It made my children's summer holidays.”
- “I don't know what I would do without SVP during July & August”

SVP Charity Shop Opens in Rosemary Street First Vincent's shop in Belfast City Centre



Rosemary Street recently welcomed the arrival of a St Vincent de Paul's (SVP) first charity shop in Belfast City Centre which opened this week. Deputy Lord Mayor, Guy Spence, officially launched the 'Vincent's' store, which will sell a variety of first and second hand bargain goods as well as helping the charity to raise vital funds to assist those in need in the community.

The new Rosemary Street shop, which brings the number of Vincent's stores to 31 across the province, is marking new terrain for the charity by specialising in vintage and designer goods.

Deputy Lord Mayor, Guy Spence, said: "I am delighted to open this St Vincent de Paul shop in the heart of our city. The SVP shops provide quality goods at affordable prices. I would encourage everyone to pay them a visit."

Barney Devenny, Area President of SVP in North Belfast, commented: "SVP, through local volunteers, has been serving the people of Belfast for over 100 years, working to help alleviate poverty in the area and to tackle its causes. We are delighted to be able to bring our Vincent's shop to this historic part of Belfast City Centre, making vintage and designer goods more accessible to the people of Belfast. It will also become an important source of revenue for the charity which allows us to expand our work further into the local community and help even more people in the area."

"We would like to welcome everyone from the community to our new Vincent's shop and hope people will be impressed with the clothing, homeware and bric-a-brac on sale. There is good news for fashionistas as high street and designer clothing in our

shop will be easily identifiable through our 'Vincent's', 'Elegance' and 'Vintage' clothing labels and there are plenty of bargains on the rails!"

The new Vincent's shop is located in an historic area of Belfast with the building dating from the 1880s. During signage work on the building, SVP uncovered the original signage of the building and, in cooperation with conservation planners, restored it for all to see.

St Vincent de Paul is also hoping for local people to support their work through volunteering in the shop or donating their pre-loved goods.

Ruairi Murray, Regional Shops Coordinator added, "I would like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers who have already signed up to help in our new shop and would encourage anyone with an hour or two to spare to drop in and see us in Rosemary Street as we would love more people to help. We also welcome donations of any items in good condition and are so grateful to everyone who has supported the team already."

SVP is fully funded by donations and work is carried out 365 days a year across Northern Ireland by more than 1600 active volunteers. Through Conferences (groups), the Society provides assistance to all sections of the community and offers practical, material and moral support as well as friendship to families and individuals in need.

To find out more about St Vincent de Paul in Belfast, please call the Vincent's shop on 02890310255



Recycling Hot Topic at Vincent's Shops AGM – Northern Region



Friday 4 September saw the coming together of almost 50 shop managers, shop committee members and area presidents for the second Vincent's Shops AGM in the Northern region.

The event was moderated by Cormac Wilson, Chairperson of the Regional Shop Committee. Topics up for discussion included regional and national retail strategies, HR policies and procedures, volunteer recruitment and raising the profile of the shops.

The liveliest discussions centred on the topic of recycling. Given the poor state of recycling markets and falling recycling rates, this topic took on much greater significance. All present took part in workshops to discuss on how to reuse stock better prior to recycling and innovative ideas for increasing sales while in turn playing their part for making a better and cleaner environment.

A fun and informative part of the day was when everyone was asked to price an outfit, which had been selected by the Regional Shops Coordinator, Ruairi Murray. The outfit was an eclectic mix of high street, designer and vintage items including a pair of Christian Louboutin shoes. The closest guess on the day came from Portadown shop manager Deirdre McElhatton.

National Retail Development Manager, Dermot McGilloway, commented, "the lively discussions on the day will assist the National and Regional Shop Committees to formulate strategies for tackling issues that face our Vincent's shops".

The event closed with an address from Regional President, Aidan Crawford, highlighting the important role the shops play within the Society.



L-R: Cormac Walsh, Pauline Browne - SVP Regional Co-ordinator & Aidan Crawford - Regional President

In Tribute

To Deceased Members of the Society of St.Vincent de Paul

Paddy Ryan- 1916-2014

St Mary's Conference, Killarney regret to report the death of Brother Patrick Ryan, aged 99. Paddy joined the Society in Waterford city in 1950 and when he and his family moved to Killarney in 1963 he joined St. Joseph's Conference (Hospital Visitation). Some years later he transferred to St. Mary's Conference (Family Visitation). Paddy held many positions within the Society, including Conference president and Killarney Particular council president. He was the overseas link member for the Kerry Region. He was a very active and dedicated member for all the years, Paddy missed very few meetings. His advice and words of wisdom were always appreciated by all the members.

Spiritual reading held a special place in Paddy's heart, and in later years he prepared the spiritual readings for the weekly meetings. Paddy's last meeting was in February 2014 when he joined with all the Killarney members to celebrate 100 years of the founding of St. Mary's Conference at a special mass celebrated by Bishop Ray Browne. May Paddy's soul rest in peace. Our sympathy to his family Vivian, Elizabeth, Tadgh, Adrian and Derek.

Julia Leahy: 1919-2014

Julia Leahy joined St. Bridget's Conference, Killarney in 1977 she was a very active member of the Society. The SVP was her heart and soul and no work was a bother to her. She was dedicated to her work in family visitation and had a great rapport with the many families she visited. Julia was a founder member of the St. Vincent's thrift shop in Killarney and she also took a very active role in the day to day running of this shop. Julia also took part in monthly collections at the Franciscan Friary in aid of SVP. Julia is missed very much by her friends in St. Bridget's Conference. Our sincere sympathy to her family and many friends

Michael Dowling: 1913-2015

Michael Dowling joined Killarney SVP in 1960 and then transferred to the 2nd Conference St. Joseph's which was formed in 1964. Michael held the positions of President of the St Joseph's hospital visitation Conference and Area president. He was a dedicated member and spent many hours in the company of the patients he visited. Michael passed away aged 102 years and always held the Society close to his heart. Sympathy to his family and friends.

Colm Howlett: 2014

The death has occurred in September 2014 after a short illness of Colm Howlett, a longstanding and much loved member of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Conference Foxrock.

Colm joined the Society in 1996 and over the years has served as President on a number of occasions, most recently in 2013. He has also been Rathdown Area Treasurer for a number of years.

Colm was a man of many talents but he wore his work and academic achievements very lightly. He was always gentle and unassuming and his unfailing good humour won him many friends. He always saw the good in people and would go to great lengths in his efforts to help those he served as a member of the Society. He was a great believer in the benefits of education and encouraged and supported those wishing to attend third level courses.

Colm was a keen hill walker and the highlight of his year was his annual visit to the Lake District in England with his walking friends. He was an avid supporter of the Leinster Rugby Team, rarely missing any of their matches.

He will be sadly missed by all who knew him, not least by his colleagues in the Conference who will always remember him with great affection. I have no doubt the many people he helped and befriended in his visitations will greatly miss the support and encouragement he provided to them

To Annalise and family, who were so supportive of Colm, we extend our deepest sympathy. May he rest in peace.



REGIONAL OFFICES

National Office

SVP House, 91-92, Sean McDermott Street Lower, Dublin, D01 WV38
Phone: 01 838 6990, Email: info@svp.ie

East Region

SVP House, 91-92, Sean McDermott Street, Dublin, Dublin 1
Phone: 01-8550022, Email: info@svpeast.ie

South West Region

Ozanam House, 2 Tuckey Street, Cork
Phone: 021-4270444, Email: info@svpcork.ie

Mid West Region

Ozanam House, Hartstonge Street, Limerick
Phone: 061-317327, Email: info.midwest@svp.ie

North East & Midlands Region

53-54 Trinity Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth
Phone: 041-9873331 Freephone number 1800 677 777,
Email: info.northeast@svp.ie

West Region

Ozanam House, Augustine Street, Galway
Phone: 091-563233, Email: info.west@svp.ie

South East Region

Ozanam Centre, Henrietta Street, Waterford
Phone: 051-857112, Email: info.southeast@svp.ie

North Region

196-200 Antrim Road, Belfast,
Northern Ireland, BT15 2AJ,
Phone: (028) 90351561, Email: info@svpni.co.uk

North West Region

The Diamond, Raphoe, Donegal
Phone: 074-9173933, Email: eddie.shiels@svp.ie

