



Society of St Vincent de Paul



Vincetian News

Yearbook 2023

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St Vincent de Paul

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

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

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

Our Mission and Ethos

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



Support and Friendship

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



Promoting Self-sufficiency

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



Working for Social Justice

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



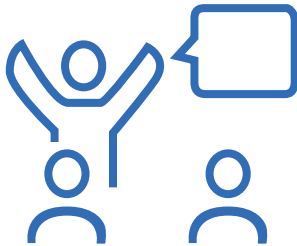
SVP Services



Home
Visits



Education
Support



Social Justice
Advocacy



Twinning
Programmes

How SVP Responds



Home
Visits



Online



Phone

How SVP Helps

162

Conferences

18

Area Councils

SVP Expenditure
in 2023

£5,000,000

SVP has
increased its help
to individuals and
families by

43%
from
£3.5m
in 2022

*The key areas of
expenditure:*

Electricity
Food
Gas
Oil
Household goods



SVP
Charity Shops

30

SVP Membership

Local Conferences in every town,
village and city with over

800 members





Spiritual Reflection by Fr Perry Gildea C.M.

"For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish."

(Mk:14)

This was a simple passing remark made by Jesus in support of a very special personal kindness. But it is a truly prophetic statement. No matter where or when we look at human society there are always the poor.


It was the realisation of both St Mathew and St Mark that the story of this anointing with a very expensive ointment was important as Jesus himself declared her act of loving kindness would be told for all time.

While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, *"Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor."* And they scolded her. But Jesus said, *"Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."* (Mk: 14:3-9)

St. Vincent and Blessed Frederic understood that service and assistance to the poor was the principal way in which we lovingly serve God. While it is a sad reality that there always are many poor it is also a challenge to all who profess to be Christian to do all that is possible to help them. It is a human challenge as well as a Christian one and we often will find many others serving the poor in variety of ways. However, for the Christian it is a necessity of life. It was this realisation that inspired St. Vincent and Ozanam. A response to the psalm we use for their feasts *"The Lord hears the cry of the poor"* is the constant challenge for all Vincentians.

Poverty is now all around us. There is the appalling situation in Gaza where an entire population are subject to unbelievable violence poverty, homelessness, hunger, and disease while available aid is strictly limited and insufficient. Their cry is surely the cry of the poor.

Then there are the people of Ukraine subject to a hostile and invading army wrecking destruction like that in Gaza. There are many other areas or countries suffering from either war or armed violence. All these add to the chorus cry of the poor.



Locally too there is a dramatic increase in domestic poverty as is so eloquently illustrated by your own report “Beyond breaking Point”. This impressive document based on the experience of the conferences if the Northern Region spells out the extent of food, heating, clothing, poverty, especially as it affects children (97000), and pensioners (4700), out of a total of 306000 of Northern Ireland’s statistically poor. These statistics are supported by the endless flood of requests for help of many kinds the Society receives. This report articulates the cry of the poor. It also confirms Jesus’ assertion that the poor will always be with us.

The report calls for political and social action to address such extreme social poverty. This is fitting. Blessed Frederic Ozanam saw part of the mission of the Society as advocacy. Not only did he direct the society to helping the poor but he also frequently spoke and wrote about the need for changing society to care much more effectively for the poor. He also encouraged the society to speak out about the causes of poverty and be advocates of the poor. In Jesus’ acceptance of this remarkable act of love and kindness, kindness itself is highlighted.

Vincentian service of the poor and needy must always be characterised by loving kindness.

Welcome from Regional President, Mary Waide



"St Vincent de Paul members have seen the level of need escalating and not dissipating at all"

This is a comment made by a member of SVP in Antrim and included in our Social Justice Report **"Beyond Breaking Point"**.

In the last year, SVP has been a crucial lifeline to thousands of people in our Region.

The members have been faced with a tsunami of requests with need stretching across city, town, village, and rural areas.

Children are going to bed hungry and cold and going out to school in the morning without any breakfast, depending on a school dinner. Many with working parents have no entitlement to that hot meal.

Members are visiting homes with empty larders and fridges, no heat, and are meeting people without hope. This is leading to stress, anxiety and mental health issues which has a knock-on effect for families and for whole communities.

Our members are very special people who are following in the footsteps of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, not only concerned with fulfilling immediate needs but who have a thirst for justice and equality. This was apparent in the Focus Groups with members in the final phase of the research for our Social Justice Survey and is apparent in the commitment of our Social Justice Committee.



The publication of “Beyond Breaking Point” and its launch in The Long Gallery in Parliament Buildings Stormont was a highlight of the year. It was a first for our Northern Region and a clear voice for the voiceless.

The calls to Regional Office and local Conference helplines increased and last year we provided £5m in assistance, up 43% on the previous year. We are indebted to our members and to our staff for their resilience and dedication.

There is however an ongoing need for the recruitment of volunteers if we are to sustain the work of The Society. I would appeal to you as you read this SVP Yearbook to consider becoming a member and making a commitment to help your neighbours living in poverty.



Our Evening of Seasonal Songs in Clonard Monastery was a wonderful occasion and a success beyond all our expectations. More than 800 people packed into the beautiful building to enjoy an evening of magnificent music hosted by Claire McCollum with performances by Malachi Cush, Margaret Keys and Fr Martin O'Hagan.

The work of our volunteers has been recognised with SVP being chosen to receive the Kings Award for Voluntary Service. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

This year once more we welcomed Rose McGowan, SVP National President, to the Annual Northern Region Members' Day which took place in Tullyglass House Hotel, Ballymena. The membership was well represented and the day was both informative and enjoyable, with members sharing experiences and stories of our successes in supporting those living in poverty across the Region.

Our donors have been faithful and increasingly generous and without their loyalty we could not continue with our work in reaching out to those we assist. I thank them from the bottom of my heart for their continued support.

Thank you and God's Blessings to all our members who are inspired by St Vincent de Paul and carry on the legacy of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam by reaching out the hand of friendship and support to make a difference to so many in our communities.

I am proud to have represented St Vincent de Paul in the Northern Region for another year as Regional President.



“Those who know the way to the home of their poorer brothers, whose feet have swept the dust from his staircase, never knock at his door without feelings of respect”

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

St Vincent de Paul Regional Board



Mary Waide, Regional President

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

Patrick Friel, Regional Treasurer

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

Henry O’Loan, Regional Vice President

Henry joined St Mary’s Glenravel on 1 January 2007 and became President of St Mary’s Glenravel in January 2014. He was also elected as Area President for Mid Antrim in 2017. He is interested in adult faith development having joined the Adult Faith Development Pathways programme in Drumalis Retreat Centre in 2006 which he found engaged him in living his faith as a true Christian. It has enabled Henry to be a better visible sign of Christ and to be able to bear witness to his boundless love.

Anne Irwin, Regional Vice President

A friend invited Anne to become a volunteer of her local Conference 20 years ago. She realised there was a level of poverty that she hadn’t been aware of, prior to becoming a volunteer, and felt good giving something back to society by spending a couple of hours a week visiting those in need while providing food, electricity, coal etc. Before becoming Area President in 2019, Anne was Treasurer and originally had responsibility for 10 Visitation Conferences. Anne keeps in regular contact with Conference Presidents via phone, face to face and Zoom meetings.

Anne McLarnon, Regional Secretary

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

Fr Perry, Spiritual Advisor

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

St Vincent de Paul Regional Staff



**Pauline Brown,
Regional Manager**

T: 028 9075 0150
E: pauline.brown@svpni.co.uk

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



**Colm Crummey,
Regional Accountant &
Treasurer Support**

T: 028 9075 0155
E: colm.crummey@svpni.co.uk

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



**Ciaran Liggett,
Special Works & Treasurer
Support Officer**

T: 028 9075 0156
E: agresso.support@svpni.co.uk

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



**Geraldine McStravick,
HR Service Partner**

T: 028 9086 0158
E: geraldine.mcstravick@svpni.co.uk

Geraldine provides support to managers, employees, office holders and members with any HR queries. She administers and provides full recruitment and selection advice, support and guidance. Ensuring full compliance with the SVP Recruitment and Selection policy, Geraldine manages the induction programme for new employees in collaboration with line managers.



**Christine Gaston,
Membership Support Officer**

T: 028 9075 0151
E: christine.gaston@svpni.co.uk



**Aisleain Reynolds,
Membership Support Officer**

T: 028 9075 0151
E: aisleain.reynolds@svpni.co.uk

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



**Mary McCaughey,
Information Support Officer,
Regional Office**

T: 028 9035 1561
E: mary.mccaughey@svpni.co.uk



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

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

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



**Anne Crossan,
Regional Retail Manager**

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

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

Membership

What is The Rule - The Famous Blue Book



The Rule reflects the basic philosophy of the Society as well as developments in its outlook, organisation, and working methodology to enable it to meet the needs of those most in need in Irish Society.

The Rule for Ireland complies with the International Society's Basic Requirements for Drafting the Internal Statutes.

Rule for the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Ireland

The overall purposes and objects of the Society are:

- The prevention and relief of poverty and economic hardship; and
- Such other purposes that are of benefit to the community for the purposes of charities legislation and which are identified by the National Council.



Vincentian Vocation

The vocation of the Society's members, who are called Vincentians, is to follow Christ through service to those in need and so bear witness to His compassionate and liberating love. Members show their commitment through person-to-person contact. Vincentians serve in hope.

Vincentian Values

The work of our founder Frederic Ozanam permeates throughout each aspect of our work. There are a number of core values members of SVP bring to their work and represent the standard to which we all aspire.

- 1 Believing that our work and our own lives are enriched by keeping a strong spiritual dimension to all our activities.
- 2 Respecting the right of every person to participate economically and socially in society.
- 3 Supporting those who are disadvantaged to speak for themselves. We aim to ensure the voice of those we help has a strong role in influencing the supports we offer and the way we provide our services.
- 4 Valuing diversity and being non-judgmental, caring, confidential and respectful in all our interactions with those we help, other members and staff.
- 5 Welcoming as members all those who respect and support our Christian values.

The Rule Book is our guide which supports the foundation of our work, ensures good governance and compliance in all aspects of our work.

Validating our structure, The Rule Book, forms our constitution and meets the standards for our charitable purposes, aims and objectives.

An extract from The Rule should be read at each Conference meeting.



The journey of becoming a member...in six easy steps!

How we make a difference to the people we assist is the core work of the Society. SVP volunteers are the backbone, offering their time, skills, and compassion to uplift the lives of individuals and families facing impossible choices.

As a new member of the Society, your skills of empathy, listening and being non-judgmental ensure all of our families and individuals are treated with the utmost dignity and respect. By visiting people in their own homes, you will be a welcome visitor bringing hope, turning sorrow into joy and lifting heavy hearts with practical and emotional support.

STEP 1

Visit **www.svp.ie** and complete the online form. A welcome telephone call will be received by one of our friendly Membership Support Officers to clarify your journey.

STEP 2

Once the application is submitted, the applicant receives a thank you email from National Office outlining next steps, which include the process for ID validation, reference checking and vetting.

STEP 3

Complete the vetting process through AccessNI. A Membership Support Officer will guide you.

STEP 4

Once vetting and references are completed, the applicant will be emailed a link to complete four mandatory online modules of training.

These include the History of the Society, Poverty, Structure of SVP and Safeguarding. Online modules should be completed within 30 days and take approximately two hours.

This can be completed at your own pace.

STEP 5

Once online training is complete, the applicant will be invited to register for mandatory Home Visitation training. This will be organised either online or in person. This training is carried out by experienced, existing members to give practical skills and insights about your role.

STEP 6

Once the Visitation training is complete, the applicant is formally placed with a Conference. The Conference President will welcome you to your first meeting and you are ready to go!

As part of a group of like-minded people, you will enjoy the camaraderie and support of the others.

What **you** can expect of **us**

It is the aspiration of SVP that, as a member:

- we give you meaningful work to do
- you know what's expected from you
- you're offered appropriate training
- you're thanked and recognised for your voluntary contribution
- you receive supervision and support
- you know who to go to if there is a problem
- you are not out of pocket for expenses incurred when volunteering
- you're given the opportunity to learn from your mistakes
- you're made aware of any disciplinary and grievance procedures (including 'The Rule' for Members)
- you're treated fairly and do not experience discrimination
- you have safe volunteering conditions, including public liability insurance cover
- you're informed about and given the opportunity to play an active part in SVP
- you're able to say 'no',
- to leave without feeling guilty,
- you're consulted with and kept informed of changes within SVP

What **we** hope of **you**

You agree to do your best:

- to adhere the Mission and Spiritual Ethos of SVP
- to perform your volunteer role to the best of your ability
- to give as much notice as possible whenever you cannot volunteer when expected
- to follow the Society's Rules and Procedures (for members)
- to follow all procedures including confidentiality and other relevant policies
- to abide by the Society's Code of Conduct

What our new members have said:

- *I joined because I wanted to help others in my local community*
- *I was looking for a new opportunity at this stage in my life*
- *SVP is a worthwhile cause*
- *I had been helped when I was having a tough time in my life and I wanted to give something back now I am on my feet!*
- *The training was excellent - the two trainers were very informative*
- *Had a great time meeting others*
- *I learned a lot!*

We want us both - you, our amazing volunteer, and us, the Society - to have **a really positive and mutually beneficial volunteering relationship**, so you can be as proud of **us**, as we can be proud of **you**.

The Role of An Area President

What is the Purpose of an Area President?

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

An Area President should be:

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

An Area President should:

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

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

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



Area Presidents Gathering

The Regional Board met with Area Presidents at the Hill of the O'Neill in Dungannon to discuss the importance of governance and compliance. The structure within the International and National Societies across the world ensures that there is consistency with 'The Rule' and charities legislation.

A very interactive evening was held with everyone participating and enjoying the sharing of information within the peer group.



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Spotlight On Area Presidents



Martin Allen Mid Antrim

When did you join SVP?

Over 30 years ago

Why did you join SVP?

I was asked by Iris Sharkey, a lady I knew, who is since deceased, and someone whom I had the utmost respect for. My daughter Molly said another reason I joined was because *"I can't say no!!"*.

What was it about SVP's ethos that interested you?

The aspiration of SVP to serve Christ with love, respect, justice, hope and joy.

How have you valued your membership?

I value my membership highly as SVP offers the opportunity to do some good work in the wider community.

What is the best thing about being a member of SVP?

I have felt very blessed to have the great opportunity to be part of an organisation and team in helping people and being a witness to their resilience and strength of character. Also the Conference members have been a great witness to me over this last 30 years.

What are your hopes as Area President?

To help whatever way I can to lighten the load for those Conference members in the Area. To help them have joy in what they do.

What would you say to someone who is considering becoming a member of SVP?

I would want them to know the joy I have experienced from all my years of being a member of SVP in being able to bring help to those in need. It is a great organisation, it does good work, and you meet a lot of good people.

A graphic of a spotlight shining from the top left corner onto the title text.

Spotlight On Area Presidents



Sean Gallagher Derry City

When did you join SVP?

I joined in March 2011 and my wife is also a member too.

Why did you join SVP?

I was asked to join by a former Area President, so I decided I'd give it a try. 13 years later and I am still here!

What was it about SVP's ethos that interested you?

Being able to help people who are struggling with everyday bills and being able to do it confidentially putting our client at ease and knowing that we have made their lives a little bit easier.

How have you valued your membership?

I can say that being a member has had a real impact on my life and my family's. They have all had help in some way or another through the years.

What is the best thing about being a member of SVP?

I love being a member especially around Christmas when clients are delighted to see you coming to visit.

Knowing that you are helping ease the burden for them at the most difficult time of the year.

What are your hopes as Area President?

It is a big undertaking. The Area I look after is huge and challenging but enjoyable.

My hopes are that my board and I can raise our profile in Derry, get new members signed up and be able to help as many people as possible in a caring way, one that Blessed Frédéric himself would do.

A graphic of a spotlight beam shining from the top left corner onto the title text.

Spotlight On Area Presidents



Shaun Killough Kilmeegan

When did you join SVP?

I was recruited to join after an appeal at Mass. I had retired and I need to find some activity to fill my day.

Why did you join SVP?

My father and uncles were in SVP in Ballymena when I was growing up and I initially thought that all they did was collect outside our church after Mass. To be honest when I joined I was unaware of the many different ways the Society helps families due to the confidential nature of our work.

What was it about SVP's ethos that interested you?

I agree with our National Recruitment Campaign statement which states that as a member of the largest charitable organization in Ireland it gives us a way to live out our Christian values in a quiet, discreet and confidential way.

What are the best thing about being a member of SVP?

To be part of a great team and to witness the practical support we provide in a compassionate, non-judgmental way.

What are your hopes as Area President?

I hope to continue with the great work that has been achieved by the many members who are no longer with us. Similar to many other charities and sporting bodies there is a great need to involve new younger members to join us.

I intend to try and recruit new members in each of our Area Conferences. I hope to be always available and use my skills and experience to help anyone in my Area.

What would you say to someone who is considering becoming a member of SVP?

I would recommend that after they have completed their training they should attend our meetings for a short period of time and then decide. This will give them a true picture of the work undertaken.

I would also suggest that they may find that they get a great sense of satisfaction and witness how we have radically changed some individual's lives.

A graphic of a spotlight shining from the top left corner onto the title text.

Spotlight On Area Presidents



George McGrath South and East Belfast

When did you join SVP?

I first Joined SVP as a teenager, in the 60's, in Ardglass, and looked after the sale of Sunday Papers in a kiosk after mass. I re-joined St Brigid's Conference Belfast in 2014.

Why did you join SVP?

I think it's very important to give something back to the community in which I live and I have been involved in other voluntary organisations prior to rejoining SVP.

What was it about SVP's ethos that interested you?

The ethos of SVP – to help anyone in need regardless of creed, ethnicity, background etc is vitally important in the age we live as it demonstrates Christ's love for all through our membership and actions.

What are the best things about being a member of SVP?

My membership of SVP reaffirms on a daily basis the needs of the disadvantaged and provides me with the opportunity to help. The best thing about being a member is the friendship and the daily reminder of the Blessings I have received and can use to help others.

What are your hopes as Area President?

My hopes for the Area is that we can recruit more members and that I can help and support all the Conferences in the Area.

What would you say to someone who is considering becoming a member of SVP? I will tell any prospective member that they will get more out of membership than they can ever put in.

A graphic of a spotlight shining from the top left corner of the page.

Spotlight On Area Presidents



Bernadette (Bernie) McNeice **Armagh / Craigavon**

When did you join SVP?

I joined SVP 12 years ago.

Why did you join SVP?

I have always admired the work that the Society does.

What was it about SVP's ethos that interested you?

Helping others without being judgmental.

How have you valued your membership?

I have made many friends within the Society this past 12 years. I have seen another side to my hometown. I would never have thought there was so much poverty right on my own doorstep. Most families are just a pay packet away from needing financial help.

What would you say to someone who is considering becoming a member of SVP?

I would encourage them to give it a go.

A yellow spotlight beam shines from the top left corner of the page, illuminating the title text.

Spotlight On Area Presidents



Thomas O'Kane North Belfast

When did you join SVP?

I was introduced to SVP by holding a red box outside our church 50 years ago but didn't join SVP until about 2017.

Why did you join SVP?

I joined SVP to help in my community.

What was it about SVP's ethos that interested you?

Helping and supporting those in need within the local community.

How have you valued your membership?

I've valued my membership by working with our volunteers in the Conference.

What is the best thing about being a member of SVP?

Working with colleagues to assist those in need of help and support.

What are your hopes as Area President?

To help and assist my colleagues in the Conferences with the work that we do.

What would you say to someone who is considering becoming a member of SVP?

I would encourage them to talk to Conference members.

A graphic of a spotlight shining from the top left corner onto the text.

Spotlight On Area Presidents



Charlie Rafferty East Tyrone

When did you join SVP?

My mother was a supporter of SVP so SVP always interested me. Being a regular contributor, I was asked to join by the President so I said yes.

Why did you join SVP?

I knew I wanted to do something in my local community and SVP came along at the right time.

What was it about SVP's ethos that interested you?

I wanted to help in any way I could to alleviate poverty and loneliness.

How have you valued your membership?

Being a member of SVP helps me to understand the problems families face day to day. I think it helps me with my faith journey in life. It's also great to meet like minded people in my own Conference, my Area Conference and also at Regional level.

What are your hopes as Area President?

I hope to gel all six Conferences that we can all work together for the betterment of all those who seek help.

Any difficulties they may have let them know I am only a phone call away.

What would you say to someone who is considering becoming a member of SVP?

I would say yes, helping others can be very rewarding, you get to know the problems families face in your local Area. Support is always at hand so you're not on your own.

SVP Members' Day

SVP Volunteers Selfless Service Celebrated During Volunteers' Week

More than 120 SVP members from across the Northern Region joined to celebrate Volunteers' Week and learn of the inspirational work being undertaken by SVP across Northern Ireland, at the Society's annual Members' Day.



SVP volunteers are the backbone of the Society, offering their time, skills, and compassion to uplift the lives of individuals and families facing impossible choices.



The occasion marked significant membership milestones for 12 members, who were presented with special commemorative certificates and medals. Between them they have devoted over 150 years of selfless service to SVP in their local community.



Mary Waide, Regional President of St Vincent de Paul for the Northern Region, said:

"As SVP Regional President it was a great privilege to welcome everyone to Members' Day and to celebrate our volunteers during Volunteers' Week. Our volunteers' compassion and commitment is incredible as they play an invaluable role in the Society and are the very fabric of the Vincentian family.

We are extremely proud of our volunteers and I know that so many of those who attended Members' Day left feeling inspired for the future and the contribution they have made and will continue to make through SVP in the heart of their own community. The atmosphere in the room was brimming with positivity and it was testament to the enduring spirit of kindness that lies at the heart of SVP in the Northern Region."



The celebratory atmosphere was filled with countless heartfelt stories, shared memories, and expressions of gratitude. Attendees were deeply moved by the genuine connections and lifelong bonds that have been forged through their shared commitment to service. The event provided a platform for volunteers to reflect on their incredible journey and inspire others to embark on their own path of volunteering.





Rose McGowan, SVP National President, was guest of honour at the event and said:

"One of the privileges of being SVP National President is that I have the opportunity of meeting members, volunteers and staff from every corner of this island.

I get the opportunity to meet and speak with volunteers and to experience the enthusiasm that you have for the work of the Society. Our greatest strength is our volunteers. You and the thousands of volunteers within the Society show kindness towards people requesting your help. You also show compassion and empathy for people in difficult circumstances and approach their needs with discretion, mindful of confidentiality while being respectful and non-judgmental. I thank you for the opportunity of being here today."



What I Believe:

Pauline Brown, SVP Regional Manager

I was born in north Belfast in the 1960s and have three sisters and two brothers. My mum and dad were exceptionally hard working parents and family was at the heart of everything.

My primary education was at Holy Cross Girls' School and I went to St Dominic's High School. Being a Dominican, our moto was Veritas, which means truth. I have always tried to live my life in a truthful and honest way. From an early age both my parents encouraged all of us and supported us to have a good education. They made many sacrifices, which only became clear in later life, to ensure that there was enough money to buy school books and uniform.

My first job was with the NI Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux where I worked for 13 years, moving on to Barnardos and then the British Red Cross. My role with SVP began in 2015. I have always worked in the Voluntary Sector as I believe the core work makes a real difference in the lives of those we are trying to help and support.

I married Declan in 1986 and have one daughter, Edelle and two beautiful grandchildren. We still live in North Belfast.

How and when did you come to faith?

Like all of my family, we were christened as a baby. My mum always said the tradition was to have a child baptized as soon as possible. We were brought up in the Catholic tradition, making First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Throughout our school years we supported many charities



and were always taught to observe Feast Days, make sacrifices during Lent by giving up a treat and donating a little bit of pocket money.

We were married in Our Lady of Perpetual Succour church, Deanby Gardens, which was our family parish at the time. I was also a young SVP member in the 1980s in this parish.

The values and ethos of the Catholic faith remain very important to me.

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

Thankfully, I haven't had a crisis of faith. I have at times of difficulty during my life often questioned how or why certain events happened to me or to my family.

I sometimes doubt I am doing enough as I think my faith is probably very simplistic.

Could you envisage a life without faith?

No, never. I believe that God has a plan and a path for everyone and it is my faith in Him that keeps me going. As my full time job now is with SVP, it is lovely at times to be at a meeting when prayers are said. It keeps me grounded and brings me back to purpose.

My 92 year old dad attends mass every day. He remains a great example and role model in the lives of our extended family. He is always the first we go to when we want some extra prayers said.

Is there a difference between being spiritual and being religious?

I think the difference is that practice and actions bring religion to life. I do believe that spirituality is what moves us to being proactive within faith.

Are you ever frustrated by your own faith or denomination?

I wouldn't say I would be frustrated with my faith. I do be disappointed when labels are attached to denominations and assumptions are made without a full understanding of what others believe in.

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

I cannot say I am looking forward to dying but I do believe that when I do die, my mum, grandparents and other members of the family will be there to welcome me. My mum died five years ago and she was such a faithful person. I believe that she will look after me in death just as she did in life.

Do you believe your faith is fulfilling its mission in Northern Ireland?

I think church leaders have a really difficult role in fulfilling its mission in any country.

The world we live in is very challenging. The commitment to living a life of faith can be perceived as being "unpopular". Clergy, teachers and parents have an exceptionally important mission in bringing faith into action. There is no doubt that there is a decline in the number of people attending church on a regular basis and that the number of people entering into vocational life, is decreasing.

Have you ever experienced a "leap of faith moment"?

When I look back on the "big" events of my life, I believe that God has guided me to making the right decisions. I would always call on the Holy Spirit to help me when faced with certain choices and I have no regrets even though I couldn't have known what the outcomes of some of those choices would be.

What misconceptions are there about your faith/denomination?

I think living in Northern Ireland there is a lot of misconceptions about a lot of things!

Fear, in my opinion, of not fully understanding another's perspective or faith, has led to much difficulty. Genuine understanding of what others believe should not be threatening nor misconstrued.

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

I often hear others saying they do not have time to practice their faith. Time is a precious commodity in the lives of busy people and everyone is entitled to choose how they spend and prioritise their time.

How do you think faith is portrayed in the media?

It is encouraging to see the media interested in faith when reports are factual or meaningful.

Have you ever been angry with God?

No, never angry. I have at times asked God a serious question as to why certain things have happened in family life or in the world. At times I would like a direct answer, but that is not God's way. God tells us not to be afraid, so I always try to remember to let go and let God. My mum always said that whatever we pray for we should put it in God's hands.

Have you a favourite hymn/spiritual song?

There are certain hymns I associate with certain events. I really enjoy some of the Taizé chants, like "O Lord hear my prayer". Our Lady of Knock hymn always reminds me of my mum and my granny. It was sung at their funeral masses.

Is there a religious text from which you derive comfort?

We studied St Matthews Gospel for O Level and I often think of the words

"ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be opened to you"

For me, this is about faith and truly believing that God will answer our prayers.

What do you believe happens after death?

I believe that there is a place in heaven and we will be reunited with loved ones. Jesus reminds us that there are many rooms in His Father's house.

Has religion helped or hindered the people of Northern Ireland?

Definitely helped. When you see a coming together of church leaders who worked tirelessly in helping to bring peace and reconciliation after so many difficult years here in Northern Ireland.

Where do you feel closest to God?

Sometimes it can be sitting in an empty church having lit a candle, it can be at my mum's graveside or it can be in a packed full church, at the annual novena mass in Clonard.

What is your favourite film?

Breakfast at Tiffany's with Audrey Hepburn

What is your favourite book?

Anam Cara by John O'Donohue

What music do you enjoy?

Anything by Bob Geldof and the Boomtown Rats - my first ever live gig!

How do you relax?

By going to watch Cliftonville Football club, gardening and playing with my two grandchildren.

How would you like to be remembered?

As someone who tried her best

Do you believe in regrets?

There are no regrets just lessons learned.

What I Believe with Pauline Brown
was first published by Belfast Telegraph

What I Believe:

Patrick Friel, SVP Regional Treasurer

I was born in Dromore, Co Tyrone, in March 1950, in a small rural village. I moved to Omagh in 1952 where I grew up. My father was a telegraph boy / postman / telephone exchange supervisor who was attracted to my mother as a young girl out cycling. He cycled to Dromore to 'court' her and they married in mid 1940s. Mum was a live at home wife who looked after her three children - a girl and two boys – I am the middle child. My sister died in 2014. Mum and dad both died in their mid/late 60s.

I was educated in Christian Brothers Primary School / Grammar School until 1968 when I went to Queen's University and then worked in an accountancy practice in Omagh before circumstances led me to setting up my own practice from which I retired four years ago.

I joined SVP Christ the King Conference in 1980 and since then I have held various voluntary roles within the Society. I am currently Treasurer of the Northern Region.

I married Catherine in 1988 and we have three girls, all of whom have their own careers - Pharmacist, QUB Research Fellow and Nurse. All have their own homes - two in Belfast and one in Omagh. The middle girl got married in May 2023 and we had a marvellous family occasion!

I met Catherine on a Diocesan Religious Education Course (spread over two years) and I car shared with others from the parish who were on the course. Our relationship started there, we got engaged after the course in December 1987 and married in June 1988. We have been very happily married since.



How and when did you come to faith?

As a child, at home, at the feet of my parents, saying our prayers/rosary, attending Mass regularly and on Christmas morning. Foundation laid there. School was also instrumental in preparation for sacraments. Worked at it over growing up and during lifetime events reinforced my faith.

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

Never had any crisis or doubt. Faith has grown deeper with time. It requires work each day - prayers, daily Mass, feeling part of a pilgrim community / parish.

Could you envisage a life without faith?

No way. What 'rock' have we to cling to when things are going bad, illness, death in family, tragedies, wars etc. Faith gives you that 'hope' that all will be well in the end.

Is there a difference between being spiritual and being religious?

I think so. I am not quite sure what some people mean when they say they are spiritual - possibly that they think / believe there must be something out there that maybe is in charge of all this (world) but not quite sure what it is. Religious have a definite belief in a creator, God, in whom they place their trust and follow His teachings closely.

Are you ever frustrated by your own faith or denomination?

No. It gives meaning / purpose to my daily living.

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

Not really afraid. At my age I know it could be imminent and I must be prepared to meet my Lord/Saviour for judgement. Hopefully, be found worthy, to enter into the place God has prepared for me for all eternity.

Do you believe your faith is fulfilling its mission in Northern Ireland?

Yes. It is constantly pointing me to God and confirming me in my belief in Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour.

Have you ever experienced a "leap of faith moment"?

Yes. In connection with prayer for a critically ill family member who, within hours, was restored to health. An outcome described by medics as a miracle.

What misconceptions are there about your faith/ denomination?

I am not aware of others' misconceptions about my faith / denomination. It is not that I don't talk to others about religion. I respect other people's choices / beliefs and no one has challenged me about my beliefs.

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

The modern culture wants everything to happen 'now' - instant communications by mobile phone etc. Religion requires one to work at it - 'take up your cross daily and follow me'. The greater the input the better the outcome. Like most/all relationships, they require input/work to achieve a result.

How do you think faith is portrayed in the media?

Because they have to maintain a balance most of the time, media tends to shy away from religious matters. In certain countries the media is currently perceived as anti-religion which can engender or reinforce a similar attitude with their audience, particularly the younger people.

Have you ever been angry with God?

No. I have not suffered a grievous emotional hurt which a lot of families have and I can understand why they might be angry with God. In such circumstances they may grow closer to God with whom they may have an encounter which might be angry initially.

Have you a favourite hymn/spiritual song?

My favourite hymn is 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'. It reinforces the real meaning of Christmas which is still under threat from 'consumerism'. It is also easy to sing along with for those of us who are not quite choir material!

Is there a religious text from which you derive comfort?

Yes I do! John 14.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house. If there were not,

I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared a place for you. I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too."

So very comforting and reassuring.

What do you believe happens after death?

I believe that immediately after our death we are subject to judgment by Jesus. We will be found either worthy to enter Heaven or, if not, we will be banished to Hell, the latter being absence from the presence of God. On the last day our mortal bodies will rise from the dead, be reunited with our souls and those judged worthy of Heaven will enter into eternal joy in the presence of God and all the saints while those found not worthy will suffer Hell (the absence from the joy of being in the presence of our eternal Father).

Has religion helped or hindered the people of Northern Ireland?

The Troubles were not a religious matter but political in nature. It is a fact that the political camps were split coincidentally also along religious lines but this is changing in the younger generation. I have political views but my relationships with others are formed by my Christian not political beliefs.

Where do you feel closest to God?

God is always in my thoughts throughout the day but I feel closest to Him when present at Mass and during my daily personal prayers.

What is your favourite film?

Definitely Ben-Hur. To me it relates the story of Judah Ben

Hur's encounter with Jesus and it is beautifully crafted. The beginning announces the birth of Jesus and the end. His crucifixion is portrayed as blood and water (from the storm) flowing out across the land depicting His saving grace.

What is your favourite book?

When it comes to books I enjoy John Grisham - light, page-turning reading.

What music do you enjoy?

I grew up with The Beatles, Rolling Stones, et al but my favourite music is that produced by the late John Denver - Country Roads etc.

How do you relax?

By taking walks, watching films and reading. Though I'm finding it increasingly difficult to do any of this because of my voluntary commitments.

How would you like to be remembered?

I don't really know. That's for others to determine. I am amused by the late Spike Milligan's comment on his gravestone - *"I told them I wasn't well"*.

Do you believe in regrets?

We do have regrets – decisions / comments we made which with hindsight we would rather not have done. However for our wellbeing we should not give them too much thought. Let us look forward and move on, they will otherwise drag us back. We can't do much about them now.

**What I Believe with Patrick Friel
was first published by Belfast Telegraph**

Feast Day Mass

The beautiful surroundings of St Peter's Cathedral was the setting for the Mass for the Feast of St Vincent de Paul which was celebrated by Fr Perry. It was lovely to welcome so many members to attend such an uplifting evening.





Council Illuminations

Council buildings across the Region were illuminated for St Vincent de Paul Day. These included:

Antrim and Newtownabbey:

Antrim Civic Centre, Mossley Mill

Causeway Coast and Glens:

Cloonavin

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon:

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

Fermanagh and Omagh:

Enniskillen Castle, Enniskillen and Strule Arts Centre,
Omagh





North Down & Ards Gathering

The North Down & Ards Area held an Area Gathering in Clondeboy Golf Club for its volunteer members to help them to gain a better understanding of the complexities of the benefits system, the difficulties encountered by benefits recipients and the help that can be provided by Ards and North Down Community Advice.



Spinathon

All Saints GAC participated in a Spinathon for SVP in Ballymena - thanks to everyone who cycled and donated on the day!



Knock Pilgrimages

A number of Conferences visited Knock during the summer. Conferences from Derry and Omagh travelled together and Kilmegan and East Down got together once again for their annual day at Knock.



Sr Margaret Rose from Ballynahinch Conference attended the day trip to Knock and celebrated her 91st birthday in 2023.

Derry Offices Blessed

New Spiritual Director Fr Stephen Quinn celebrated mass for SVP volunteers in our Derry offices.



SVP Represented at Community Events



North Down Ards SVP Council Members attended a very enjoyable and informative 'Positive Ageing' event. Pictured are: Sean Johnston, Area President; Tracey Colaluca, President St Patrick's, Newtownards; and Concepta, Member of St Patricks Newtownards.



ACC Bobby Singleton and colleagues from the PSNI senior leadership team met with Pauline Brown, Regional Manager of SVP, to discuss the work of the Emergency Services Referral Scheme which is successfully providing support to vulnerable people in local communities across the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area.



Clare Barr and Emily McKeown of Blessed Virgin SVP Conference attended a Jobs and Benefits Information Event with Support Groups at the Braid Centre in Ballymena.

The John and Pat Hume Foundation hosted a special event in the Guildhall in Derry to mark the 25th anniversary of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 to John Hume and David Trimble promoting leadership for peaceful change solutions to lasting peace.

Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the Northern Region, was invited to make a presentation at the event and there was a panel discussion on human rights, social justice and leadership for peaceful change, along with live music and video tributes



Annual Appeal

This year's Annual Appeal was launched with a truly magnificent Evening of Seasonal Songs as 800 people packed into Clonard Monastery to witness performances by singer songwriter Malachi Cush, Fr Martin O'Hagan, Classical Soprano Margaret Keys and the choirs of St Dominic's Grammar and St Clare's Primary.



The event was hosted by television presenter Claire McCollum and one person who attended the concert said:

"Well done; what a wonderful evening of music - we really enjoyed it and to see so many 'old' friends was a pleasure."

This year's Annual Appeal focused on providing help to struggling parents wondering how they will provide a Happy Christmas for their families.

The campaign is entitled **"The Wonder of Christmas"** and subtitled **"Will we have Christmas at all"**.



Launching this year's SVP Annual Appeal in the Northern Region, Mary Waide, Regional President for the Northern Region said: "The theme of this year's St Vincent de Paul Annual Appeal reflects the questions our volunteers face most regularly and particularly at this time of the year. They include; 'I wonder how I'm going to afford heating? I wonder will I have enough for food and toys? I wonder do the kids know we are struggling? I wonder how it is affecting them? I wonder how we got into this situation? I wonder if we will ever get us out of it? I wonder if you can help me?'"





"The calls for help to our regional office and local Conference helplines continue to increase every day. Last year we provided £5m in assistance, up 43% on the year before and with 200 calls a day for help already this year, I believe we are sadly on track to exceed that number again, as families are continually facing impossible choices and our recently launched report 'Beyond Breaking Point' shows that 80% of SVP volunteers in Northern Ireland have experienced a monumental surge in requests for help this year to date."

Mary added: "We need to remember that last year every household received a one off payment from the government but this year only some people will receive an additional payment so there are many people who continue to struggle to meet basic family expenses on a day to day basis. This struggle becomes even more difficult on special occasions such as Christmas."



"In our experience of carrying out home visitation in the heart of local communities across Northern Ireland, those hardest hit include one parent-families, low-income workers; households on fixed incomes; low-income households in rural areas; people with disabilities and their carers. That is why we are appealing for donations so we can provide vouchers to give families the gift of choice and the dignity to decide how to use these vouchers. They can be used to pay for food, heat their homes and ensure their children enjoy the wonder of Christmas."







SVP members were very grateful for the very generous donations from individuals, corporate donors, schools and partners in support of the Annual Appeal.



Thank you to Lisa and Stephanie from Belfast City Council who presented a donation of vouchers to SVP Regional President for the Northern Region, Mary Waide, and SVP Regional Manager, Pauline Brown.



Pauline Brown, SVP Regional Manager for the Northern Region, welcomed Linda Gould from NICVA to Regional Office with a donation from the proceeds of their staff Christmas Jumper Day.



Thanks to everyone for their generosity! ♥

Northern Ireland Assembly Christmas Giving Tree Appeal

The Northern Ireland Assembly nominated SVP to be one of its charities for its Christmas Giving Tree Appeal. Mary Waide, SVP Regional President of the Northern Region, was invited to speak at the Appeal's launch and Pauline Brown, SVP Regional Manager for the Northern Region, was invited to speak at the carol service. The Speaker of the Assembly, Alex Maskey MLA, got into the spirit of the season and wore his SVP Christmas Jumper to encourage staff of the NI Assembly to make a donation to the Appeal.



Giving Tree Appeal

Department for Communities. Permanent Secretary Colum Boyle, launched the annual joint SVP and BCM Giving Tree Appeal which has been raising funds for families across Northern Ireland at Christmas for over 20 years.



Policing Board members pictured with donations for this year's joint SVP and BCM Giving Tree Appeal.



Businesses Support SVP

McQuillan Companies Compliance Manager, Craig Chisholm, presented Pauline Brown, Regional Manager of SVP for the Northern Region, with a very generous donation of £2,500.



Pearse Brolly from Brolly's Butchers Cloughmills and St Brigid's GAA presented a cheque for £740 to Anne Smiley of Sacred Heart SVP Conference Cloughmills.



Fast Technologies Christmas Tree Appeal collected gifts for SVP which were presented by staff to representatives from SVP Derry.



A big thank you to the team from DHL who arrived at Regional Office with a very generous donation for SVP's Annual Appeal.

Re-Gen Waste presented a cheque for £5,000 to Rosemary Cunningham, SVP Newry and Mourne Area President.



Thanks to Captain Jack's Bistro in Portaferry for donating 30 Christmas Dinners to SVP for distribution on Christmas Eve.



Danielle Neeson, owner of Coppertree Childcare, is pictured with Christmas food hampers which were delivered to Sacred Heart SVP Conference Cloughmills.



Community Support for SVP

Sean Haveron Wednesday Afternoon Group at All Saints Parish Centre in Ballymena presented £300 to SVP. Funds were raised from raffles and quizzes.



SVP Conference Ballyholme/Donaghadee received a donation of £250 vouchers from Donaghadee Rotary Club. Eileen Thomson, President Ballyholme/Donaghadee SVP Conference and Sean Johnston, SVP Ards & North Down Area President, are pictured receiving the donation.

Nine year old Ella made a donation to St Patrick's Portaferry and Ballygalget SVP Conference from the sale of her Barbie Dreamhouse in memory of her granny Catherine Davidson who sadly died a few months ago.



Ella's granny was a member of SVP in Kircubbin.

Schools Support for SVP

Holy Child Primary School Christmas Jumper Day raised £431 for SVP Annual Appeal.

Mr Austin presented the cheque to Fr McCullagh at the school's carol service.



St Bride's Parent and SVP representative, Declan Lawn, collected a cheque for £1,014.95 raised by P4 pupils for SVP Annual Appeal.



St Colmcille's Primary School presented a cheque for £1,135 to Rosemary Simpson of SVP for the Annual Appeal collected during the school nativity plays.



St Joseph's College launched their Annual Appeal for SVP with student leaders Ronan, Leah, Sean, Cathal, Rachel and Niamh. Various fundraising activities included breakfasts, bingo, a hamper raffle and coffee mornings throughout December. A phenomenal £2,985 was raised by students for the SVP Annual Appeal.



Mini Vinnies of St Colmcille's Primary School in Carrickmore raised £573.55 for SVP with their 'Grab and Go' event.



Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the Northern Region, visited Edmund Rice College and collected a cheque for £770 raised from a Christmas Jumper Day, movie morning and donations from form classes.





Mr Rasdale, Mrs Lavelle, Ben Cregan and Amal Devaraj, welcomed local representatives from Ederney St Joseph's SVP to St Michaels college, Enniskillen, to present over 60 vouchers for various shops and businesses around the county collected by classes and staff.



Sacred Heart Grammar School collected food for distribution throughout the local community. Pupils are pictured with SVP Newry representatives.



St Ronan's Primary School in Newry created a giving tree for SVP's Annual Appeal.



Pamela Muir, Principal of Dunclug Nursery in Ballymena, presented Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the Northern Region with a cheque for £645 collected from donations made by parents who were asked to donate to SVP in place of buying presents for teachers.



Leona McMullan of St Patrick's, Saul, Downpatrick presented SVP West Belfast with a cheque for £960. Principal Siobhan Kelly and Thomas McCaughey of St Mary's Grammar school presented a cheque to SVP West Belfast Area President Valerie McGreevy for £1,595. Thomas organised events with the pupils to raise the money for SVP's Annual Appeal.

SVP St Colman's Conference Kilkeel received Christmas hampers from St Columban's Primary School and St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel. Donations like these ensured that over 100 families received support from SVP in the local area with each also receiving a festive Christmas card designed by local school pupils with the SVP logo and helpline number on the back.



Pupils from St Columbas High School Portaferry presented a cheque for £605 raised by the pupils for SVP's Annual Appeal to SVP member Mary B White.



As a result of various fundraising activities, St Columbanus College in Bangor raised £2,432 for SVP's Annual Appeal. Each year the College runs various fundraising events to assist SVP. Patricia Norrington, SVP Treasurer; Eileen Thomson, President; and Pat O'Driscoll, Vice President of SVP Ballyholme/Donaghadee Conference; are pictured receiving the donation from Maria Flynn, Principal of St Columbanus College.



St Comgall's Primary School proudly donated £950 to SVP Annual Appeal from collections at their nativity celebrations.

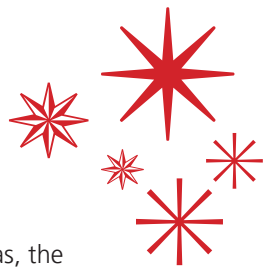
Sports Clubs Support for SVP



Rosie from St Enda's GAA delivered vouchers to Regional Office. Pauline Brown, SVP Regional Manager for the Northern Region, accepted this generous donation which will help SVP members ensure that families across the Region enjoy a wonderful Christmas.

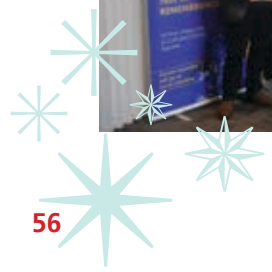


Anne Smiley of Sacred Heart SVP Conference Cloughmills is pictured receiving a donation from St Brigid's Ladies GAA Cloughmills.



Thanks from St Canice Conference Limavady

St Canice Conference in Limavady was grateful for the continued support throughout the year. At Christmas, the Conference received donations for SVP Annual Appeal from Castlerock Golf Club; St Mary's and Limavady High School; Antoinette's Café; Limavady Rotary Club; Limavady Wolfhounds GAC; DAERA, Ballykelly; Afterglow & Higgins Bookmakers.



Celebrating Christmas

SVP Conferences St Josephs Crossgar and Kilmore celebrated Christmas with a Senior Citizens Dinner at The Millbrook Lodge Hotel.



Santa Train

A unique Santa experience was provided by The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland. Families were invited to enjoy a fun filled ride on the Santa Train and meet Santa and Mrs Claus.



The Difference SVP Makes



Dear Mrs Waide,

I was visited by two members of St Therese Conference. I was treated with respect and dignity, the members were genuinely interested in my situation and spent time with me. I was offered much needed assistance. The way in which I was treated reflects the values and mission statement of SVP. I thank all of you for this. If you could pass on my sincere gratitude I would be very much obliged.

Hopefully soon I will be back on 'my own feet' and will be able to offer something back. Keep up the good work and have a happy and holy Christmas.

Best, God Bless.



SVP can continue to offer support across the Northern Region with thanks to our donors including:

Air Power
Aldergrove HOP
Belfast City Council
Chartered Accountants Ulster Society
Cleary Contracting
Danske Bank
Dept for Infrastructure
DHL
Digg Deep for Kids
McQuillan Companies
Mackle Pets
Movie House Cinemas
NI Assembly
NICVA
NI Housing Executive
Paschal O'Hare Solicitors
Puffin Insurance
Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
Rotary Club
St Malachy's Old Boys
Ulster Garden Villages
Unite Union

What Our Donors Say

Our club has collected donations from members for our Christmas Appeal. I am pleased to enclose a cheque for SVP. Wishing you and your colleagues a very happy Christmas and New Year. We are pleased to continue supporting the great work that you do in Belfast.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to your noble cause and support the invaluable work you do in our community. We sincerely hope it will make a positive impact in the lives of those in most need. Our team firmly believes in the importance of helping those less fortunate and fostering a spirit of compassion and generosity within our community.

We commend your dedication and unwavering efforts in providing assistance, guidance and comfort to those facing challenging circumstances. SVP Northern Region has consistently exhibited compassion, empathy and commitment to making a difference in the lives of others. It is an honour for us to contribute to your mission.

Once again we extend our deepest gratitude to SVP Northern Region for the exceptional work you do."

SVP Safeguarding in Home Visitation – Northern Region

SVP is committed to creating a safe, healthy and inclusive environment for everyone, particularly the children, young people and adults at risk/in need of protection we assist.

◀◀ **SVP home visitation members have a vital role in helping vulnerable groups in the community.** ▶▶

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is preventative action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk/adults in need of protection. Safeguarding is an essential part of quality home visitation. It also provides information in case an SVP member comes across a concern.



WHO IS A CHILD? A child is any person under the age of 18

WHO IS AN ADULT AT RISK? In Northern Ireland an 'adult at risk of harm' is a person aged 18 or over whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their (a) personal circumstances, and/or (b) life circumstances.

WHO IS AN ADULT IN NEED OF PROTECTION? An 'adult in need of protection' is a person aged 18 or over whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their (a) personal circumstances, and/or (b) life circumstances, and (c) who is unable to protect their own wellbeing, property, assets, rights or other interests.

What is abuse?

ABUSE is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to another individual or violates their human or civil rights.

WHAT ARE THESE TYPES OF ABUSE?



Physical



Emotional



Sexual



Financial



Exploitation



Neglect



Institutional

What can SVP members do if they have concerns about abuse?

IT IS IMPORTANT that everyone in SVP is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not actual abuse has occurred.



▶▶ **SVP's role is not to investigate or form our own conclusions but to follow the SVP Safeguarding Policy - record, report and seek advice.**

SVP Safeguarding Reporting Flow Chart

Concern Arises

Concerns may arise from

A

A disclosure of harm or abuse

B

An observed incident of harm or abuse

C

A suspicion of harm or abuse

Action

Ensure the **safety** of the child/adult that you have a concern about.

If the person is in **immediate danger** report to the Health Trust or Police as appropriate.

Record your concern in writing and **report** to the Designated Liaison Person without delay.

Maintain **confidentiality** at all times.

Useful Contact Numbers

Northern Ireland Contact Details for Health Trust Gateway Teams for Children

Belfast HCC Trust	028 9050 7000*
Northern Gateway Team	(Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Portrush, Coleraine) 028 7032 5462
South Eastern Gateway Team	(Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey, Larne) 028 9334 0165
Western Trust	028 7131 4090
Southern HSC Trust	0800 783 7745* <i>*This number is for referrals</i>

HSC Trusts Adult Safeguarding Service

Belfast	028 9504 1744
Northern	028 2563 5512
South Eastern	028 9250 1277
Southern	028 3756 4423
Western	028 7161 1366

Regional Emergency Social Work Service 028 9504 9999

PSNI

Emergency 999 / Non-emergency 101 / General Enquiries 101

RQIA Normal working hours 9.00am - 5.00pm

Belfast 028 9051 7500 / Omagh 028 8224 5828



Northern Region
Safeguarding Officer
(Designated Liaison)

Pauline Brown,
SVP Regional Manager
028 9075 0150
07921 876230

▶▶ See www.svp.ie/safeguarding for more information ◀◀

A Word of Encouragement from Malachi Cush

In today's society, where poverty has reached new depths and complexities, the work of SVP is more crucial than ever. With poverty taking on various forms, from economic hardship to homelessness and the basic needs of so many being unmet for a myriad of reasons, our community is indebted to you all.

During the past number of years, I have had the privilege of working with some of the teams at SVP on various fundraising initiatives and have always been touched by the gentle, kind and generous hearts that I have met.

It has also been humbling to meet people from our community who have benefited from the many services that SVP provides and who are not ashamed but grateful to share their stories. You have helped to restore pride in so many and your efforts are making a profound difference in the lives of those in need.

In recent years, I have forged friendships and developed a great respect for many 'newcomers' who have chosen, for differing reasons, to call this place their home. It is often difficult to feel welcome in a new place; fear and anxiety can take hold and, depending on the circumstances you have left behind in your 'old life', trust can be hard to nurture. In today's world, which can often feel disconnected, the work of SVP brings communities together and helps to break down misguided prejudice; your volunteering, fundraising, and outreach initiatives foster a sense of solidarity and empathy, reminding us of our shared humanity and the importance of supporting one another, regardless of background.



Your unwavering commitment to supporting the most vulnerable in our society is truly inspiring. By standing in solidarity with those in need, you embody the values of compassion, empathy, and resilience, which make our society a better place for all.

Your work is a beacon of hope and light in our community, and it is important to know that you are appreciated more than words can express.

A dear friend of mine has an expression that reminds us that, no matter how difficult or hopeless life can sometimes feel, we must always 'look for the light'.

You are the 'light' for so many in our world; I encourage you to keep shining for all those you encounter and on behalf of so many, I thank you for your invaluable contribution to our part of the world.

*God Bless,
Malachi*



Social Justice - A Key Cornerstone Of Our Work

Over the last 18 months the Social Justice Group met with various political parties to lobby against the current state of austerity that people across the province are encountering and which is causing extreme hardship.

Our hope has been to hold our politicians to account, to deliver to their constituents, the wherewithal to put food on their tables and have heat and light besides. We have raised the issue of the predominance of offering loans to people rather than grants, the impact on their lives of having to have the loans deducted from their benefits and the unacceptable situation of having to wait without any money for five weeks before payment is made.

We recognised that even though telling people's stories is powerful, we needed some hard data to make the case on behalf of the people we support. To this end, the Society commissioned research which was facilitated by SVP National Social Justice Department so that we would have empirical evidence for making our case and be more effective in holding policymakers to account. The name of the report is **"Beyond Breaking Point"** which was a quote from one of the people we support in describing her situation in the current circumstances.

The report unveils the escalating struggles faced by families grappling with the compounding challenges of the pandemic, rising living costs, and social security cuts and changes.

In looking at the way forward for the Social Justice Group, we are hoping to engage with other organisations that are grappling with similar issues as ourselves. We have decided that we need to have some open meetings where all can participate in learning which organisations exist that we can call on, and work collaboratively with, to make life better for the people we support. There is the National Energy Action group which has a remit for assisting with gas and electric particularly in the case of people with disabilities, there is Housing Rights which helps people with some housing injustices, Christians Against Poverty which helps people with debt. These are a few of the organisations with which we may want to liaise to ensure a better life for the people we visit.

Social Justice is the concern of the whole of SVP so we aim to make it more inclusive so we can work collaboratively with others when appropriate for the benefit of people locked in poverty in the Region.

In conclusion, I commend the research to you and invite you to join the Social Justice Group in working towards a better life for those trapped in poverty.

Gerardine Cunningham
Chair, Social Justice Group

Beyond Breaking Point

'Beyond Breaking Point' Exposes Devastating Impact of Poverty in Northern Ireland.



SVP Report Shows 80% of SVP Volunteers Experiencing Monumental Surge in Requests from Struggling Households.

In November SVP launched a groundbreaking report, Beyond Breaking Point: Sharing the perspective of SVP Members on the cost of living crisis, at Parliament Buildings Stormont, shedding light on the harsh realities of poverty in Northern Ireland and calling on MLAs to get back to work to meet the growing needs of the people here.

The report, compiled by SVP Northern Region's Social Justice Committee, unveiled the escalating struggles faced by families grappling with the compounding challenges of the pandemic, rising living costs, and social security cuts and changes.

Based on responses from 161 SVP members, illustrated by a 15% response rate with broad geographical representation, survey results emphasised the increasing complexities faced by households, with 80% of respondents meeting families dealing with multiple difficulties.

Consequently, there was a substantial surge in calls to SVP, reaching 25,057 by the end of October 2023 alone, almost double what they were before the pandemic.

Among those SVP members surveyed, 77% said the rising cost of energy was the main reason people are seeking help from the charity, the second most common request is for food.

Among its other major concerns was the increasing poverty within working households, particularly affecting individuals engaged in zero-hour contracts, receiving low pay, and dealing with childcare costs. This observation aligns with additional findings from the Department of Communities, indicating that 13% of individuals within working families in this region are living in poverty.



Even travel costs for those who do work were cited as a major concern among SVP members.

The report is a first-of-its-kind, collating the experiences and perspectives of SVP members on poverty, offering a poignant narrative of the harsh realities faced by not just those on low income but those who are working too.

SVP finds itself on the frontline of the local cost of living crisis, a fact underscored by the surge in calls to the charity in recent years. Notably, between 2020 and 2021, calls to



SVP's regional office in Belfast doubled, reaching 25,285, and further escalated by an additional 50% the subsequent year, with 37,599 calls recorded in 2022. Even in 2023, call volumes have remained persistently high, with 25,057 calls documented by the end of October.

The figures reflected the collective impact of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis, and social security cuts but this is the first time SVP has published such a comprehensive account, bringing together the firsthand experiences of SVP members.

SVP is not the first organisation to highlight poverty in Northern Ireland, statistics from the Department for Communities show 306,000 people, constituting 16% of the total population in Northern Ireland, are living in poverty. Disturbingly, this includes 163,000 working-age adults, 97,000 children, and 47,000 pensioners.

Lone parents and their children face the highest risk of poverty, with 35% experiencing poverty. Single pensioners follow at 21%, and couples with children at 16%.

SVP attributes escalating food and energy prices at the root of much of this poverty, coupled with austerity measures. Benefit reforms and the transfer to Universal Credit - with its subsequent five - week wait - were also major factors in growing struggles across the Northern Region. In total, 80% of members identified the wait as the key challenge facing those on benefits.

SVP members are calling for an overhaul of the benefits system, appropriate wages, removal of the Universal Credit wait, affordable childcare, funding for mental health services and adequate support for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as a new strategy for affordable housing. SVP is also asking leaders to 'poverty proof the school day'.



Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the Northern Region, said:

"The purpose of this report is to shine a light on the cost of living crisis and poverty in Northern Ireland from the perspective of SVP and to bring our solutions to the table. In this way, the report is a call to action to our policymakers and a blueprint for ending poverty.

Feedback from SVP members who are at the coalface of the cost of living crisis shows the depth and breadth of financial difficulties currently being experienced by far too many households. While we welcome the fall in inflation, the reality is that even with this drop, many families remain worse off than last year when every household received the one off energy payment."

Mary expressed deep concern about the overwhelming despair among households, emphasising the urgent need for government intervention. She stressed the critical role of charities, stating: "Charities like SVP should be complementing government assistance, not being the first port of call for those living in poverty."

Members articulated a clear need for improvements to the benefit system, underscoring the urgency for a functioning Executive and the implementation of an Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The report concludes with an urgent plea for political leadership to safeguard those facing challenges on multiple fronts, calling for immediate government intervention to prevent further hardship. It reads;

"There is an urgent need for political leadership to protect people in poverty as they face challenges on many fronts: a functioning Executive is essential to prevent further hardship. The need for an Anti-Poverty Strategy has never been more profound."

The report urged all relevant government departments to ensure a strategy is ready for immediate implementation under Section 28a of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

To read Beyond Breaking Point: Sharing the perspective of SVP Members on the cost of living crisis, please visit svpnri.co.uk/beyondbreakingpointnorthernregionperspective

To request a copy of the report, please email info@svpni.co.uk







Social Justice Delegation Meets Alliance Party



In an attempt to continue to keep the subject of Social Justice on the agenda with political representatives, a delegation from the Social Justice Group met with Alliance Party Leader Naomi Long and representatives at Parliament Buildings Stormont.

Social Justice Group Members

Gerardine Cunningham, Chair

Mary Bingham

Orla Conway

Peggy McCann

Ciara McCullagh

Malachy McKernan

Mary Waide

Retail



The Northern Regional Retail Committee is established and authorised by the Northern Regional Council of the Society. Its role is to advise, recommend and seek approval for matters relating to retail operations of SVP and to ensure that the Society's retail activities, to include shops and transport, are appropriately managed through adequate oversight.

The year 2023 was a very busy year for retail in the Northern Region.

The Northern Region Retail Committee met regularly throughout the year, working hard to progress our priorities in support of our shops in Northern Region. We were represented at National Retail meetings during the year and provided regular reports to Regional Board and Council.

We are grateful to our Retail Committee Members, **Anne Marie Hughes**, Killyclogher, Secretary; **Mairead Taggart**, Omagh; **Bernie McNiece**, Armagh Craigavon; **Denise McAllister**, North Belfast; **Eileen McKenna**, Portadown; **Eugene Graffin**, Cushendall; Chair, **Anne Mc Larnon**,

North Down and Ards. **Anne Crossan**, Regional Retail Manager, and **Patrick Friel**, Regional Treasurer, attend and contribute at each of our meetings.

Active promotion of RACI in the North during the year included circulating information on RACI and meeting with Sarea Councils and Shop Committees. We thank all those who responded with information requested about their Shop Conference. We recognise it may mean changes for some Conferences and during the coming year 2024, the Regional Retail Manager and Retail Committee member plan to visit with each shop manager and Chair of Shop Conference to offer support and help in any way that is needed.

RULE 7.3 states

“the Society’s vision goes beyond the immediate future, looking toward sustainable development and protection of the environment for the benefit of future generations - it is essential to respect the environment as a consequence of our faith in its creation by God for the benefit of human beings who are stewards of creation and must care for it and nurture it for future generations”.

In our endeavours to work ethically for the planet and in respect for our donor’s generosity, we undertook a review of recycling practices during the year. With the help and cooperation of our shops and Conferences, we were successful in completing our task to ensure that the Society practiced ethical recycling. We are now using two recycling companies who were chosen because of their ethical recycling methods.

We are however aware, that due to lack of storage facilities in many of our shops, we are recycling more clothing than we would like to and this is a matter we will need to address in 2024.

To help address the issue of ‘reuse’ several ‘POP UP’ events were held during the year. Anne Crossan and her teams of staff, volunteers and members worked hard to promote, set up and clear up after the events. The events offered good quality clothing at the bargain price of £1 per item! The events attracted a variety of customers and were lively and enjoyable but importantly, dramatically reduced the number of items going to recycling.

National Retail Conference saw several shops and personnel from the Northern Region receiving awards. Congratulations to all of them. However, we are grateful and appreciate all the work our shop managers and volunteers do for the Society and their Communities.

Anne McLarnon
Chair, Regional Retail Committee

Annual Retail Conference

Approximately 200 Vincent's staff and volunteers gathered in Galway University for the annual Retail Conference. A key focus of the conference was sustainability in fashion. Dermot McGilloway, SVP National Retail Development Manager said that Vincent's Charity shops are deeply committed to the circular retailing model of **Reduce - Reuse - Recycle** and to an energy efficient, low carbon, textile collection and processing service.

*"In a world that produces 1.6 times more waste than it can re-absorb, the old fashion industry linear model of **"Take - Make - Throw away"** must end in favour of more environmentally friendly practices.*

The Fashion industry is now one of the biggest polluters on the planet, generating more CO2 than the aviation and maritime industry combined. Nearly 100 billion garments are made annually, increasingly from synthetic non-biodegradable materials, and 92 million tonnes will end up in landfill each year."

He said that by donating pre-loved items to Vincent's or updating your wardrobe from its extensive and affordable range of classy garments, you are helping to slow down the harmful effects of Fast Fashion and keep garments in circulation for longer.



Pictured at the Retail Conference:

Suzanne: Dungiven; **Linda:** Derry; **Alison:** Lurgan; **Sarah:** Derry; **Tom:** Newcastle; **Anne:** Regional Retail Manager; **Connor:** Kircubbin; **Charlie:** Derry; **Susan:** Lurgan; **Anne:** Chair of Regional Retail Committee and **Sonia:** Strabane

Retail Awards

Susan Long from Vincent's Lurgan won Volunteer of the Year in the SVP Northern Region and Tom Mulholland accepted the award for Vincent's Newcastle on winning Team of the Year in the Northern Region.



Charity Retail Ireland Awards

Congratulations to Vincent's Magherafelt on being awarded Highly Commended Shop Team of the Year at the Charity Retail Ireland Awards!

Congratulations to the following on being shortlisted:

Shop Window of the Year: Newcastle

Shop Manager of the Year: Tom Mulholland, Newcastle

Volunteer of the Year: Phyliss, Lurgan and Ros Magherafelt

Shops Pop Up Around the Region



Three hundred shoppers bagged bargains of clothing, footwear and handbags at the Northern Region's Pop Up Shop in Derry.

They enjoyed browsing, winning raffle prizes and refreshments with managers greeting customers from Northern Region shops in Derry, Dungiven, Strabane, Enniskillen, Killyclogher and North West Region shops in Letterkenny Main St, Buncrana and Castlefinn.



Vincent's Omagh hosted a Pop Up Shop with a team of Power NI staff helping with the set up. Local SVP members and volunteers joined with the shop team to hang approx 3,000 garments and displayed approx 200 pairs of shoes - all selling at £1.00 each! The Pop Up shop team was made up of local members of Omagh Area Conferences, volunteers and staff from Killyclogher, Omagh, Strabane, Enniskillen and Derry Vincent's.



Ormeau Road Vincent's and Power NI volunteers helped out at the Belfast Pop Up with all items selling for £1.00 each.



Belfast City Council, Connected Community Care and the Mums and Toddler group from Shaftesbury Community and Recreation Centre promoted reuse and recycling and the benefits of a healthy mind to the shoppers.

Second Hand September

Vincent's stores around the Northern Region received visits from their local elected representatives on St Vincent de Paul Day to celebrate Second Hand September. The Chair of Mid Ulster District Council is pictured with staff and volunteers during a visit to Vincent's Killyclogher.

Blessed Trinity Donation

Young SVP volunteers of Blessed Trinity College Belfast collected coats, hats and scarves which they donated to Vincent's on Belfast's Antrim Road.



Christmas at Vincent's

Gerry Keating and the team in Vincent's Ormeau Road met with local MP Claire Hanna during a Christmas event along with other traders on the lower Ormeau Road.

St Joseph's choir entertained the shoppers whilst kids were treated to goodies and meeting Santa!





Vincent's shop staff and volunteers got into the spirit of the festive season with Christmas themed displays on shop floors and in windows.

Each shop received two Christmas jumpers to promote the Annual Appeal and one was prominently displayed with the other being raffled.



Richard won the Christmas jumper raffle in Bridge Street, Newry; and Suzanne Brady congratulated Helena O'Kane on winning in Dungiven.



Window Fit for Grafton Street!

Congratulations to Vincent's Cushendall on winning:

Causeway Coast & Glens Council Best Window Display



The local community eagerly awaited the unveiling of the display and they weren't disappointed.

The Northern Region's answer to Brown Thomas!



Vibrant Volunteers

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

Anne Crossan,
Regional Retail Manager





Your Local Vincent's

Armagh

46/48 Scotch Street, Armagh,
BT61 7DF
T: 028 3778 8040
E: armagh.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Ballymena

11 Cushendall Road, Ballymena,
BT43 6HA
T: 028 2564 4122
E: ballymena.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Banbridge

5 Jinglers Court, Banbridge,
BT32 3YJ
T: 028 4066 2047

Belfast

196/200 Antrim Road,
BT15 2AJ
T: 028 9075 2648
E: antrimrd.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Belfast

138 Ormeau Road, Belfast,
BT7 2EB
T: 028 9032 5885
E: ormeaurd.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Belfast

45/47 Rosemary Street, Belfast,
BT1 1QB
T: 028 9031 0255
E: antrimrd.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Belfast

98 Springfield Road, Belfast, BT12 7AH
T: 028 9090 7696
E: springfieldrd.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Cookstown

35 Loy Street, Cookstown,
BT80 8PZ
T: 028 8676 9400
E: cookstown.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Cushendall

7 Dalriada Avenue, Cushendall,
BT44 0NB
T: 028 9443 8523
E: cushendall.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Dairy Farm

Unit W3, Dairy Farm Centre,
Stewartstown Road, Dunmurry, BT17 0AW
T: 028 9060 4372
E: dunmurry.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Derry

34 William Street, Derry,
BT48 6ET
T: 028 7126 8325
E: williamstderry.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Downpatrick

Unit 5, Ballymote Centre,
40 Killough Road, Downpatrick, BT30 6PY
T: 028 4461 3717
E: ballymotedownpatrick.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Downpatrick

14 Irish Street, Downpatrick,
BT30 6BP
T: 028 4461 4194
E: irishstdownpatrick.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Dungiven

447 Ballyquin Road, Dungiven,
BT47 4LX
T: 028 7774 0714
E: dungiven.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Enniskillen

24 Church Street, Enniskillen,
BT74 7EJ
T: 028 6632 9893
E: enniskillen.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Keady

39 Kinelowen Street, Keady,
BT60 3ST
T: 028 3778 8010
E: keady.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Killyclogher

72 Circular Road, Omagh,
BT79 7HA
T: 028 8224 9251
E: killyclogher.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Kilrea

52 Maghera Street, Kilrea,
BT51 5QN
T: 028 2954 0103
E: kilrea.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Kircubbin

63 Main Street, Kircubbin,
BT22 2SR
T: 028 4273 8075
E: kircubbin.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Lisnaskea

132 Main Street,
Lisnaskea,
BT92 0JB
T: 028 6772 1906

Lurgan

14/16 William Street, Lurgan,
BT66 6JA
T: 028 3832 5725
E: lurgan.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Magherafelt

12 King Street, Magherafelt,
BT45 6AR
T: 028 7932 8088
E: magherafelt.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Moyrafferty

Unit 10/11 Moyrafferty Centre,
Craigavon, BT65 5HX
T: 028 3834 4881

Newcastle

76 Main Street, Newcastle,
BT33 0AD
T: 028 4372 4008
E: newcastle.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Newry

40a Bridge Street, Newry,
BT35 8AF
T: 028 3026 8185
E: bridgestnewry.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Newry

30 Mill Street, Newry,
BT34 1EY
T: 028 3026 7590
E: millstnewry.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Omagh

43 Castle Street, Omagh,
BT78 1DD
T: 028 8225 2000
E: omagh.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Portadown

Unit 2/3 Mayfair BC,
193/205 Garvaghy Road,
Portadown, BT62 1EH
T: 028 3839 3898
E: portadown.vincents@svpni.co.uk

Strabane

18 Barrack Street, Strabane,
BT82 8HG
T: 028 7188 4479
E: strabane.vincents@svpni.co.uk

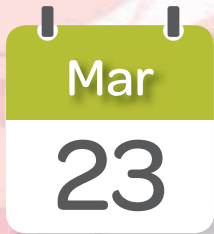
Tullygally

Unit 3/4 Tullygally Shopping Centre,
Craigavon, BT65 5AU
T: 028 3834 1513
E: tullygally.vincents@svpni.co.uk

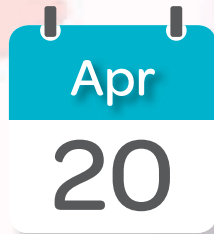
SVP in the Media



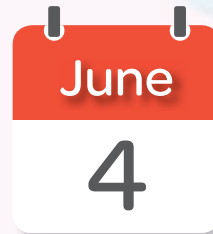
Dates For Your Diary 2024



**Annual Retreat
at Drumalis**



**Council of Ireland
at The Convention
Centre, Dublin**



**Members' Day at
Glenavon Hotel,
Cookstown**



**Annual Pilgrimage
to Knock**



Cover Story



SVP member Dympha Gallagher explains the thinking behind her inspirational front cover design of the 2023 Yearbook encapsulating the ethos of SVP.

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

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

IN MEMORIAM



Eileen Faulkner

This year Vincent's lost one of our longest serving volunteers: Eileen Faulkner was a much loved volunteer in Vincent's Newcastle and is terribly missed. She was a part of the retail team for 30 years!

SVP West Belfast lost some valued members this year.



Roisin Hyland

The Area remembered the life of former member Roisin Hyland expressing their sympathy to her loved ones. Roisin was a former member of the Nativity Conference and Requiem mass was celebrated in St Lukes Church before Roisin's burial at Milltown Cemetery.

In December, West Belfast lost two long-time volunteers, who will be sadly missed, and hard to replace.

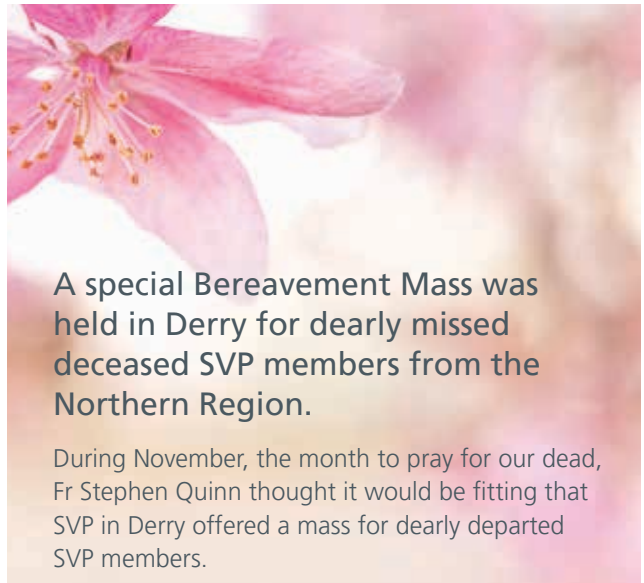
Eithna Rodgers

A volunteer member in St Patricks, Derriaghy, passed away on 15 December and was buried in St Colman's Church, Lambeg.

Peggy Reid

Peggy passed away on 31 December. She served St Peters SVP for a long time and just last year amalgamated with Most Holy Redeemer, Clonard.

Peggy was buried from St Michael, The Archangel Church.



A special Bereavement Mass was held in Derry for dearly missed deceased SVP members from the Northern Region.

During November, the month to pray for our dead, Fr Stephen Quinn thought it would be fitting that SVP in Derry offered a mass for dearly departed SVP members.



Society of St Vincent de Paul

Northern Region

18 Area Councils

162 Conferences

Derry City

Our Lady of Lourdes Steelstown
Holy Family Galliagh
St Columba Imm Con Ardmore
St Peter Strathfoyle
St Eugene
Good Shepherd Gobnascale
St Mary Creggan
St Francis of Assisi Ballymagroarty
St Eithne
St Patrick
Carnhill
St Canice
St John Waterside

North Derry

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

Mid Ulster

St Lurach Maghera
St Columba Ballinascreen
St Patrick Magherafelt
Immaculate Conception Cookstown
St Mary Bellaghy
St Anne Kilrea
St John Granaghan
St Oliver Plunkett Greenlough & Clady
St Brigid Lavey

Mid Antrim

St Mary Ahoghill
St Comgall Antrim
St Joseph Antrim
Blessed Virgin Ballymena
St Mary Portglenone
St Mary Glenravel
St Joseph Glenavy
St MacNissi Randalstown
St James Aldergrove
St Vincent de Paul Toome & Duneane

North Antrim & North East Derry

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

Northern Region

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

Tel: 028 9035 1561

Email: info@svpni.co.uk

www.svp.ie



North Belfast

St Mary Whitehouse
St James Whiteabbey
St Gerard &
St Mary Greencastle
Holy Cross
Sacred Heart
Holy Family
St Patrick
Church of the Resurrection
St Colman Greenisland
St Therese Somerton Road
St Mary on the Hill Carnmoney

East Tyrone

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

East Antrim

Sacred Heart
& Holy Family Ballyclare
St Mary Cushendall
St Patrick Glenariffe
St Comgall Larne
St Nicholas Carrickfergus
Our Lady of Lourdes Whitehead

South & East Belfast

St Brigid
St Malachy
Holy Rosary
St Bernadette
St Colmcille Ballyhackamore
Imm Heart of Mary Drumbo
St Matthew

Strabane

St Therese Sion Mills
St Mary & St Joseph Strabane
St Patrick Leckpatrick
St Patrick Castlederg

Omagh

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

North Down & Ards

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

Fermanagh

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

Armagh & Craigavon

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

East Down

St Nicholas Ardglass
St Joseph Killough & Bright
St Patrick Saul
St Mochai Saintfield
Stella Maris Strangford
St Joseph Crossgar & Kilmore
St Patrick Downpatrick

Newry & Mourne

St Brigid Newry
St Joseph Newry
Sacred Heart Cloghogue
St Jogn Hilltown
St Bronagh Rostrevor
St Patrick Warrenpoint
St Colman Kilkeel
St Joachim Attical
St Benedict Newtownhamilton
St Mary Burren
St Francis of Assisi Crossmaglen

Kilmegan

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

West Belfast

Corpus Christi
St Luke Twinbrook
St Anne Dunmurry
St Patrick Lisburn
St Patrick Derriaghy
St Michael
St Oliver Plunkett
Most Holy Redeemer & St Peter
St Paul
St Teresa
St John
Church of the Nativity Poleglass
St Joseph Hannahstown
Our Lady Queen of Peace Kilwee
Christ the Redeemer
St Peter the Rock Strangford
St Agnes
St Pio Prison



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