



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

Message from President Michael D. Higgins
Saint Vincent de Paul - 180th anniversary

Saturday, 20th April, 2024

Is mian liom agus mo bhuíochas ó chroí a thabhairt do Saint Vincent de Paul as a n-obair fhiúntach agus iad ag comóradh 180 bliain na heagraíochta.

May I extend my warmest congratulations and sincere regards to all the staff and volunteers in the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul on what is a remarkable occasion for you and all those you assist, the occasion of your 180th anniversary.

Since its foundation in Dublin in December 1844, the Irish branch of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has been a beacon of hope and compassion for so many, an exceptional network of solidarity offering vital support to individuals and families facing adversity across our nation.

Mar Uachtarán na h Éireann, as President of Ireland, may I express my sincere gratitude and admiration for this practical citizenship to all the staff and volunteers who have contributed to Saint Vincent de Paul over the past 180 years.

Your dedication and hard work are a testament to the importance of recognizing vulnerability and of the power of community, the importance of supporting one another through challenging times. Your tireless efforts over nearly two centuries in providing practical assistance, emotional support, and companionship have touched the lives of countless individuals, families and communities, in your offering empathy, solace and dignity in their times of greatest need.

Today, as we celebrate and reflect on the remarkable achievements of SVP, we must also acknowledge the profound challenges that persist in our society. Despite our progress, inequality continues to cast a dark shadow over the lives of many who experience poverty, marginalization, and exclusion, denying them the opportunity to fulfil their potential and participate fully in our society.

Inequality, in all its forms, undermines the very fabric of our communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty, exclusion, and injustice. In exacerbating disparities in access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, trapping generations in a cycle of disadvantage, it threatens the fundamental principles and values of a republic. It diminishes the richness of our diversity, silencing the voices of those vulnerable and marginalized.

The work of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is indispensable in addressing these inequalities and responding to them. Your identifying these as values of justice as you do in all your publications is of the greatest importance.

As a society, we must recognize that inequality is not just a moral issue but a societal one. We cannot claim to be a republic of equals if so many are deprived of full participation in our society.

As we look to the future, we are challenged to redouble our efforts to dismantle the barriers that perpetuate inequality and injustice and reaffirm our shared commitment to building a flourishing republic, one that is grounded in compassion, solidarity, and above all, justice.

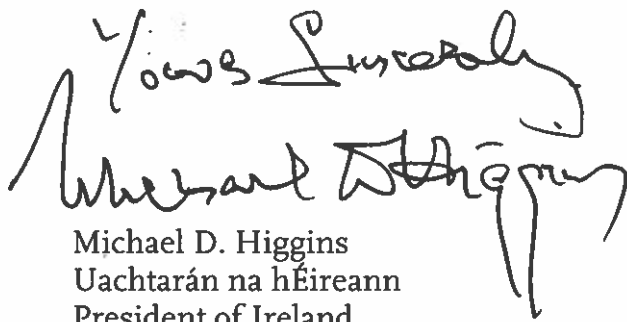
By working together to create an Ireland where every individual, regardless of their background or circumstance, has the opportunity to participate fully in our society and contribute meaningfully to our inclusive, shared future, we can co-operate for change to a just society.

As we celebrate this important milestone, may I once again express my sincere regards and deep gratitude to all the staff and volunteers, past and present, who have contributed to the work of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul here in Ireland.

May this occasion inspire renewed determination and even greater achievements in the decades ahead. I look forward to seeing the positive changes that you will bring in the years to come through your efforts to create a more equitable, just, and fair future for all.

Arís mo bhuíochas libh uilig, traoslaím libh agus guím gach rath oraibh don todhchaí.

Beir beannacht

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael D. Higgins', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the bottom right.

Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland