

In Remembrance...

We remember with fondness our SSVP members who have returned home to the Lord. Their zeal, integrity and passion for serving the poor will always be in our hearts. Thank you dear friends for inspiring us along life's journey!

Bro Robert Victor D'Cruz, Conference of St Francis Xavier, DOD: 11 August 2015.

Bro. Robert, a senior member passed away on Tuesday 11 August 2015 at the age of 94 years. He had held the record of being the longest serving Treasurer of the SFX SSVP Conference, having held the post for 30 years and was also a pioneer member of the SFX counting team. He continued to serve both the SSVP and the counting team until about 2 months ago when ill health prevented his regular presence.

Although he led a bachelor life, he was considered to be married to his family as was testified by his family members. The most senior of his 6 nephews and a niece, Anthony Gomez shared how Bro Robert in his younger days made regular visits to India once every 4 years and brought them each time 100 kilos of dry food stuffs, especially Horlicks, milk powder and the like, besides clothing. Bro Robert always shared the families' concern and their every need was his need and he made sure they were fulfilled, either monetarily or otherwise. His charity works in India was directed to his favourite institution of Don Bosco in Madras.

Back here in Malaysia, he gave his all in service to the Lord via his involvement in charity works of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, and various parish

related services as Communion Minister, warden and church collection counting team member.

Bro Robert was always concerned about the accounts of the SSVP being properly accounted for in line with the need for transparency in handling public monies, and always raised questions related to internal audits, and the need to publicly display the society's annual audited account. As a man who moves around, he somehow has this ability to identify those who approach the SSVP for help that he knew or have seen them somewhere which helps to give a clearer picture of which case deserved help and which did not. Home visits, a prerequisite of the SSVP's works to build up a case was also actively participated by him.

Bro Robert despite his old age was always walking from his house to church and back, whether for worship or for meeting activities be it day or night. Many of his friends and peers related his walking habit and a strict diet that he followed to helping him remain alert, maintain a good memory of events and names, and his blessing of remaining mobile and active until such a ripe old age. Another of his favourite hobbies was gardening. The garden of his house was thriving with plants which he gave away regularly to neighbours and friends to be used in cooking curry etc.



Bros Robert (left) & Ho Fatt (right)

Also, we understand he took care of the grass cutters in the neighbourhood and provided temporary shelter for them if they needed it. Their significant presence was hugely noticeable to this SSVP member with a heart of gold throughout his wake and funeral.

Bro Robert's requiem Mass was celebrated by Rev Fr Alberto Irenus SJ, on Thursday 13 August 2015 at the Church of the Assumption P.J. (as SFX church is now under renovation) and thence for burial at the Cheras Cemetery on the plot of land where both his late parents are buried.

A Future Not Our Own

It helps now and then to step back and take a long view. The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection, no pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission. No set of goals and objectives include everything.

This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing this. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

- Oscar Romero (1917-1980)

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them. Amen.

Bro Dhanaraj, Conference of Assumption, Former President, DOD: 13 March 2015

Bro Ho Fatt, Conference of St Francis Xavier, DOD: 28 March 2015

Bro Basil John, Conference of Holy Redeemer, Klang, DOD: 5 April 2015.

Bro. B. Mariadass, Conference of Our Lady of Lourdes, founder of SVP Boys Home, DOD: 7 April 2015

Bro A. A. Nicholas, Conference of Our Lady of Lourdes, DOD: 13 April 2015

Bro Robert Victor D'Cruz, Conference of St Francis Xavier, DOD: 11 August 2015

Bro Leonard Miranda, Conference of Assumption DOD: 12 June 2015



PRAXIS

The Newsletter of the Society of St Vincent de Paul
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SSVP Selangor AGM 2015: New Direction by Archbishop Julian Leow

The Society of St Vincent de Paul in Selangor (SSVP Selangor) held its much anticipated AGM on Sunday 17.5.2015 at St Francis Xavier's Church P.J. It also formally closed the year long Golden Jubilee celebration of the State Council which had the celebration theme **"Transforming our Faith by Empowering the Poor and Marginalised"**.

The meeting was well attended by more than 70 Vincentians from Selangor who were thrilled and felt blessed by the presence of His Grace Archbishop Julian Leow in his maiden visit to the Society in Selangor since being appointed as Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. The AGM was also attended by Rev Fr Mari Arokiam, the Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Society in Selangor, the National Council President Dato Watson Peters as well as some of the staff and friends of the Society.

After the customary Vincentian prayers, the Gospel was proclaimed. Rev. Fr Mari Arokiam, in his spiritual reflection encouraged Vincentians to recall the blessings that have accompanied our 52 years of serving the poor and needy. "Despite the ups and downs and challenges of the times, we can truly thank God for His wondrous deeds". He called on all Vincentians to continue to be united with Christ and be His instruments of Mercy and Compassion towards our brothers and sisters who are in need, irrespective of race, religion and culture.

The meeting was then kicked off by the address of the State Council President Bro Raj Narayanan who put into perspective the works of SSVP in the State of Selangor. He said he was encouraged by the enthusiasm and commitment of his brother and sister Vincentians to do their part for the Vincentian Vocation by operating so many works that aimed at empowering and to help elevate the sufferings of the poor

and needy. He noted too a certain 'tiredness or exhaustion' in many Vincentians as many were balancing their lives in serving the society and pursuing a career and family life. There is therefore the need to reach out more to the young so that the society can be renewed with youthful vigour and ideas to continue these works of charity and social justice. Bro Raj also threw the idea of Vincentians reaching out to lapsed Catholics to join the Society to do charitable works and he believed that through their involvement with SSVP it will work towards bringing them back to the fold of the church.

The meeting then turned to the highlight of the AGM which was the address by His Grace Archbishop Julian Leow. AB Julian in his address complimented the members of Selangor for their active involvement in works of



empowerment and not just merely be doling out money.

He then called on the members of Selangor to go "one step" further by promoting the works of SSVP such that it can also be means towards **nation building** by bringing races and religions together, because the poor, or poverty, is color blind and race blind. He was clear in directing the members to reach and serve all and contribute to nation building as a way forward for the Society in Selangor. It is interesting to note that earlier in his written message for the Annual Report of the AGM,



His Grace also called on SSVP to "Let us move from giving mere 'handouts' to the giving of skills, knowledge and power to bring lasting benefits to those in need".

After the dynamic and heart to heart direct personal address by His Grace, Dato Watson Peters, the National President of the Society also brought good news to the members when he spoke on the continued expansion of the Society in Malaysia, especially into the heartland of Christianity in East Malaysia with the formation of the newest Conference in MIRI, Sarawak.

The AGM went on to deal with matters of the AGM and evaluating our works in Selangor the past year. This included the election of the delegates to the National Council. After a healthy election, Bros Francis Lai, James Selvam and Patrick Har were unanimously elected by the members present. The AGM ended with a moment of silent prayer for the Vincentians of Selangor who had passed away recently.

After the AGM, Vincentians present attended Mass which was a BM Mass animated by the BM speaking community from Sabah and Sarawak. This was followed by a subscription dinner fellowship held at a nearby restaurant. All Vincentians went home motivated and in good spirits thanking our Lord for the many blessings He has bestowed on the Society, its members and all our works.

Message from SSVP Ecclesiastical Assistant



Dear fellow Vincentians

Shalom in the Lord of the Divine Mercy.

I am glad and thank God that we're able to meet again through this newsletter *PRAXIS*.

This time around we are called to reflect on our lives and our work with the theme **'REBUILDING OUR LIVES'**.

As for me, the instrument to do this is not merely based on the latest man-made gadgets or devices developed or manufactured by humankind, but rather making an inward journey into our hearts where God who created us lives and moves us to recreate or rebuild the world within and around us. When we do this we will fulfill and live it in reality.

Therefore it is by looking into our past, moving towards our future but living the present with acceptance and appreciation with gratitude.

Human as we are, we must have overlooked many important and vital elements and also opportune moments for ourselves and the society that we serve with diligence and whole-hearted commitment.

It is a moment to identify whatever we have failed to do in small and big ways. Invoking God's grace upon us let us do it for ourselves, all the poor and marginalized whom we love and care and also the society we serve with honor, respect and pride.

May the Holy Spirit guide us in what we are going to illumine and inspire us. When we discover or identify such areas let us be **RENEWED** and **REBUILD** it for the good of man and the glory of God... AMEN.

Lastly, with this *PRAXIS* I conclude my six years tenure as the *Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Society of St Vincent de Paul* in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.

I just want to say **TERIMA KASIH** to all of you my fellow Vincentians for making me a better **PERSON** and **PRIEST** in this journey.

Humbly continue your journey... Like a clock, don't only look at it but do what it is doing and just keep moving forward doing what you are doing.

God bless you and Mother Mary loves us all.

Humbly yours,

Rev. Fr Mari Arokiam
Ecclesiastical Assistant
SSVP Archdiocese of KL

the challenges of a busy career and life which we are going through. Yet, it's one's desire, passion, and with God's will - all things are possible. What we consider to be nothing can mean so much for the one who receives it! So even the least effort we put in does create a big change in those who are in need of it."

To outsiders, the SSVP may appear to be solely based on action, just doling out cash aid. But what it truly does is to challenge us. We are confronted with the reality of

Christ's mandate to heal and help the underprivileged and what that entails. The scene narrated by Cassandra in the opening paragraph is often played out in one form or another. But we can help the story take a turn for the better.

To those interested in finding out more - **be brave enough to respond in faith! Be brave enough to meet the poor where they are as Christ did!** Be brave enough to see their pain, to want to do something even if you don't

see the results immediately. In the journey with the underprivileged, you will meet Christ in the poor and in turn, become Christ to others. It is a powerful encounter that will deepen your relationship with Christ who came to us in our poverty!



Aquaponics System: Towards Sustainability



On 27 July 2015, SSVP Selangor State Board was invited for a site visit to IRIS Berhad Head Office at TPM, Bukit Jalil by Dato Vincent Leong. IRIS has a farming division which has diversified into pre-fabricated home construction and aquaponics from their core business of providing the Malaysia passport security features.

We were taken on a tour of IRIS sample pre-fab home constructed and Aquaponics system which was set-up on top of their Head Office building. Through Aquaponics, we were shown how plants, rice and vegetables are watered and fertilised from fish water mixed with premixed nutrient to achieve optimal fruit sizes to be harvested for the market.

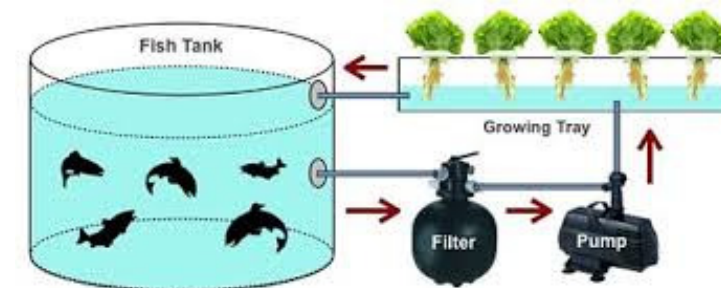
The fish and plant form the Aquaponic cycle where revenue earned is in the ratio of 3:1 respectively. Such a process of harvesting fish and vegetables can assist the SSVP project homes earn a sustainable income, defray some of the home food expenses and educate the children on Aquaponics. IRIS also has an education division under Stamford College which also provides certification in Aquaponics approved by MOE. SSVP may want to collaborate on this as well.

With pre-fab bungalow homes, IRIS can build these houses at a fraction of the current costs and within 3 months; depending on the design and size. As SSVP State has a few homes in need of repair and

expansion, the IRIS system offers an opportunity to revamp and remodel our project homes and incorporate Aquaponics on site to be self-funding on income generated from fish and vegetable sales.

On 18 Aug 2015, IRIS invited SSVP State Board to witness an existing community at their Jasin farm in Melaka. At this farm, we were given a tour of the actual pre-fab houses built and the Aquaponics farming of fish and vegetables on a large scale. The residents of these houses are also employed by IRIS to maintain their Aquaponics system and harvesting of fruits and vegetables for the market.

IRIS pre-fab housing with Aquaponics offers an opportunity for SSVP to collaborate on a CSR level to achieve a win-win situation for both parties.



Pengajian Xavier, each of the finalists were invited to share their story including their own involvement in charitable works.

All the finalists, which came from background as college students and undergraduates as well as pursuing different careers from medicine to law and the arts, have been involved in such charitable works, some when they were still students, while some in pursuing their career have joined their family members as well as their employer's CSR programmes in reaching out to the less fortunate. A couple of the finalists were emotional in sharing their works, which included helping, advocating



and empowering single mothers.

The Pageant Convener also introduced Mr Simon Chin, the owner of Billion Supermarket, who brought along 5 hampers for the residents of the home.

Bro Kennedy Solomon, President of the Holy Trinity Conference, who

came straight from work also gave his welcome and thank you address to the visitors.

A simple reception was held after the sharing and it gave the children and the finalists another chance to catch up, with of course a lot of selfies and small group photos taken.

The one and a half hour visit ended with a group photo taken. After which the finalists had to rush off to another programme already lined up for them.

SSVP would like to wish all the finalists all the best in their finals, and life that lies ahead of them.

'Why the young are attracted to SSVP!'

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised..." - Luke 4:18

The railings were broken as they climbed up the many flights of stairs to the apartment. It was a far cry from their comfortable homes. Sweat trickled down their necks in the heat of the day. The scene that greeted them in the rundown apartment was grim. The occupant had had his leg amputated and desperately needed financial help for his family.



Cassandra Ng, a SSVP member who is a Deputy Business Development Manager, remembers that first experience of visiting a home

visibly. She'd joined SSVP after reading about it in the church bulletin. She wanted to serve Christ, to serve Christ in others. "Many people run away from serving..." she said softly, her eyes

tearing up as she recalled that day. A member since 2009, the experience was jarring. It was the very first time she had ever met an amputee, and in such depressing conditions. Home visits are not easy for Cassandra, and her observation that many shy away from being exposed to such sorrow is one of empathy. And yet she perseveres. Why?

To Cassandra and to other SSVP members, their reaching out is a **faith response to Christ's call** to serve the poor. They have also come to understand the Vincentian Spirituality more deeply - confronted by suffering and challenges, it is a spirituality that builds up a person's faith and encourages us to defend it. It teaches responsibility for those around us and the environment.

Cassandra encourages others, "Come for home visits and Ration Sunday (1st Sunday at SFX Church). You have to come and see if your heart is drawn towards it. It is an important experience... You can see, especially with the FINs - you can see the difference in their living conditions and ours."

A highly evolving ministry that is solidly built on the spirituality of St Vincent de Paul, SSVP is passionate about empowering the poor. The idea is to give future

generations inspiration to strive harder, to hope, to be open to new experiences, to be wiser about their decisions. It is constantly on the lookout for ways and means to help them rise above the level of poverty as some of the articles in this PRAXIS issue seeks to address.

Megala, joined SSVP after journeying in RCIA with her then boyfriend (whom she later married), "It had been on my mind to do volunteer work for the poor and underprivileged for a long time and when I learned about SSVP, I took the opportunity to give it a try. I consider myself privileged for having the opportunity to serve in SSVP and I certainly have much to learn from the people whom we work with. The most fulfilling part of being with SSVP is that I am an instrument in making a difference in people's lives by opening the door of opportunity for a better future." She is currently pursuing her Doctorate in Neuropharmacology. Although very busy, both she and her husband are serving in SSVP. Megala explains, "Of course I do not deny



Message from SSVP State Council President

"Let your generosity extend to all the living. Do not withhold it even from the dead"
- Ecc 7: 32 -34



Dear fellow Vincentian Sisters & Brothers,

Greetings of Peace! It gives me great pleasure to write this message for our magazine, PRAXIS, once again and in particular in conjunction with the Feast of St Vincent De Paul, our Patron Saint. I have been President of the SSVP Selangor for 5 years now, and I must congratulate every member in Selangor, for doing your level best - for finding the time, and the energy to balance your personal lives, your working lives, your family lives, with the Vincentian vocation that you are committed to.

I am humbled at the way our Society in Selangor has transformed itself to become a Society that is actively involved in empowerment works, carrying out projects and works which help redeem / rebuild lives of those who are poor and disadvantaged. I know of many who are rich, and who whenever asked, donate much money to the Poor. But I am proud of the many Vincentians in Selangor, who not only contribute your considerable resources and monies (**akin to the woman whom Jesus described in Mark 12: 41-44**); but you also spend time visiting and engaging with the families and persons of the Poor and Marginalised. Even in this difficult, trying, uncertain economic times, many of us have remained committed to our works within the Society! Surely this is only possible because of our Faith and the promptings of God's Spirit within us.

This year, let us move our works further forward by ensuring that our works, not only respect the rights and dignity of the person whom we meet and journey with, but we will ensure that our works ensure the preservation of the environment as directed by our Holy Father, Pope Francis. For long the slogan has been "Don't just give someone a fish, but also teach the person how to fish. Today, as Vincentians, we should expand this thought further by not just teaching the person to fish (as a longer term measure), but we also should teach him/her how to preserve the environment in which the fish and the person lives in 'harmony', so that sustainability can be achieved. In my humble opinion, this would be a **'holistic'** approach. By adopting this approach, we would then need to equip the persons with the skills, knowledge and tools necessary while appreciating and nurturing the balance of the ecosystem and universe God has provided for all of us.

We should also ensure that our works contribute towards nation building as directed by His Grace Archbishop Julian Leow in his address to us during our recent AGM. We love our country, Malaysia, and all of us are patriotic citizens of this country. God has bestowed us this country, and through our works we can contribute much to nation building. We should not segregate or separate people, reaching out to all, irrespective of race, religion, colour and creed. We must strive to make this a bigger reality than what it is today. I recognize that, in small ways, we are already doing works in that direction. Our OSC's are a good testimony for this. But, it is time now for us to consolidate our works, such that, the impact of our works towards preservation of the environment and towards nation building, is more effective and outreaching.

Sisters and Brothers, as we continue in our works, let us remain mindful that it is the Lord who makes everything possible for us. It is God's Love in us that manifests when we reach out in love to others. Let us continue to lift up all our works to the Lord in earnest Prayer that He will continue to guide us and bring out the spirit of humility, gentleness and meekness as extolled in our Rule.

"Oh Lord invite us constantly to carry the Cross of The Suffering Christ present in the image of every person that we encounter during our vocation so that we may glorify You!" we pray!

"Mother Mary, loving Mother, we love you! Intercede and pray for us always" we ask!

Rajenthiran (Raj) Narayanan
Sept 2015

Reflection



We give thanks to God for a wonderful golden jubilee celebration last year!

It was indeed an inspiring and insightful year for Vincentians. Through the golden jubilee celebrations and the numerous programmes and activities - we have rediscovered and renewed our faith and belief in the living out of the Vincentian spirituality.

We also thank Archbishop Julian Leow, Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam, Fr Mari Arokiam and other priests for their support and presence during our various activities.

What does it mean to be a Vincentian?

St Vincent de Paul did not write a book on his spiritual teachings but it is through his letters and conferences - in which he trained his followers to the mission of service to the poor that we hear the voice of this amazing saint. The fundamental sources of his teaching are *the Gospel and life*. He wanted his followers to place the Gospel at the core of their lives.

Everything that St Vincent has to say to us is about practicing simplicity in our everyday life, and of the penetrating strength of the word of God. The main characteristics of Vincentian spirituality could be summed as: *respond, compassion, friendship and prayer*.

In Vincentian spirituality, prayer and action go hand in hand. St Vincent himself defined prayer as *"an elevation of the mind to God by which the soul detaches itself, as it were, from itself so as to seek God in himself. It is a conversation with God, an intercourse of the spirit, in which God interiorly teaches it what it should know and do, and in which the soul says to God what He himself teaches it to ask for."*

While the jubilee celebrations may seem to be over, as Vincentians we are continually being invited by God to participate in the Vincentian mission by who we are and what we do.



Through our work we are a living example of Christ and of St Vincent, and indeed of all the saints. And so we must ask ourselves especially today in the challenging economical and social situation of Malaysia - how do we stay true to our values, ethics and our faith? Are there areas that we need to strengthen? How can we do this?

What is the Vincentian vocation?

"Our vocation is to embrace the hearts of all men, to do what the Son of God did, he who came into the world to set it on fire. It is true therefore that I am sent not only to love God but to make him

loved. It is not enough to love God if my neighbour does not love him." St Vincent Paul (XII 262).

Why did you volunteer to become part of the Vincentian family? What are you thinking about as you consider joining us? Remember that "God demands first of all the heart, and then the work" -St. Vincent (Leonard, 4:114).

"And who is my neighbour?"

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37) was of special importance to Blessed Frederick Ozanam. It is a call to stop and think about our brothers and sisters in need.

We do not have to look far to find them.

A simple daily reflection can help us recognise Christ in the poor that we meet. At the end of each day, sit quietly and think about where you have met Christ that day. For surely, Christ is constantly with us - in the people we encounter and the events of our lives. God is there in our experiences.

Did you recognise Christ in your neighbour today? And do you think your neighbour saw the face of Christ in you? This little reflection will gradually open your heart to the face of Christ in the poor. At the end of it, give thanks to God and offer all to him.



'Stepping Up For A Better Tomorrow'



The Charity Golf, Run and Dinner with the theme, "Stepping Up For A Better Tomorrow" was held to raise funds for the renovation of our new home, Rumah Pengajian Xavier. The property at Section 3, Petaling Jaya was purchased early 2015, to enable us to increase the intake of boys to 25-30 secondary school boys. Presently we have 14 boys at our rented premise.

After a few months of planning, 24 July 2015 finally came with greetings of a beautiful, clear and sunny sky when the golfers came drifting in the registration counter as early as 11.00 am at Kelab Golf Perkhidmatan Awam (KGPA). After lunch, the 64 golfers began their rounds. Some 60 runners registered (and paid) for the fun run but only 20 made to the run at 5.30pm, most probably due to the fact that it was a working day. Those participated had lots of fun as the run was held at the greens and yet challenging route of Bukit Kiara Hills.

After the golfers and runners completed their events, they adjourned to Oriental Pearl

Restaurant at Bukit Kiara Equestrian and Country Club for their well deserved nourishment there. After some opening remarks by Master of Ceremony Terence Conrad, Conference President Sr Annie Lau kicked off the gala dinner when she welcomed and thanked all present in her opening welcome address. In her short and sweet speech, she highlighted the main objectives of the fundraising event.

Following this, a short prayer led Bro Alvin, the Home Management Committee Chairperson, dinner was then served. The food served at the dinner was great and good value, though not exceptional. What was exceptional however was the enthusiasm and camaraderie displayed by the over 400 guests, which included the golfers and runners/walkers. Add in the flow of the beer, wine and whisky and it undoubtedly made the night a resounding success. Guests were seen leaving the restaurant with broad smiles - an indication that their money and time were well spent. Not to mention the door gifts for all and prizes won.



Bro Raj, the Organising Committee Chairman, enlightened all present of the objectives of the SSVP, and specifically the role of RPX in uplifting the poor and marginalized. There were many present who contributed to the monthly collection in church or directly to the home funds but are not fully aware of how the money is spent. Bro Raj drove home the point very effectively. The organisers added a fitting touch to the evening's programme by



introducing on stage RPX housemother *Mariamah* affectionately known as 'Patti', who has faithfully been looking after the boys for more than 9 years. It must also be mentioned that the RPX boys' song and dance routine was enthusiastically received by the guests. A very good time was indeed had by all.

On this end note, the committee is grateful for the many companies, friends and associates who came forward to support and make this event a success. We definitely look forward to having the next charity event.

2015 Miss Malaysia World Finalists visit SSVP Home

19 finalists of this year's Miss Malaysia World and also members of the organising pageant made a visit to Rumah Ozanam on Wednesday 26 August 2015 at 4pm. They were met by the combined presence of the children from R.O. and Rumah Pengajian Xavier (RPX), the respective management team and members of the society from both conferences. This is the third consecutive year the pageant convener Datuk Anna Lim has

arranged for the respective year's finalists to visit SSVP run homes, as she wants to expose and introduce the finalists to works of charity that are run by organisations like the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

After a general introduction and welcome by Bro Francis Lai, on behalf of the Conferences of Holy Trinity and St Francis Xavier and the administration and residents of both Rumah Ozanam and Rumah



confidence of youths and young adults. We want them to be open to the opportunities offered by OSC through job placement, vocational training etc.

As part of OSC's activities, 5 children attended a 2-day Youth Leadership Programme organised by Toastmasters International. And there is the OSC success story of Mdm. L, A single mother with four children, she came seeking support for her family. The income from a sundry shop she worked for was sorely insufficient. After consultation, she began work with the Cititel, who works with SSVP Selangor to provide better work opportunities. From a part-time basis, she is now a supervisor earning more than RM 2,100 a month with benefits. Life has improved immensely for her and the children. They can look to their own mother for inspiration to succeed and rise above the crowd.

OSC Coalfields Sungai Buloh (rural): Commenced April 2011. Set in a rural area, the estimated population is 10,000. Location surrounded by plantations, smallholders and farmers - in a premise on a generous lease by a donor. Services: prison related social work (Sungai Buloh prison), daily free classes for nursery children, adult self-motivation classes, free weekend classes of students, skills training for youths, weekend computer classes, weekend moral classes. Since its inception, the centre has attended to more than 55 cases.

Other empowerment services rendered include obtaining a trading license for a lady to sell home-cooked food, enabling her to be self-employed. The Society also assisted in renovating the shop and providing seed money. We were also able to help a 10-year-old who was fitted with an artificial leg which enabled him to enjoy his childhood more fully. An open house and exhibition were organised last year.

OSC Port Klang (urban): Commenced June 2011. Currently, temporarily closed as restructuring of its works is being carried out.

The urgency and importance of these service centres cannot be stressed enough. There has been the emergence of a disturbing poor quality of life in in the various low-cost flats which are 'replacements' for previous squatter settlements. These residential areas are now a cesspool of social ills especially among the young. It's imperative that we address the reality of the situation and show them concrete ways of rising above their situation before generations are affected and trapped in a cycle of poverty and crime.



SSVP Selangor's Golden Jubilee

We launched our Golden Jubilee celebrations on 27 September 2013 coinciding with our feast day at the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Klang. It was a spiritual journey for all Vincentians in Selangor. Our support of the Church's declaration of the Year of Faith is reflected in our theme, "Transforming Faith by Empowering the Poor and Marginalised", and in the activities for the year.

The choice to focus on the spiritual formation of SSVP members meant a return to our roots - the realisation that our commitment and motivation in serving the poor and

marginalised has to be continually purified. Other important features of the celebrations include reflections at Conferences on our solidarity with the poor, care for the environment, the enhancement of elements of social justice, the identification of a new project whereby certain families will be able to wipe clean their debts, and working with the new poor. Also



noteworthy for Vincentians in Selangor, is our identification of the urgent educational needs of the Orang Asli children. As written in our Rule, no work of charity is foreign to Vincentians.

To that end, we have had several inspiring and exciting activities! The formations covered included Vincentian spirituality, training

programmes for caregivers, administrators and members, the planting of the time capsule, a charity Mt Kinabalu climb, activities with the Orang Asli, Environment Day and an AIDS awareness programme. The celebrations closed with a Mass on the 27 September 2014.

Another landmark event was Malaysia's hosting of PANASCO (Pan Asian Congress) in October 2014 . Held once in 4 years, it is a gathering of SSVP members from the Asia and Oceanic region. With more than 25 member countries, it serves as a platform to network and share experiences, therefore allowing an exchange of ideas and an efficient flow of information to better serve the realities of serving the poor today.



Fundraising dinner in aid of SSVP Selangor Projects

As part of SSVP Selangor's effort to empower the poor and marginalized, the Society manages 6 residential homes for abused and underprivileged children, 3 Service Centers, a Home for Women and Children with HIV/AIDS, a half-way residential shelter for male parolees, and a nursery and kindergarten for poor children.

The cost of funding these projects average RM175,000 a month and is financed almost solely through public donations and fund raising projects. With the escalating annual cost, the Society is faced with critical challenges to keep these projects on-going and also to enhance our services to the poor and marginalized to the next level.



Rebuilding Lives, Sharing a Destiny

To cope with the escalating costs, the State Council Selangor, organized a Fundraising Charity Dinner on 23rd August 2014 at the Royal Selangor Club, Dataran Merdeka., Kuala Lumpur. The theme was: *Rebuilding Lives, Sharing a Destiny*.

With all 32 tables sold, the night began at about 8.15 p.m. with the Master of Ceremonies, Neubert Ambrose, welcoming and thanking the guests. Amongst those present were donors, invited guests, friends of the Society, past presidents of the State Council and Vincentian members.

The official function commenced with State Council President Bro. Rajenthiran Narayanan's wel-

come address. In his address, he made mention of the works of the Society in Selangor, in particular its sourcing funds to finance 11 projects. Notwithstanding the many critical financial challenges faced, the Society will continue with its endeavors to bring hope, care, shelter and cheer to the many children who have been deprived or denied of basic rights to food, shelter, education, and most of all, love.

Bro. Rajenthiran went on to affirm the openness and readiness of the Society to assist all members of society regardless of race or religion. In this connection, he made special mention that the Society does not evangelize, promote or compel conversion of children and adults in our homes, and that for the record to date, there has not been a single conversion save those who had converted of their own free will after they had reached the age of 18.

The President's welcome speech was followed by the highlight of the evening, the address by the Guest of Honour Y.B. Hannah Yeoh, the Speaker and Member of the Selangor State Assembly. In her address Y.B. Hannah thanked the society for inviting her and acknowledged that she was pleasantly surprised to learn of the extent of works undertaken by the Society, in particular the number of residential homes the Society manages and operates. She thanked the Society for the hand it extends to the members of the public in the State of Selangor, in particular towards the welfare and empowerment of the marginalized. In appreciation of the works of SSVP, Y.B Hannah Yeoh announced that she has increased her earlier unsolicited pledge of a RM3,000 donation to RM5,000 to the Society.

The next item for the night was a mock cheque presentation of RM10,000 by *Golden Craft Sdn. Bhd.* With the formalities over, the night began with grace be-



fore the first serving of a ten-course Chinese dinner, followed by much merry-making by the guests. They danced away to the upbeat music played by 'Dion' the band in attendance. The highlight was the rendition of songs by well-known Malaysian singer and entertainer, V.J David.



The sale of Liverpool merchandise, sponsored by Standard Chartered Bank also created excitement with items sold out. The proceeds totaling RM2,500 was donated to the Society. In addition, there was a Dutch Auction of a 37-inch TV which raised a further sum of RM3,500. Many delighted guests also walked away with lucky draw prizes. The joyful night ended at midnight.

Our Grateful Thanks

The Fund Raising Charity Dinner raised a net surplus of RM106,000. The State Council places on record their thanks to *YB Hannah Yeoh* for consenting to be its patron. Additional thanks to the State Council members, Vincentian members and the Organizing Committee for the effort and time in putting the event together within the short period of one month. Last, but not least, the State Council thanks almighty God in making this event a resounding success.

Conference of SFX: Lenten Campaign 2015

The Lenten season's call of conversion and a return to the LORD through *prayer, fasting and almsgiving* is a timely reminder to all members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SSVP). This is because it is very much a *Vincentian spirituality* to:

'See Christ in the Community' and to reach out to help the needy and poor. Based on the spirituality of the Society, formations and prayers continue to emphasise that "the more one wants to serve, the more one needs to be formed'.

Lent is also a period of renewal where every branch or Conference registered with the Malaysian Societies Act must hold annual general meetings (AGM) to review its works of charity and social justice, present its publicly audited accounts, and elect new office bearers for the new term.

These AGMs are a meeting of the members with their respective Conference Spiritual Director, who is also the parish priest of the church where SSVP operates from.

The Conference of St Francis Xavier

As a Society that wants to help the poor and needy, its charitable and social justice works continues throughout the Lenten season. Of late, a new category of 'urban poor' has emerged due to the rise in the cost of living. Consequently more home visits have been made to see the actual situation on the ground and to verify information given earlier when these FINs (Friends in Need) first came forward to ask for aid.

The forms of aid given include financial and food aid for sustenance, reimbursing medical costs, ensuring the children's education by paying for the

school bus fares, tuition fees for those children deserving of such education aid, underwriting education and related costs, helping to off-set partially any arrears of utilities to ensure and avoid disconnection of such basic necessities, subsidising the funeral expenses etc.

With enough Vincentians of this Conference being present during the home visits, more cases have been visited simultaneously as the members are divided into two or three teams for the purpose. These efforts have enabled cases to be verified in the shortest possible



time and allow aid to be distributed soonest.

1st Sunday Ration and Medical Clinic Day

The monthly '1st Sunday Ration and Medical Clinic Day' is an important day as the status of all cases will be updated, and whereby FINs collect their monthly financial aid and food aid. Their accompanying young children are engaged separately by our younger Vincentians and collaborators to engage them in some educational activity which includes reading, arts and craft, play acting, singing and dancing.

All FINs present undergo free medical examination and receive free medication for certain straight forward cases like flu etc, while those that require specialist treatments are referred to hospitals. Vision



problems are also referred to an optician who has been very generous in providing free spectacles to SSVP FINs.

The season of lent has also encouraged parishioners to be generous in almsgiving, by donating to the Lenten Campaign and also by offering to donate to the cause of SSVP. A case in point is in which a charitable parishioner was helped by SSVP to link-up directly with a migrant community who has approached SSVP for help. This parishioner has begun to provide directly to the community of 14 Catholic families, food aid for an initial period of 3 months.

Rumah Pengajian Xavier (RPX)

On the Education Home front, Rumah Pengajian Xavier (RPX) - the good news is that the older lads have graduated and have secured employment. Among the success stories are an engineering graduate and 2 hospitality industry graduates. Continuing in their studies are those in Accountancy, Information Technology courses and 2 more lads who will graduate with vocational qualifications sometime in this May from Montfort Boys Town, Shah Alam.



Continued on page 7...



Training: SDAC, Caregivers

In recognition of the social and psychological support that the children in our homes need, the Society has formed a Social Development Action Committee (SDAC). Support group volunteers will provide one-to-one interaction with the children. More importantly, they will be a trusted friend to them. Volunteers have been screened and completed six modules of training.

Last year the society also organised a successful training programme for caregivers (including administrators, wardens and house mothers) from its homes, kindergarten and service centres. The programme was held at the Methodist Centre, Fraser's Hill, over a full weekend in mid-March. A total of 24 caregivers took part. Society members took turns to look after the children while the caregivers were away. The objective: to upgrade the skills and knowledge of the caregivers in handling our children and residents, to instil a sense of belonging to the Vincentian apostolate and the need to view work as a vocation. There was a need to train caregivers to be committed and be knowledgeable of the psychology of children in today's world. The sessions were delivered by carefully selected speakers and were conducted in both Tamil and English language.

The State Council of Selangor also organised a fun summer camp and outing for the children of SSVP homes in Selangor. It was coordinated by Ms Malini, Social Development Coordinator of the Society. It was held at the 'Kingfisher Adventure' Hulu Langat over a weekend. The objective: to instil life skills, positive values, leadership skills and the spirit of caring for each other. In previous years, we have also organised a visit to Aquaria KLCC (Rumah Kanak Kanak Impian) for the children, and were visited by the crew members of United States Navy (Rumah SVP Klang) in 2010.

We are also grateful to have had *Rumah Keluarga Kami* blessed by H.E. Archbishop Joseph Marino, Apostolic Nuncio to Malaysia.



Ozanam Service Centres (OSC) - Our Response to the Latest Urgency

Most recently, the Society in Selangor has been actively setting up *Ozanam Service Centres* (OSC) in the heart of where the poor reside (low-cost flats, villages, and squatter areas).

In our works of mercy, in particular the former squatter settlements - observations revealed the plight of the single mothers whose full-time employment is hampered by the need to look after their children. Problems are further compounded when they are responsible for aged parents or a disabled spouse. This leads to a vicious cycle.

We decided that we need to be located where the poor are, to better journey with them!

Returning to our Vincentian roots - St Vincent de Paul's letters indicated his care was first and foremost for the individual's needs; and secondly, about sustainable transformation in the lives of the poor. The Rule of the Society as envisaged by our founding fathers requires us to go beyond and "to unpack and address the systems that cause poverty in order to alleviate the sufferings of the poor".

The beginning of the OSCs are a response to these insights. All 3 PJ Conferences of Assumption, SFX and SIC work together to run the centres. This has led to the establishment of industry linkages, learning centres, self-help projects and provision of quality medical care (in collaboration with Assunta Hospital).

There are currently 2 active centres operating in Taman Sri Sentosa and Coalfields Sungai Buloh. The 3rd OSC at Port Klang is being 'revisited' for further development.

OSC Taman Sri Sentosa (urban): Commenced June 2010. Services provided: proper documentation e.g. birth certificates (children), counselling, training courses, improvement of working conditions and income, childcare to enable parents to seek full-time employment, educational needs of the children, helping and developing delinquent youths - opportunities to develop skills and talents, medical assistance, tuition and computer classes.

It provides a learning centre for children who are weak in their studies to explore their talents. These include motivational classes, self-esteem sessions, positive values development. Self-help projects help identify skills and strengths of individuals. Also available are 'Football Coaching Clinics' - to win the trust and



We recognise the need for us to be continually formed in our Catholic teachings, while respecting the beliefs and virtues of those who seek our assistance by recognising that it is Christ we meet in the poor.

We have come to understand that our faith response must be more than just providing aid. We must enable the poor to overcome the very causes that lead to such social injustices. Our *faith response* is incomplete unless we are willing to take the risk of involving ourselves directly in enabling our less fortunate brethren to meet basic needs. We



cannot afford to be condescending towards them.

This follows the example set by our founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his young companions who worked and lived with the poor as part of their efforts.

The Society in Selangor

The State Council of Selangor being part of the National Council of Malaysia and International Council is a registered NGO in Malaysia and the United Nations. It is actively engaged in empowering the poor and marginalised regardless of race, creed, colour or religion. Its children's homes are approved by the Welfare Ministry.

The Society caters to the 4 basic needs of the poor and marginalised by providing assistance and aid in: shelter, education, food and health.

We believe it is not enough to provide 'the fish' to the poor. We

must teach them how to protect, preserve and nurture the environment that breeds the 'fish'. We have to arm the poor with the necessary means to rise above their state of poverty and give them hope that increases over time.

From a humble beginning of less than 8 members, today more than 120 membrs work in 10 conferences managing 14 empowerment projects - not discounting the routine work of providing basic aid to more than 500 families living in Selangor.

Various Conferences (parish-based) in Selangor help manage each project: Holy Trinity, St Ignatius, Holy Family (Kajang),

In our works of mercy, Vincentians should view their service as sanctifying each poor person. In the face of the poor is Christ Himself.

We, Vincentians, are merely the instruments of God to enable the poor to realise that they are people worthy of dignity and rights. We must serve our poor with humility and love, for what we do is merely to give them what is rightfully theirs. Love must always supersede duty. Indeed, a true Vincentian hopes that someday it will no longer be they who love, but Christ who loves through them.

Our Lady of Lourdes, St Anne, Holy Redeemer (Kajang), St Jude (Rawang), St Francis Xavier, Assumption and Holy Eucharist.

Also collaborating with us are the MEP (Missions étrangères de Paris) for the past 10 years. The missionaries of the MEP have discovered that the volunteering initiative of MEP compliments the rediscovery of faith and vocation towards community service among the young people of Europe. About 36 volunteers have served the Society to date. They are stationed in the projects' homes as a caregiver cum assistant administrators for a period of 6 months to a year.

the poor with a sense of dignity and self-belief, and it shows in our transparent and sincere approach.

Expansion of Planned Cottage Industries: The potential of upgrading one of our planned 'empowerment' cottage industry projects (recycling-based) to become a revenue project is being studied. Our Society in Australia has had good success and we plan to import and implement the model in Selangor.

In terms of media and publicity, besides fundraising events - we publish our own magazine, 'Praxis' and have launched an official website.

Presently RPX has 13 lads, and a recruitment drive is underway to fill up the quota to make it 14 lads. All schooling lads continue to be helped via paid tuition and volunteer tutors to improve in their studies. As not all are academically inclined, last year's SPM lads have now secured vocational training opportunities.



During the recent flood disaster in the East Coast, Catholic Churches nationwide came forward to help. SSVP also joined in the initiative and were successful in organising several tranches of help. The National Council coordinated with the State Councils and in turn the State Councils mobilised their respective Conferences to collect donated items in terms of cash and dry food products.

The RPX lads who were having their extended end of the year school holidays were mobilised to help the collection at both the National Council level and at the SFX Church organised collection level. Their help to repack items was also extended to the AOHD collection centre, as they had accompanied the collected items from SFX Church to AOHD.

For the RPX lads, their participation in the flood relief works will hopefully encourage the lads to realise that difficulties in life can be made

much lighter with the participation of people with charitable hearts. And that they should learn to be charitable in their outlook when they grow up and lead more productive lives.

Other Works in Progress

SFX Conference continues to work with the State Council in new tranches of aid being organised. An SFX SSVP collaborator is actively working with some NGOs to continue to get more food aid across to the Orang Asli who are isolated and living in the interior of Gua Musang. They have hardly received any food aid.

Another area of development and expansion of RPX is the purchase of a building in Section 3 in PJ Old Town to be the new permanent RPX Home at a cost of RM1.2million.



Another estimated RM500k will be spent in renovations works. The new building is estimated to be occupied in about 1 year. The conference has embarked on a fund raising project to raise the renovation amount.

SSVP through its Tax Exempt Foundation 'The Yayasan Ozanam SSVP' is able to issue tax-exempt receipts to donors who donate a minimum of



RM50.00 to its cause.

The Conference of St Francis Xavier in collaboration with the Conferences of Assumption and St Ignatius PJ operate and support the urban service centre i.e. the Ozanam Service Centre in Taman Sri Sentosa. Besides funding the operations, our Vincentians also double up as the Centre's Management Committee team to oversee activities aimed at helping those in need of documentations via linking up with authorities, e.g. Hospitals, SOCSO, Welfare Department, IC Department, Legal Aid etc, as well as running a tuition centre for children from needy backgrounds with the help of volunteer teachers.

Every first Wednesday of the month, the CSR program of Assunta Hospital also uses the Ozanam Service Centre to run free clinics for the poor. The CSR program of the Assunta Hospital has also enabled SSVP to receive free out-patient and in-patient treatment for its FINs, via the SWIP and SWOP programmes.

Giving thanks

SSVP Conference of St Francis Xavier is deeply grateful to the Jesuit Parish Priests and all parishioners who have donated so generously to its works.

home - a single storey terrace house at 12, Taman Kilaunan 2, Bestari Jaya - was a long cherished dream come true. It was partly financed by a financial institution and purchased in 1989. It was to be the home where his four children

would grow up.

However, tragedy struck in April 2011, when a raging fire almost entirely destroyed their home. The financing bank utilized the claim from the insurance proceeds to partly off-set the

Collaborative effort brings joy to family!

The *Conference of Holy Eucharist, Batang Berjuntai* and the *State Council of Selangor* decided to come together to help restore the family home of Mr F.M.

To Mr F.M. and his wife, their

outstanding loan.

Further complications

Following the fire, the house was totally inhabitable and the family was forced to seek shelter in single storey low cost house in the vicinity. Unfortunately, no sooner had they settled in the rented house, tragedy struck again when Mr. F was diagnosed with severe diabetes and was immobilized. Confined to a wheelchair he was no longer able to obtain gainful employment.

The bank commenced foreclosure proceedings as the loan repayments fell overdue. To avoid the auction of the house with contributions from the Church and SSVP, monies were raised to pay of a small outstanding amount to the bank. His wife had no alternative but to start work as a cleaner at a nearby school.

However, this was not to last as in 2013, she was diagnosed with cancer of the duodenum and had to seek periodic chemotherapy and radiation treatment at the Institute of Cancer Research in Putra Jaya.

Following the aforementioned third tragedy, the Conference of Holy Eucharist sought the assistance of the State Council, Selangor to restore the house at an estimated cost of RM31,000. The opportunity came when a generous donor came forward to contribute towards this cause in August 2013.

A home for the family

With funds from the donor, the State council contributed RM28,500 and the balance of RM 2,500 was generously contributed by Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Edwin Paul by way of roof tiles. The restoration contact was awarded to Mr. Fernandez of *ReDeBulitz Engineering*, a parishioner of the Holy Family Church, Kajang, who agreed to undertake the project at RM28,500.00 including providing the electrical fittings for free.

Work commenced in mid-August and was completed on 6 September 2014. The family moved in on 16 September 2014. The members of the SSVP at Holy Eucharist undertook the cleaning and the shifting into the newly restored house.



The Sunday of 21 September 2014 was a time of thanksgiving and joyous celebration for the family members and the members of SSVP Holy Eucharist, Bestari Jaya, when Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Edwin Paul blessed the house at 12.30 noon. The blessing was followed by a simple lunch.

The family has five children aged twelve, eleven, nine, five and one. The Lord has indeed blessed them. The Society gives thanks to our Lord Jesus for giving the Society the opportunity to provide a home for the family. We give thanks for the Lord's unseen hand from the start to the completion of the project.

Medical Clinic Collaboration with Assunta Hospital



Assunta Hospital in collaboration with SSVP initiated a monthly medical clinic at the Ozanam Services Centre (OSC) in Sri Sentosa for the lower income group. The clinic is held on the first Wednesday of the month.

The usual patients who patronize the clinic are the elderly and young children accompanied by their parents. Though the clinic is for Malaysians, there are other nationalities who come by as well. The type of cases seen generally include those with fever, common

cold, light injuries and body aches. The blood sugar level of older patients is taken and if found to be diabetic, the relevant advice is given by the doctor in attendance, or by the ex-senior nurses. In severe cases, they are referred to the hospitals - either University Hospital or Hospital Kuala Lumpur.

The clinic usually comprises of 1 doctor, 2 registered nurses and volunteers.

When a patient comes in he or she is given a number and is registered. Then he proceeds to a room where his weight is taken. Thereafter his blood sugar is taken and recorded on a medical card. The doctor takes his blood pressure and advises him on the relevant health issues. If the patient is found to be suffering from a serious illness, a referral

letter to the hospital is given to the patient.

For minor ailments, a prescription is sufficient. With the prescription, he goes to the pharmacy to collect his medication. The pharmacist in turn, would advise him on the application and dosage required.

The Medical Clinic was inaugurated on 30 November, 2012. Since then, an average of 35 to 40 patients visit this clinic monthly.



A Look at SSVP's Relevance to Society: Past & Present

It has been a fruitful and inspiring year for the State Council of Selangor! In celebration of our 53 odd years in existence, our Golden Jubilee celebrations and related activities have had us reflecting on our relevance in today's world. Here, we take a look at how SSVP came to be, its progress in Selangor and our ongoing mission today.



Origins of the Society

The Society of St Vincent De Paul (SSVP) was founded in Sorbonne University, Paris, in 1833 by

Frederic Ozanam (pic, left), a student. It was a time of great upheaval in Paris. During and following the French Revolution, Paris was profoundly affected by social unrest. Religion was on the decline. Many were moving to the cities but finding no work, little pay or factories closed due to the revolution. In 1832, an epidemic of cholera struck to Paris killing thousands.

Young Frederic Ozanam had to walk through the poorer suburbs on his way to university lectures - passing the homeless, the diseased and starving. It was the taunts of an anti-religious opponent in a debating society founded by the students that fired his heart to action: "You are right Ozanam when you speak of the past! In former times Christianity worked wonders, but what is it doing for mankind now? And you, who pride yourself on your Catholicism, what are you doing for the poor? Show us your works". And so Frederic rose to the challenge. He gathered a few friends and they decided to

do what they could to assist the poor. They adopted the name of the 'Society of St Vincent De Paul' after the patron saint of Christian charity.

Patron saint of the Society, St Vincent de Paul, was ordained as a priest at the age of 19. As a young man he ministered to the wealthy and powerful. However an appointment as chaplain to a poor parish, and to galley prisoners, inspired him to a vocation of working with the marginalised and powerless. "Deal with the most urgent needs. Organise charity so that it is more efficient...teach reading and writing, educate with the aim of giving each the means of self-support. Intervene with authorities to obtain reforms in structure... there is no charity without justice." He died in Paris on 27 September 1660 at the age of 79.

Not long after, the sincerity of young Frederic and his friends became apparent. And within a year, membership had expanded to over 100. It became necessary to split the *Conference* (group) into three separate Conferences. Meanwhile, other Conferences sprang up in parishes around Paris. And within the first decade, the Society had spread to 48 other cities in France and Italy. In later years the Society reached Rome, England, Belgium, Scotland,

Ireland, the USA and Australia.

In 1933, the parish priest of the Assumption Church in Penang desired to help alleviate the poverty of certain parishioners. Together with leaders of the Church, he established the Conference of the Assumption of SSVP. The Conference actively saw to the needs of the poor. It stopped with the outbreak of the Second World War and Japan's Occupation of Malaysia, and was reactivated on 1 September 1945. With the suggestion of experienced Vincentians from Holland, Br. De Grys and Br. Bergers, other parishes in Penang set up their own Conferences.

In the 1950's, several Conferences were started in Kuala Lumpur. By 1963, there were 24 Conferences in the country. To group together all the existing Conferences and Councils in the country into a national body, 'The National Society of St Vincent de Paul' was formed in 1963.

SSVP Malaysia today consists of the National Council in Kuala Lumpur, an Archdiocesan Council, a Diocesan Council, 9 State Councils and 60 Conferences. It has about 700 members who continue to do the work, started by Blessed Frederic Ozanam.

Vincentian Spirituality and Vocation

'God gave me the grace to be born in the Faith. Later the confusion of an unbelieving world surrounded me. I knew all the horror of the doubts that torment the soul. It was then that the instructions of a priest and philosopher (Abbé Noirot) saved me. I believed thenceforth with an assured faith, and touched by so rare a goodness. I promised God to devote my life to the services of the truth which had given me peace.'

- Frederic Ozanam

Central to the Vincentian vocation is the desire for holiness, perfect union with Christ, and the perfection of love. The poor are our companions, and sometimes even our teachers on this journey towards perfecting our love for each other and for Christ. Under the patronage of St Vincent de Paul (pic, right), members of the society are inspired by his spirituality, thoughts and example.

Vincentians seek to emulate St Vincent in the 5 virtues essential for promoting love and respect for the poor: *simplicity, humility, gentleness, selflessness and zeal.*

