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Twinning

Information regarding Twinning can be found in the Manual, Chapter 2, Article 2.4, pages 46-47, in the Rule, Part I, Articles 4.1 – 4.3, pages 13-14 and on the SVdP USA website in the Member section under Programs/International Twinning. The following is a compilation of information found in the above-referenced materials.

A more complete discussion of Twinning is part of the Ozanam Orientation which all members are required to attend – first as new members and then every 5 years thereafter. The next Ozanam Orientation is scheduled on August 13, 2016 at St. Vincent Ferrer Conference in Vallejo.

What is Twinning?

Conferences and Councils help others in need, both at the national and international level. This is one of the activities most cherished by the Society. The awareness of acute poverty in a great number of countries and the Vincentian preferential option of the poor spurs Conferences and Councils to assist others with less resources or in particular situations. This direct link between two Conferences or Councils, consisting of sharing prayer, a profound friendship and material resources, is called Twinning. This activity contributes to world peace and to understanding and cultural exchange among peoples.

Twinning promotes spirituality, deep friendship, solidarity and mutual help. Funds and other material resources can be provided to enable a Conference or Council to help local families. Financial, technical, medical and educational support is given to projects which are suggested by the local Society and which encourage self-sufficiency. Even more important is support given through prayer, as well as through mutual communication regarding what has been accomplished and what is happening among Vincentians in each area, including news about individuals and families.

The Society urges Vincentians to consider undertaking a personal commitment for a particular period of time to work with Vincentians in other countries to form new conferences.

When disasters, war or major accidents occur, the Society launches emergency initiatives on the spot and provides funds for the local Society to help victims.

Members throughout the world, together with other communities inspired by the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul and those whom they help, form a single family. The Society maintains and develops close relationships with other branches of the Vincentian family, while preserving its identity.

The Spirituality of Twinning

We must create a culture of international solidarity and cooperation, where all – particularly the wealthy nations and the private sector – accept responsibility for an economic model that serves everyone, where the poor Lazarus can sit beside the rich man, sharing the same banquet and not feeding on



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scraps that fall from the table. *“Extreme poverty is a source of violence, bitterness, and scandal. To eradicate it is to do the work of justice and, therefore, therefore of peace.”* (Pope John Paul II, November 29, 1998).

The Society is a Christian family whose members share their resources. Twinning links brother and sister Vincentians in a special way; it cuts through language and cultural barriers. Through Twinning, Councils and Conferences implement the theological virtue of charity, heighten awareness of the Church, transect provincialism, and fulfill the Church’s preferential option for the poor.

What is International Twinning?

In keeping with the vision of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam to create a network of charity around the world, the National Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul offers an International Twinning program, whereby one Conference or Council in the United States reaches out to help another Conference or Council in countries lacking resources to conduct their works of charity.

The United States has been named as the lead country for the Americas, which encompasses Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Ozanam Orientation reminds us that the guidelines for a successful Conference encompass:

- **Having a spirit of solidarity with other Conferences and Councils. We are our brothers’ keepers.**
- **Each Conference should look beyond its own boundaries. They should participate in the National and International dimensions of the Society.**
- **Do not hoard for a rainy day. Trust God’s providence.**

Reflection

Has our Conference participated in Twinning? How has it changed the way we look at other Conferences and their needs both nationally and internationally? If we have not twinned, how can we begin to participate in the Twinning program?

For information about this training module or other training needs, please contact Judy Dietlein, Sacramento Diocesan Council Training Coordinator.