



The Top Hat

The Vincentian Voice of
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Archdiocesan Council of New Orleans

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THE TOP HAT....

Is a publication for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and it's designed to inform its communities of past, present and future services and events.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a Catholic lay organization that offers service to the needy in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam and its patron, St. Vincent de Paul.

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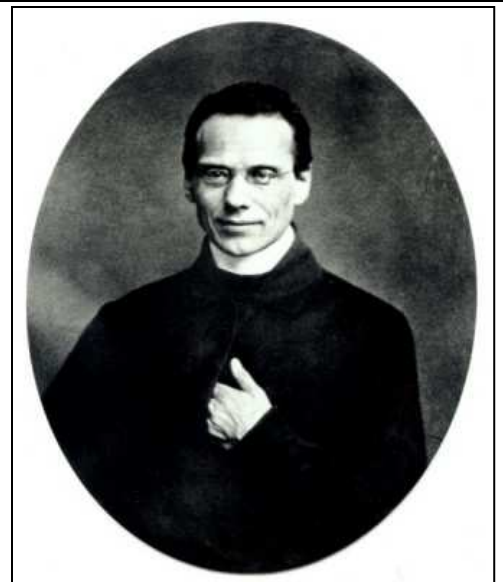
January 2012

Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos honored and remembered in January

Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos was a German-American Roman Catholic priest and Redemptorist missionary, born in Fussen Bavaria, Germany on January 11, 1819 and was baptized the same day in the parish church of St. Mang. Having expressed a desire for the priesthood since childhood, he entered the diocesan seminary in 1842 after having completed his studies in philosophy. Soon after meeting the missionaries of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer founded for the evangelization of the most abandoned, he decided to enter the congregation and to minister to German-speaking immigrants in the United States. He was accepted by the Congregation on November 22, 1842, and sailed the following year from Le Havre, France, arriving in New York on April 20, 1843. On December 22, 1844, after having completed his novitiate and theological studies, Seelos was ordained a priest in the Redemptorist Church of St. James in Baltimore, Maryland.

His availability and innate kindness in understanding and responding to the needs of the faithful quickly made him well known as an expert confessor and spiritual director, so much so that people came to him even from neighboring towns. Faithful to the Redemptorist charism. He practiced a simple lifestyle and a simple manner of expressing himself. The themes of his preaching, rich in Biblical content, were always heard and understood even by the simplest people.

After a brief period of parish ministry in Detroit, Michigan, he was assigned in 1866 to the Redemptorist community here in New Orleans.



As pastor of the Church of St. Mary of the Assumption, he was known as a pastor who was joyously available to his faithful and singularly concerned for the poorest and the most abandoned. However, his ministry in New Orleans was destined to be brief. In September of that year, exhausted from visiting and caring for victims of yellow fever, he contracted the disease.

After several weeks, he died on October 4, 1867, at the age of 48. His dedication to ministry with cheerful holiness makes him an outstanding clergy to this day.

Pope John Paul II beatified Father Seelos in April, 2000 (the Solemn Jubilee Year)

SVdP NOLA says goodbye to two beloved staff members

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Archdiocesan Council of New Orleans, and faith based organizations around the city and state mourn the loss of **Sr. Lory Schaff, CSJ**, who lost her battle with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma on January 21st. Sr. Lory Co-founded and taught at the SVdP Adult Learning Center from 2006 until her death, and was the co-founder of Hope House, here in New Orleans. Before Sr. Lory joined the SVdP staff, she taught at various schools, including Mercy Academy (locally).

She was not only an advocate for literacy, but a champion in the fight to end the cycle of crime, poverty and injustice. In 2010, Sr. Lory published *A Tale Seldom Told*-an account of her experience living in the St. Thomas Housing Development. She lived in public housing for nearly 15 years, and stated her book served as a voice for her neighbors-giving a glimpse of their struggles and triumphs. As a result, Hope House was established, addressing those issues of poverty.

On January 27th, family, friends, former students and colleagues filled St. Raymond/St. Leo the Great Church for a memorial service to honor her by sharing stories and memories. "Sr. Lory wasn't *like* family, she was family," Executive Director Deacon Rudy Rayfield said. "I would call her Mom; Sr. Kathleen-Auntie and I'd call Sr. Bonita, cousin."

A Christian Burial Mass took place on Saturday, January 28th, at St. Paul Church, in Baton Rouge.



Sr. Lory Schaff, pictured with an Adult Learning Center student

Mertes Troullier, noted New Orleans pharmacist and member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul volunteer pharmacy staff, died on Sunday, December 25th while visiting family in Birmingham, Alabama. He was 79. Troullier not only dispensed drugs, but also trained young New Orleanians for the profession. A life-long resident of the Crescent City, Troullier graduated from Gilbert Academy and Xavier University's College of Pharmacy. He served as a pharmacist for 25 years-which included working at the Circle Drug Store, which was located in the Circle Food Store, the landmark that was a linchpin of the New Orleans' African-American community. He then worked as a clinical pharmacist for the state Dept. Health and Hospitals for 10 years and worked in the Head Start Program's Annual Parent Training Workshop.

During the past year, Troullier helped the SVdP Community Pharmacy dispense medication to the homeless, elderly and poor residents of the city of New Orleans. In his role as preceptor for the Xavier College of Pharmacy, Troullier helped some 200 students transition from the classroom to the pharmacy. He was laid to rest on December 30th at First Grace Methodist Church in New Orleans.



Mertes Troullier, **third from left**, with Attorney General Buddy Caldwell, Spiritual Director Fr. Louie Arceneaux and the Community Pharmacy Staff

Special Works News- From District President Mike Champagne

It is with great pride that we announce the start of construction of our new West Bank SVdP Thrift Store in Marrero. I had the pleasure of visiting the construction site this afternoon with fellow West Bank Vincentians from Immaculate Conception Conference, Don Ory and Ray Lamy.

The store is expected to be finished in early August and open by Sept. 1, 2012. Our visit followed a meeting with the builder, FJ Arcement Construction Co. in Marrero.



As you are aware, the previous West Bank SVdP Thrift Store had an electrical fire on March 28, 2010 (Palm Sunday) and was burned beyond repair. After many months of discussion, site preparation and zoning approval, we finally got the go ahead to begin our reconstruction on the original Fourth Street site.

We would like to schedule an 'official' groundbreaking ceremony on Tuesday, February 9, 2012, at 11:00am. We plan on inviting various Archdiocesan leaders, Vincentians, Jefferson Parish dignitaries, media, etc.

Thanks to all Vincentians for their support and patience during this project. We'll do our best to keep everyone posted as to the progress of the construction.



2012 Fundraising Gala Date Confirmed

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul looks to continue the success of last year's fundraising gala- **Jazzin' on the River**. The 2012 event will be held **Saturday, June 23rd**, once again, aboard the Steamboat Natchez. Looks for updates via e-mail blasts and in future Top Hat Newsletters.

Want to share your conference news with fellow Vincentians? Spread the word in the TOP HAT— send info to Kelly Parker/Publications, at svdp@bellsouth.net

SVdP NOLA says goodbye to two beloved staff members, cont.

Mertes was such a joy to work with. He was a valued member of our Pharmacy team. He will be truly missed-

*Jackee Hall
Dir. Of Pharmacy Services, SVdP Community Pharmacy*



Sr. Lory was the sweetest, kindest, most generous person I have ever met. She did not judge you; She loved everyone that came to the center and who worked with her. She will live on through our hearts, because she touched all of our lives-

Sasha Williams/ALC Student



Both Mertes Troullier and Sr. Lory Schaff were honored during the annual SVdP volunteer appreciation dinner, held in December 2011

In the Spirit of Service



On January 27th, students from Ursuline Academy spent the morning with the staffs of both Downtown & Jefferson Thrift Stores. The students helped sort and pack clothing /household items and assisted the staff. Special thanks to the young ladies of UA for volunteering their time at the SVdP Thrift Stores.

Conference News

St. Matthew the Apostle Conference of the SVdP congratulates **Merle Guerin** as its Conference President.

East Jefferson District President Karen Kirchgraber expresses sincere thanks to **Bill Siegel** for his past service as President and his continued service as Vice President at St. Matthew the Apostle.

Elaine Selle, St. Tammany District President welcomes **Bobby O'Brien** as Conference President at **Holy Family Conference** in Franklinton.

"I have not the honor to be a theologian, but I have the happiness to be a Christian; the happiness to believe and the ambition to devote my mind, my heart, and all my strength to the service of truth."

-Frederic Ozanam

National News- From the National Council

Friends for the Poor Grant Winners Announced

Congratulations to the following Conferences in the East and Northeast Regions that were awarded Friends of the Poor[®] grants:

- St. Benedict, Mohnton , Penn.
 - St. Issac Jogues, Marlton , N.J.
 - St. Mary, Nanty Glo , Penn.
 - Immaculate Conception, Malden , Mass.
 - Our Lady of Hope, Ipswich , Mass.
 - St. Anne Parish and Shrine, Fall River , Mass.
 - St. James, Salem , Mass.
- St. Patrick, Somerset , Mass.

Friends of the Poor[®] is an original National Council program to provide direct funding for services to those in need and living in poverty in the United States. Funding for the FOP grants comes from the general public and SVdP's 172,000-plus members around the country, and is targeted to specific needs in each community that are above and beyond those resources available to Conferences. The FOP Grant Program provides a minimum of two grants per region, and will not exceed \$10,000 per region. No one grant request can exceed \$5,000.

The schedule for the next round of FOP grant submissions will is from **February 12 to February 29**, and will be open to Conferences in the **North Central** and **Southeast Regions**.

IMPORTANT: Conferences that do not include all the material and information requested on the grant application will be disqualified from consideration for that period.

For more information, contact Gerri Sample/ Development Administrative Associate at gsample@svdpusa.org

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Save the Date

The SVdP Fundraising Gala
to benefit the Community
Pharmacy and the Adult
Learning Center-
June 23, 2012 aboard the
STEAMBOAT NATCHEZ

Condolences-

To **St. Ann Conference
President Betty Davis**,
who lost her 21 year-old
grandson, Devin
Henderson, in an
accident on January 3rd.
Devin leaves behind a
wife and 3 month old
son.

Please remember to
keep Betty and her
family in your thoughts
and prayers.

Letter From The Spiritual Director of The Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Fellow Vincentians,

We all know, from our name, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, that the person who inspired Blessed Frederic Ozanam to found the Society was St. Vincent de Paul. This Wednesday, January 25th, is the date of the founding of one of the wonderful organizations that St. Vincent founded, the Congregation of the Mission. St. Vincent founded the Congregation in 1625 in Paris, France. I am honored to be a member of the Congregation along with approximately 4000 other members, priests and brothers, throughout the world at this time.

Some of us may not be aware of how Vincent became active in creating what we have come to call today, the Vincentian Family. He started out as a very young priest, ordained somehow at the young age of 19. He apparently saw the priesthood as a comfortable way to achieve financial security and he did not originally envision himself as a promoter of people living in poverty.

However, God had other plans. In 1617 Vincent was working on the estate of a woman, whose children, he tutored and whom he served as spiritual director, Madame DeGondi. While in that ministry, Vincent was asked to hear the confession of an ill poor man. This turned out to be a turning point in Vincent's life for the man later reported that had Vincent not heard his confession, he would have died with serious unconfessed sins. The next day was January 25th, the feast of the conversion of St. Paul. Vincent saw this as a sign from God to begin preaching to the country people and encouraging them to reform their lives with the help of sacramental confession.

To carry out this ministry, Vincent recruited other priests. Eight years later, in 1625, he realized that God was calling him to form a congregation of priests, dedicated to the evangelization of the poor. In doing so, Vincent looked back upon that experience in 1617 as the inspiration from God for the foundation of the Congregation of the Mission.

Between 1617 and 1625, Vincent was active in founding the Ladies of Charity, the women of Paris, whom he invited to offer their financial and personal support to help the poor of Paris and other places. In 1633, with the help of St. Louise de Marillac, he founded the Daughters of Charity, to offer direct service to the poor. St. Vincent died on September 27, 1660 and he was canonized in 1737.

As we members of the Congregation of the Mission celebrate our foundation date this Wednesday, I ask for your prayers for the ministry we do here in the archdiocese and throughout the world. May St. Vincent and Blessed Frederic continue to inspire all of us as modern day Vincentians to be open to whatever ways he wants us to serve those living in poverty and to encourage others to join us in this rewarding ministry.

**In St. Vincent and Blessed Frederic,
Fr. Louis Arceneaux, c.m.**

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