



Greater Western Sydney members gather to Reflect and Renew

It was a lovely sunny day as Greater Western Sydney Central Council gathered at Winbourne Conference Centre in Mulgoa Saturday 1 February to start the year with time to explore the 'Why' of being a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society, connect and share with other members, and learn more about available services and resources.

A team of members and staff led by Leon Ross, Nepean Regional Council president, began planning in August 2024 with the desire, in Leon's words, "Have members come together to "start the year off with spirituality, reflect on the year ahead, enjoy fellowship, and generate energy and synergies".

The day began with Mass followed by morning tea, and then a rich presentation by Corrine Lindsell and Leo Tucker from the Mission and Spirituality Team. The 50 plus members attending appreciated the time to be together and the variety of input and discussion. The afternoon topics included social justice, safeguarding, MAVS, Youth, recruitment, and engagement with Society Housing residents.

Two members who attended the day share a brief reflection on their experience:

Larry Hegarty, Hills Regional Council President and member of Our Lady of Lourdes Conference, Baulkham Hills

"I found the reflections thoughtful, powerful and came away with simple ideas for putting into action in my service – 'What do you want from me?'; 'What is in my personal cup' that I bring to my service; how do I improve the life of those I serve to enable them to flourish, to renew their hope? If I can implement these ideas into my service, it may improve the lives of those I serve and make me a better Vincentian.

I was not the only one inspired by the presentations. One of the Conference Presidents from our Region advised me a few weeks ago of their intention to stand down from the position as they found it too stressful. By lunchtime they were rejuvenated and were returning to their Conference to seek to remove their resignation. That to me is the hand of God at work.

The presentations in the afternoon gave the opportunity to meet face-to-face some of the people in the Society that I have only spoken by phone and a chance to bounce ideas off and seek direction from them on issues on my radar for our Hills Region.

I came away from the Retreat rejuvenated and refreshed for the year ahead."

Georg Eberl, Holy Family Emerton Conference President

"It was great to reflect on our spirituality, mission and values - who we are and why we do what we do. Our spiritual reflection on the scriptures challenges us to use our talents to live the gospel as Jesus did through a spirit of radical inclusiveness, accompaniment and restoration. Our mission is to share the love of God and restore the dignity of those we help so they can flourish because everybody matters every day. Let's keep that cup in our logo full of love as this is the most important thing we can bring.

Our afternoon about our services and resources was very helpful. We also had opportunities to network and meet Vincentians from across the Central Council and workshop ideas to move with the times to improve how we meet the needs of those we help."