



MANY WORKS, ONE SOCIETY

We are all one Society, living our mission through a variety of works. In addition to Vinnies Shops and our Conferences, the Society operates 115 Special Works in NSW. Many volunteers assist in these services which provide specific care and support to some of the community's most marginalised.

ONLINE RESOURCES

There is a microsite dedicated to members and volunteers with news, information and resources. To have a look, type MAVS.vinnies.org.au into your browser and if you wish, sign up to receive their regular newsletter.

www.vinnies.org.au has information about the many works of the Society across NSW and Australia. All the publications listed below are available on the website and are also posted to Conferences:

- *Vision magazine*
- *Spiritual Reflection Guides*
- *Annual Report*
- *The Record: national magazine of the St Vincent de Paul Society.*

MISSION STATEMENT

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organisation that aspires to live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy, and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society.

VISION

The St Vincent de Paul Society aspires to be recognised as a caring Catholic charity offering "a hand up" to people in need. We do this by respecting their dignity, sharing our hope, and encouraging them to take control of their own

FROM THE RULE

"The members meet as brothers and sisters with Christ in the midst of them, in Conferences that are genuine communities of faith and love, of prayer and action. Spiritual bonds and friendship between members are essential, as is the common mission to help the poor and marginalised. The entire Society is a true and unique worldwide community of Vincentian friends."

– *The Rule, Part 1, 3.3*



"You must not be content with tiding the poor over the poverty crisis: You must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty, with the aim of a long term improvement."
– Frederic Ozanam

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Welcome to the St Vincent de Paul Society

INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS

SPIRITUALITY

The essential spirituality of the Society is faith in action. St Vincent de Paul Society members come from diverse backgrounds, experiences and beliefs. As they engage in service with other members the spirituality of the Society shapes their attitudes and actions. Some characteristics are described here:

- Inspired by the compassion of Jesus, members seek to be compassionate and respectful to all.
- Like Frederic Ozanam, who founded the Society with a group of his friends, members come to experience direct human relationships as being at the heart of Christian charity.
- Members serve with humility, authenticity, and without judgment.



THE CONFERENCE

There are various kinds of Conferences, all of them offering the hand of friendship. The Rule states that "A Conference may be established within any community such as a parish, town, workplace, ethnic or social group" (Part 3, Article 2). Most Conferences respond to calls for assistance from people in the local community.

VISITATION CONFERENCES

Whether it be in the home or at a Care and Support Centre, visits are always made by two members. Meeting people face to face offers the opportunity to get to know them and their situation. Members listen with respect and compassion and discuss how the Society may be able to help.

MEETINGS

"The Society is open to all those who seek to live their faith loving and committing themselves to their neighbour in need" (The Rule, Part I, 3.1). Members meet weekly or fortnightly for spiritual reflection and to share their visitation experiences. Other ways of supporting people or following up are discussed and news from regional meetings and other information is shared. All details of those we assist are confidential within the Conference.

VINNIES SHOPS

Vinnies Shops are a vital part of the St Vincent de Paul Society and are managed within their own administrative structure. They are a resource for Conferences and the people we assist. During their visits, members sometimes prepare a voucher for a person to receive goods from the Shops.

FORMATION AND TRAINING

All new members receive the Vincentian Visitation Guidelines booklet from their Conference. This resource outlines good practice in visitation and Conference activities. In addition, required training sessions are offered locally with an emphasis on collegiality and shared learning.

Essential training for new members includes:

- Welcome Friend
- Conference Visitation Toolkit
- Effective Visitation I

Additional courses include:

- Effective Visitation II
- Budget Counselling
- Understanding Poverty
- Managing Challenging Behaviours
- Practical Listening Skills
- Mental Health Awareness

Speak with your Conference President or Regional Council about your interests in additional training.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All members receive a copy of the Society's Code of Conduct which reflects our commitment to working together to promote an ethical, just, caring and responsible working environment for all.