Board President Appoints New Treasurer

Ed Leszynski, SVDP Board President, announces he has appointed Michael Cuellar to the position of Board Treasurer.

Mike is originally from Silver Spring, MD where his family was members of St. Bernadette parish. They moved to Pittsburgh when he was 10. There he attended St. Thomas More Catholic School and became a Pittsburgh Steelers fan.

When he was 25 he moved to Cleveland and met Colleen, who would become his wife. They have two daughters, Rachel and Julia. The family attends St. Bernadette parish in Westlake.

Mike graduated with a BSBA from Duquesne Univ. in Pittsburgh. He received his JD degree from Cleveland Marshall College of Law and was admitted to the Bar. He then went on to earn his LMM (Master in Tax Law) from Case Western Reserve University, College of Law.

Mr. Cuellar has worked as Sr. Tax Counsel at TRW Inc., Sr. Tax Counsel and International Tax Director at Danaher Corp., and is currently employed at Lincoln Electric Co. as their International Tax Director.

Mike has served as Tax Counsel to several non-profit organizations including ROC 4NB Cure a small non-profit dedicated to raising funds for research into childhood neuroblastoma cancer, and the Westlake Parent Connection which is dedicated to raising awareness against teen use of drugs. Currently, Mike is serving as Vice-President of the Cleveland Chapter of Tax Executives International and will become its President this July.

Our Lenten Journey

Most Catholics pledge to do something different in Lent, often involving praying, fasting, or almsgiving. Maintaining a specific practice for forty days can be difficult. In truth, most of us will falter. Why is that so? What can we do? More fundamentally, what is the point of any Lenten practice?

We may falter because of our fallen nature, which makes us susceptible to the temptation of the devil. Make no mistake: the devil is real. He goes about the world seeking the ruin of souls and will try to convince us, for example, that we need not fast each and every day. So what if we miss a day? We then may find ourselves skipping multiple days, and before we know it, we may have completely abandoned our Lenten pledge.

What to do? Recommit to our Lenten practices. We can even consider doing something new or different. We can try a new prayer, such as "Come, Holy Spirit" or "Help me, Jesus." We can fast from some bad practice, perhaps a sin. Or we can be more charitable in our thoughts, words, or deeds. After all, almsgiving, which is rooted in charity, need not be restricted to donations to the needy.

Most important, though, we should consider why we do anything at all in Lent. The purpose of any Lenten practice should be to draw us ever closer to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As the depictions of the Sacred Heart remind us, Jesus gave us his heart, and he wants ours. As we do our best to pray, fast, or give alms, perhaps we can bring to mind the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Doing so will help us resist the temptations of the devil, maintain our Lenten practices, and draw closer to Jesus, not just for forty days, but for all the days of our lives.
WE DESPERATELY NEED VOLUNTEERS
To tag and price items at our new W. 25th Street Thrift Store.
Can you bring a friend and work 2 hours any
Monday through Friday between 10am and 2pm?
Call Cathie at 440 503-2462 or ckovacik@svdpcle.org anytime.

First Getting Ahead Program: We have a Date!!
The Getting Ahead in a Just Getting’ By World is a program based on the
Bridges Out of Poverty concepts, and is part of our National Office’s ap-
proach to Systemic Change. Through 16 sessions, we have an opportunity
to help participants identify their strengths and weaknesses, their opportu-
nities and challenges – and mentor them on their chosen journey to a bet-
ner and more self-sufficient life.

Rather than telling anyone what to do, we facilitate discussions that help
them analyze their current situation and dream a future life – which we
help them achieve, moving from where they are to where they want to be.

The first class in our Diocese will start on May 8th in Willoughby, facilitat-
ted by Sue Penicka (Vincentian at Immaculate Conception) and Bernie
Brooks (Lake County Council on Aging). The program was funded
through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development and supported
by local Conferences. There are still a couple of spots available, so if you
are in that area and know of someone who would benefit from it, send
him/her to Sue! (Click here for copy of Brochure)

I would like to congratulate Sue and the Lake/Geauga District Council for
taking the lead on this Systemic Change initiative, and wish them all the
best. Please keep Sue, Bernie, participants and supporters in your prayers
so that, through the grace of our good Lord, they may journey together
towards success stories!

In case you’d like to learn more, please call
Aneliz at 216-696-6525 x. 3560.

New West Side Free Clinic
The Islamic Center of Cleveland officially
opened its new Free Medical Clinic last
Wednesday. The Clinic is located in the
Mosque at 6055 W. 130 Street in Parma. The
clinic will be staffed by 20 doctors and will be
open Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 2
p.m. each weekend.

The initial welcoming ceremony was held in
the mosque’s gymnasium and featured speakers
from both the Muslim and Christian communi-
ties. The crowd of about 180 then went outside
for the official ribbon cutting ceremony. The
group was then invited to return to the gym for
refreshments and a tour of the mosque.

Free service will be provided to needy men, women and children who are
not covered by insurance, or inadequately covered by present insurance.
Clients should call 440-644-0581 to make appointments to see a doctor or
obtain information.

A pamphlet given out at the ceremony listed available services to include:
asthma and COPD clinic, diabetes education, sleep apnea and other sleep
related problems, behavioral health and screenings, depression, anxiety,
general health screening and education.

This generous new service by our Muslim brothers and sisters will be of
interest to our Conferences particularly in the West District, but the clinic is
open to ALL needy not covered by adequate insurance.

WHAT: St. Vincent de Paul Society 19th
Annual Kentucky Derby Party, which
serves as the organization’s marquee fund-
raiser for its network of hunger centers on
Cleveland’s near west side.

WHEN: Saturday, May 4th—4 to 8pm
WHERE: Great Lakes Brewing Company
Tasting Room (2516 Market Avenue, Cleveland)
across from West Side Market

WHY: The event will benefit SVDP’s
Westside Hunger Centers, which feed 3,000
Cleveland-area residents monthly.

Details: The evening will feature the
145th running of the Kentucky Derby on the
large screen, the opportunity to bet on the
race, a women’s hat contest, silent auction,
50/50 raffle, authentic Derby food and spir-
ts, valet parking and Cleveland’s own Great
Lakes Brewing Company beer.

Guest Emcee: Vic Gideon
Honoree: Dr. Akram Boutros,
President & CEO, MetroHealth

Hosted and Presented by:
Great Lakes Brewing Company

Tickets: Early Bird: $65 until April 14
After April 14th: $75
Visit www.svdpcle.org or eventbrite.com

SAVc THE DATE!
May 4th

Thank you to Greg and Diane Werner for their
generous donation of a freezer to St.
Pat’s Hunger Center. When donors such as
Greg and Diane take the time to respond to
the needs on the recurring Wishlist in Doing
Good it is an emphatic statement to the en-
tire community that, yes, we care and yes,
we can make a difference! It speaks to the
power of our newsletter and our collective
ability to truly “do good”! Thank you!

WE ASKED, YOU ANSWERED

April 2019
**And one more successful Ozanam Orientation!**

This month we had 16 Vincentians – new and seasoned – attend the Ozanam Orientation at Sacred Heart of Jesus parish in Wadsworth. Nine Conferences were represented and the evaluations were again highly positive, rating the day as extremely worthwhile (93%). We have heard from several attendees over these past few months and trainings that this day is not only for new Vincentians, but rather should be attended by seasoned Vincentians as well, as a wonderful way to reconnect with our Spirituality, our values and beliefs.

Here are a few notes from those evaluations:

* “I think old timers, or those in SVDP for a long time, (should) engage in this ‘retreat’ day/refresher.”
* “Worthwhile way to spend a Saturday.”
* “I will be happy to suggest/support participation by every Vincentian!”
* “I’ll encourage others to attend future classes.”

**Save the Date for Upcoming Orientations!**

Saturday, May 18th 9:00am-3:00pm St. Bartholomew in Middleburg Hts.  
Saturday, June 8th 9:00am-3:00pm Immaculate Conception in Akron

As requested in most Orientations, a **Home Visit training** is expected in the next few months. Please note that the **Ozanam Orientation is a prerequisite** to attend this new training.

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**Photo: March Board Meeting at Our Lady of Hope**

Beginning with the first person on the left, the attendees were: John Patton, Executive Director; Dan Brezovec, Executive Member; Mary Flanagan, West District President; Mike Birskovich, Executive Member, Ed Leszynski, Board President; Deacon John Travis, our new Spiritual Advisor; Greg Werner, Comptroller; Barb Leszynski, Formator St. Ladislas; Gary Sole, Formator St. Ladislas; Mike Zorena, Akron District President; Larry Lauter, Board Secretary; Theresa Golightley, Director Fund Raising, Al Schiazza, Lorain District President. At the meeting but not pictured was Emma Bednar, East District President.

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**DOES YOUR CONFERENCE NEED MONEY?**

If your Conference has need for money to help more clients in your area, or has a novel idea to assist more clients, now is the time to apply for a Grant. Applications may be downloaded from the SVDP web (**CLICK HERE**). Send the completed form to Greg Werner, Staff Comptroller at gwerner@svdpcle.org before May 30th. Ed Leszynski, Board President, has appointed a 5 member review committee to evaluate all applications. Maximum grant is $5,000 and checks for successful applications will be mailed by June 30th.

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**IN 2019 EXPECT TO FALL**

By Mike Birskovich

On every home visit this year, expect to fall. When we trip or make a mistake, we figure out what happened and make adjustments to not do it again. God designed us to learn from our mistakes and God’s merciful love encourages us to learn from our mistakes. A special part of the Vincentian Charism, through the continued contact we have with the poor, gives us insight and practice to become our better selves. On every home visit, each of us somehow could have been better. But do we slow down enough, pause enough, to look back upon those moments in which we faltered? Each contact provides an opportunity for us to recognize a personal weakness in our imitation of Christ and after some reflective prayer, determine how best to proceed in the next similar situation. Practice does make perfect and each visit strengthens and improves our imitation of Christ. Here is a suggested 2019 resolution using a 1-2-3 exercise: Approach every visit or contact:

1. **expect to fall**
2. **recognize a fault,**
3. **implement a change**

You’ll feel better for it!

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