



St Vincent de Paul Society  
SA  
*good works*

December 5, 2011

**RE: International Volunteer Day**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year marks the tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Volunteer.

The very foundation of the St Vincent de Paul Society in South Australia is our members and volunteers who are the key contributors in providing the Society's charitable works. In 2010/11 an estimate of hours volunteered to the Society totalled 431,000. This is an extraordinary effort, where we not only volunteer our time but also live out our faith by witnessing and assisting the people we serve through our good works. As well as this, we must always remember, that through serving the poor we serve Christ.

Our vocation to serve Christ through the poor is directly aligned to a comment Pope Benedict XVI made in November of this year at a gathering of Bishops who hold specific responsibility for charitable work and representatives of European charity organisations. Pope Benedict XVI said: "For Christians, volunteer work is not merely an expression of good will. It is based on a personal experience of Christ, Whose grace helps us to discover within ourselves a human desire for solidarity and a fundamental vocation to love. We also become visible instruments of His love in a world that still profoundly yearns for that love amid the poverty, loneliness, marginalisation and ignorance that we see all around us".

In 2010 through the Journey of Listening we heard from each region of the need for more members and volunteers to assist in the delivery of the Society's *good works*. In the preparation of our Strategic Planning process we identified initiatives to support and strengthen our member and volunteer base. Furthermore, in collaboration with Mick Beech, Volunteer Development Facilitator, members and volunteers have been working hard to develop an induction process for new people who may consider becoming part of the Society.

On behalf of the State Council, I would like to thank you for the important role you play in the Society. We are a volunteer based, mission driven organisation and without you we would not be able to serve those most in need. At a personal level, I am also very grateful to your families who generously support you in living out our mission "to live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy, and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society".

I look forward to personally thanking you when I visit your region in 2012 to present our Strategic Plan.

Your Brother in Christ,

Dominic Lagana  
State President