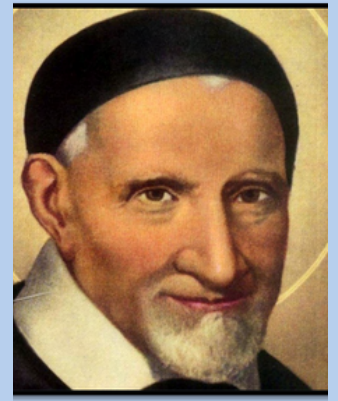




## St Vincent de Paul Canterbury Area Council SPRING NEWSLETTER 2025



### Dear Vincentians, Volunteers, Friends, Sponsors and Supporters

How great it is to see the spring blossoms again and with the temperatures starting to warm up, it certainly helps you appreciate nature bringing happiness to many.

Despite this, Vinnies continues to see each month the demand for its services increasing and so we are deeply grateful to our generous supporters and sponsors for your ongoing contributions – this makes our work possible.

To all volunteers in the shops plus our Conference volunteers who visit and support people in need, your dedication is central to our mission of helping the poor and vulnerable. Thank you!

Last weekend, Vinnies celebrated the Feast of St Vincent de Paul at a Festival Day held at Marian College. An interesting range of presenters ensured the day was most successful – read on and learn about what was discussed.

Also, at this event, a new Area President was elected. Retiring President Mike Moore passed the reins over to Bill Manning from the Selwyn Conference who will take over responsibility for the next three years.

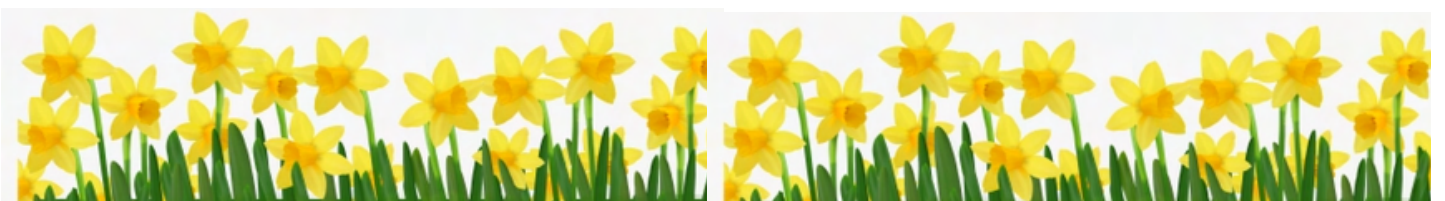
In this edition, you will find some interesting stories, including:

- An acknowledgement of the long service of Paul MacErlain and Dave Mallia
- The appointment of our new Retail Manager, Jessica West
- An update on Mid-South Canterbury who have joined the Canterbury Area Council

I hope you enjoy this edition. As always, I would love to receive your feedback and any suggestions for future newsletters.

**God Bless.**

**Mike Moore, Editor**



## New Area President – Bill Manning



May I firstly congratulate and thank the newly elected Area President Bill Manning for putting his name forward for this election.

Bill is currently the President of the Selwyn Conference having joined Vinnies late in 2023 after he retired from a successful business career. Born and bred in the Hawkes Bay, Bill attended St John's school in Hastings and on reaching the senior Forms became a member of Vinnies Young Adults Conference at this secondary school. One of their roles was to visit the older retired people at the Little Sisters of the Poor home in Hastings.

Many years later, Bill decided to rejoin Vinnies after hearing about the work of Vinnies at his parish church in Lincoln. He was only there a year or so and put up his hand for the Conference President role when the then President decided it was time to step down.

Recently Bill and his Conference members have been keen to establish a retail store plus foodbank at Rolleston. Bill – with input from a number of Vincentians – successfully developed a business case that was subsequently approved by National Board who were very impressed by the quality of Bill's work.

On behalf of all Vincentians, I wish Bill every success in his role as Area President. I am sure Bill will get great support from the Conference Presidents and the team at Vinnies.

## Jessica West – Retail Manager



Hi, I'm Jessica and I'm so pleased to join the retail team at Vinnies. I've hit the ground running!

I have a background in retail operations and a love for second hand shops. After maternity leave, I wanted to steer my career away from fast fashion and the excessive production of new items but I wasn't sure if I could find a retail position that aligned with my values, until I saw the opportunity at Vinnies. It has given real meaning to my work efforts. It's a busy and dynamic role and I'm enjoying the challenge and growth that comes with it. I'm looking forward to what's ahead, and to connecting more with the incredible bunch of volunteers that are the backbone of these stores.

Outside of work, you'll find me spending time with my family. We have a 1 year old girl named Sasha and two fluffy wee dogs that keep us busy. In our spare time you'll find us visiting cafes and walking the port hills. I'm grateful to add this role to my life and be a part of the mission of St Vincent de Paul.

**WELCOME**  
*Jessica*

# Festival Day 2025

## & Feast Day of St Vincent de Paul

Festival Day in 2025 was held on the Feast Day of St Vincent de Paul at Marian College. Some 80 Vincentians were present for this amazing event that included members from our Ashburton, Temuka and Timaru Conferences. The event this year was organised by Vincentians from the Rangiora and Kaiapoi Conferences lead by Jenny Carter and Maryanne Brown. The teams did a great job!



Proceedings started with a Karanga headed by Alvina with Polly Fisher leading the response. This was followed by a Mass in the beautiful chapel of the college that was celebrated by Fr Chris Orr who spoke of the work of St Vincent de Paul.

Following the formal welcomes, our National President (Gerry Stevens) spoke on the "Refounding" of the Society. His goal was for a strong, vibrant, spiritually focused and culturally inclusive Society that was committed to growing the love of God with our neighbours and those in need. So why is this needed? Our membership numbers have declined significantly over the 8 years to 2025 while the number of Conferences has declined by 25% over this same time. There is much to do if our Society is to survive. Our Mission is "to bring the love of Christ to people in need".



After an enjoyable morning tea, Cyrene, our Young Vinnies/Adults Coordinator introduced three passionate young members who took the stage to share not only why they joined the Society of St Vincent de Paul, but more importantly, what keeps them inspired and hopeful for the future. Their voices brought a renewed sense of hope and purpose to the theme of "Refounding."



Their stories reflected a deep desire to live out the values of compassion, service, and justice, not as distant ideals, but as real, everyday actions that make a difference. Each of them spoke from the heart, expressing their hopes for a Society that continues to walk with the poor and vulnerable, while also growing into a movement that listens to and includes the voices of the young.

They shared their hopes for:

- A Society that welcomes young people not just as helpers, but as leaders.
- More opportunities for hands-on service that connects with the real needs of their communities.
- A greater focus on issues that matter deeply to their generation.
- Spaces where young people can speak openly, be mentored, and take ownership of projects that align with their passions.

Their words were filled with energy, courage, and love, the kind of hope that is not passive, but active and alive. Their vision was clear: a Society that is bold enough to change, humble enough to listen, and strong enough to grow.



After lunch, Verity Vester - founder of 'Kai for the Community' - spoke about how the organisation supports vulnerable communities, including the homeless, those with mental health challenges, addiction, single-parent families & the elderly who are living in poverty. Each Sunday evening K4TC provides a 2-course meal that is provided by a dedicated team of volunteers and by collaborating with a range of partner organisations across Christchurch.



Next, Mike Daly introduced a session on 'Vinnies Membership' that focussed on the importance of developing a recruitment plan given that we face falling membership and difficulties in finding leaders. He noted that Canterbury was leading the way in terms of recruiting new members. We have established a 'membership team' that is able to assist Conferences with recruitment and has developed some 'best practice resources' that can help with the recruitment process. Over the past year, we have had some successful recruitment campaigns which gives the Society in Canterbury confidence for the future.

During the early afternoon, Keith Norton (Returning Officer) announced the new Area President for Canterbury - Bill Manning (Selwyn) while Mike Daly & Clodagh Ward thanked the outgoing Area President Mike Moore who had completed his 3-year term.



*thank  
you*  
**MIKE!**



The day was rounded off with Jenny Carter & Marianne Brown thanking all the presenters and summarising the day's activities and asking for feedback on the day to aid the organisation of next year's Festival Day.



Fr Chris exiting the Marian Chapel after celebrating Mass on the Feast day of St Vincent de Paul



Jenny Carter thanking Alvina



Alvina - who led the Karanga - and her daughter



Bill Manning  
Newly elected  
Area President



Outgoing President Mike Moore thanking Vincentians for their support.

Dave and Robyn Mallia  
being thanked for  
50 years service to  
Vinnies by our  
National President  
Gerry Stevens.



A big “thank you” to Jenny Carter, Maryanne Brown and Vicki Turnbull and all the amazing team from the Rangiora & Kaiapoi Conferences that hosted the occasion. Outgoing President Mike Moore, on behalf of all present, thanked Jenny, Maryanne & Vicki for their organisation and the considerable efforts of their volunteers on the day.

***From all attendees, our grateful appreciation to all who volunteered making for an outstanding day!***



THANK YOU  
to an  
amazing team  
from  
Rangiora  
and  
Kaiapoi  
Conferences  
for a  
wonderful day

FESTIVAL DAY  
2025



## Changes in Conference Leadership

Over the past year, there have been several changes of Conference President at Beckenham, Cathedral and Addington and recently Hoon Hay-Halswell. The Society has welcomed Rob Kent, Maurice Lawlor and Robert Tait in previous newsletters, and now it is time to welcome David Taylor from the Hoon Hay-Halswell Conference.

David has been a Vincentian for 8 or so years including being the deputy to the Conference President (Pat Watson). He has also been an active member in parish matters and some years ago, was the President of the local Parish Council.

### **A big thank you to Pat Watson for her leadership of the Conference.**

She recently stepped down as Conference President after completing her term of 6-years. Pat also held the role of Conference Treasurer before swapping roles with the then President Paul Gilroy. Pat will continue in her work as a Vincentian.

**THANK YOU!**

# Welcome to Mid-South Canterbury Conferences

Recently, the conferences in the former Mid-South Canterbury Area Council have merged with Canterbury Area Council. There are 4 conferences in this area, and we welcome each of the Conference Presidents and members to the Canterbury team and do hope that with our resources we can assist you in the delivery of our mission. A big thank you to Mike Daly for helping to facilitate this merger.

The four Conferences and Presidents are-

## **Nola Hill, President, Holy Family Conference, Timaru**

The conference has 17 members including 4 associate members. Members visit the sick, the elderly and the house bound in our community whenever Vinnies are made aware of the need. Members also help with transport and assist those who are unable to do their grocery shopping or keep medical appointments. Provision of groceries and firewood has increased this year while electricity bills have increased the demand on families' incomes.



## **Frances Mulvey, President, St Mary McKillop, Opihi Conference**

We have 9 members including Associate members and are in the process of a membership drive - two people have shown an interest in joining, which is very pleasing.

A number of our members have manned the Temuka Combined Churches Foodbank throughout the year and also attend monthly meetings and help when required. We have been able to assist families with petrol vouchers, wood and food. At Christmas, grocery vouchers have been given out to families in need. Our members also help those in need by baking at Christmas. Young Vinnies are helping with the cleaning of the church while the pupils at St Joseph's School gave our members some lovely cards which was much appreciated.



## **Trevor Wall, President, Holy Name Conference Ashburton**

Our conference covers the entire Ashburton District with an area of more than 5,000 square kilometres. In recent years, there has been a large increase in the number of people from other countries, particularly India, Philippines, South America and Pacific countries living in the region. The conference has some 30 members, with small groups of associate members in Methven and Rakaia who respond to need in those areas. The Society shop in Ashburton is the main source of financial support and has a team of 30 volunteers and a manager who operates the shop.



All requests for help are received through a helpline staffed by conference members rostered on in pairs for a week at a time. We are currently receiving 50 to 60 calls a month (about 230-250 people) and this is steadily increasing.

## **John Foley, President, Waimate Conference**

The Conference has a small membership and covers a largish rural area with a high number of new settlers present.

No photograph received at time of print.



Vinnies  
good works



# Recognising Extraordinary Service to the SVDP Society

## Dave Mallia - SVDP Service



This year Dave completes fifty years as a volunteer with the Society of St Vincent de Paul. He joined up as a member back in 1975 at St Partrick's Parish, Wainuiomata in Wellington.



Dave with Robyn his wife receiving congratulations from Gerry Stevens (our National President).

In 1979, Dave and his family made the move to Christchurch, and he immediately joined the St Pauls Conference at Dallington, a few years later he was instrumental in getting a conference at Holy Family Parish, Burwood up and running.

Following the amalgamation of parishes, Dave joined the St Francis of Assisi Conference in Mairehau before moving over to the current Cathedral Conference where he continues to be an active member.

Following the amalgamation of parishes, Dave joined the St Francis of Assisi Conference in Mairehau before moving over to the current Cathedral Conference where he continues to be an active member.

Over the fifty years as a volunteer and member Dave has held several roles within the conferences that he has been a member of, including President at Dallington, Burwood and Mairehau. Dave's commitment to service has had a significant impact on many lives and his generosity over such a long time is truly remarkable. The time, energy and passion given to reaching out and helping the most vulnerable in our community is a testament to his faith and personal values.

## Paul McErlain - an Acknowledgement of service to SVDP

Paul was born in Christchurch and grew up in Riccarton and he worked for an Insurance Company. In 1965 he married Pat and shortly after, they were transferred to Invercargill. While there, their 3 sons were born - Justin, Kieran and Bryan. Whilst in Invercargill, Paul was introduced to SVDP by a Vince Smith. Paul & Pat plus family returned to Christchurch in 1973 and purchased a house in 121 Idris Rd. They settled into life at St Matthews Parish where SVDP was active in the Parish. The willingness of Paul & Pat to partake in Parish activities was noticed by the chairman, Dennis Moore and he invited Paul to join SVDP.



The work of the Conference included not only the delivery of food parcels but also required members to visit prisoners, hospital patients and rest homes. Indeed, there was one rest home for returned service men in Office Rd and one of the residents - a retired Major in the Army - controlled the members as if he was still in active service. To be actively in Vinnies places demands on one's family and Paul was blessed to have the support for his SVDP work from his wife Pat.

Her support was not a token nod of approval. Rather Pat being a woman of many talents, accompanied Paul on his visitations and was able to see the need of the families requiring assistance. As a result, she volunteered in the SVDP shop and continues to do this today

Today, both Paul & Pat continue to visit homes and look after some of these people. The words of a Vincentian at Holy Trinity - "Paul you have journeyed with us and we are forever grateful for the support and guidance that you have given us. We pray Paul that you and Pat will be blessed with good health as you visit family and friends."

# Strut with Purpose



## The Young Vinnies Fashion Show Fundraiser for the “Society of St Vincent de Paul”

“Villa Maria College and Marian College’s Young Vinnies are proud to present a collaborative Young Vinnies Fashion Show Fundraiser, a vibrant celebration of creativity, compassion, and community action. To be held on Friday 24th October, 2025, at the Villa Maria College Auditorium - this event showcases the talents and passion of our students, who have poured their time and energy into transforming donated clothing through upcycling and design. Their work proves that fashion can be both ethical and impactful.

More than just a runway show, this initiative is a testament to the values our Young Vinnies hold dear: social justice, sustainability, and service. Their dedication and hard work reflect a strong commitment to the mission of the Society of St Vincent de Paul. Every dollar raised will go directly to helping those in need, providing food, clothing, and hope during the Christmas season.

This event is made possible not only by our amazing Young Vinnies but also by generous local sponsors who share our vision. Their support underscores the importance of empowering young people to take meaningful action for causes they believe in, and to use their voices and talents to advocate for real change.

**Support the Young Vinnies Fashion Show Fundraiser!**

Buy your tickets now and come see the next generation of Vincentians in action on the runway.

**To purchase tickets, please contact our Vinnies Youth Coordinator: Cyrene Tionko [cyrene@svdpcanterbury.nz](mailto:cyrene@svdpcanterbury.nz)**

**Every dollar raised  
will go directly to  
helping those in need,  
providing food,  
clothing, and hope  
during the  
Christmas season.**



## Obituaries

Let us pray for past members of the St Vincent de Paul Society who have died recently.

Please pray for the soul of Charles Edward Consedine August 4th, 2025.  
Charles was a Vincentian that had served in the Addington Conference, Sacred Heart Parish.

Good and faithful servant, rest in peace. A Funeral Mass was celebrated at Sacred Heart Church, Spencer Street Addington, on Wednesday, August 20, at 10.30am, Please keep Charles, wife Raelene and extended family in your prayer.

Eternal rest grant unto Charles, O Lord.  
And let perpetual light shine upon him.  
May he rest in peace. Amen.



*For all our fellow Vincentians, who were laid to rest in 2025*

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May the souls of the faithful departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

**Amen**

### **Blessing**

As we go on our way,  
May God go with us.  
May he go before us to show the way,  
Behind us to encourage,  
beside us to befriend,  
above to watch over,  
And within to give us his peace. Amen

*Newsletter compiled by Mike Moore and Trish O'Keefe with contributions from Cyrene Tionko .*

**"...TO SERVE THE POOR  
IS TO GO TO GOD..."**

**St. Vincent de Paul**

