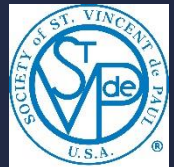


Civility in a Time of Political Strife

Ending Poverty Through Systemic Change
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul
April 2020 Webinar

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Opening Prayer

Let us learn, first of all, to defend our belief without hating our adversaries, to appreciate those who do not think as we do, to recognize that there are Christians in every camp, and that God can be served now as always!

Let us complain less of our times and more of ourselves.

Let us not be discouraged, let us be better.

Frédéric Ozanam,
Baunard, Correspondence, p.304



Agenda

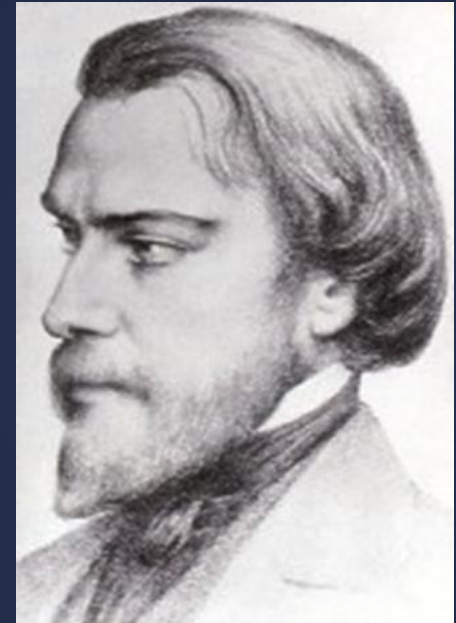
- Opening Prayer
- Civilize It! Campaign
- National SVDP Voice of the Poor Resources
 - State/Diocesan Representatives
 - Position Paper Updates
 - National Tool Kit
 - Third Thursday Webinars
- Closing Prayer

Frederic Ozanam's Address to the General Assembly of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

December 14, 1848

Gentlemen,
when the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul began, in 1833, political groups were as present as today, armed as today, irreconcilable as today.

It was the need to be united in the midst of a divided people that forged our first bonds. Is this need not more urgent than ever?



But we profess to believe that the science of welfare reform is learned less in books and parliamentary debates, than by climbing up the floors of the poor man's house, by sitting at his bedside, by suffering the same cold as him, and by drawing out the secret of his desolate heart through the outpouring of a friendly conversation.

Frédéric Ozanam

Paris, France, December 14, 1848



CIVILIZE IT



DIGNITY BEYOND THE DEBATE

2020

**PROMOTE CIVILITY,
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBORS,
AND BUILD COMMUNITY**

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Society of St. Vincent de Paul | Voice of the Poor Committee | 2020





**The world has grown cold,
it is for us Catholics to rekindle the vital fire
which has been extinguished.**

– Frédéric Ozanam –

As Catholics, we have a long tradition of engagement in the political process as a means of putting our faith into action. We are called to bring the best of ourselves and our faith to the public square—and yet today, many shy away from such involvement because our national and local conversations are filled with vitriol and harsh language, often directed at people themselves.

The Greatest Commandment

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"

He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

~ Luke 10:25-28

Civil Dialogue

A response to Jesus' call to love our neighbor

- “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10: 29)
 - *Parable of the Good Samaritan*
- Vincentians see people experiencing poverty or homelessness as “neighbors”.
- Do we see our neighbor in the person who disagrees with us?
- When personal attacks replace honest debate, no one wins.
- We need good, honest, civil dialogue.

Labels and Dividing Lines



Labels and Dividing Lines



Hello
my name is

Democrat



Hello
my name is

Republican



Hello
my name is

Pro~Choice



Hello
my name is

Pro~Life

Labels and Dividing Lines



Hello
my name is

Democrat



Hello
my name is

Republican



Hello
my name is

Gun Rights



Hello
my name is

Gun Control



Hello
my name is

Pro-Choice



Hello
my name is

Pro-Life



Hello
my name is

Liberal



Hello
my name is

Conservative



Hello
my name is

*Socialist
Democrat*



Hello
my name is

MAGA
Supporter

Tell us what you really think

Pick one name tag, a person with whom you are least likely to agree. Try to picture a real person who you think would wear that name badge.

Exercise:

1. Write **3** statements that you have said, thought, or heard about this person.

Reflect: Are the statements you wrote mostly about the individual or your perception of her/his views, beliefs, ideas?

Tell us what you really think

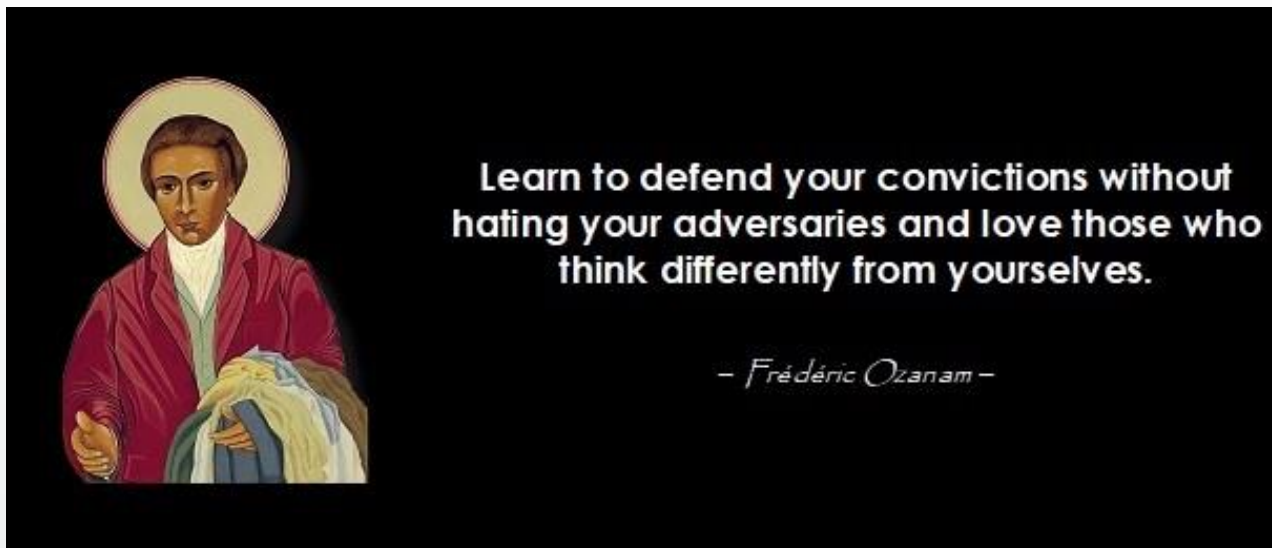
Pick one name tag, a person with whom you are least likely to agree. Try to picture a real person who you think would wear that name badge.

Exercise:

1. Write **3** statements that you have said, thought, or heard about this person.

Reflect: Are the statements you wrote mostly about the individual or your perception of her/his views, beliefs, ideas?

2. Write **2** positive things about this person.
3. Write **1** thing you may be able to learn from this person.



Civil dialogue is different than remaining silent in the face of disagreement.

An important ingredient to civil dialogue is commitment to the truth. We have the responsibility to speak truth with love.

We have an obligation to ensure that we come to conclusions based on data from credible and reputable sources, and that care is taken to avoid seeking the truth selectively, that is, only when it is convenient to us.



We must work throughout our lives to form our conscience through prayer, learning, and conversation.

1. Begin by **being open to the truth** and what is right.
2. **Study Sacred Scripture** and the **teaching** of the Church.
3. **Examine the facts** and **background information** about various choices and be discerning in where we gather information.
4. **Prayerfully reflect** to discern the will of God

Conscience is not something that allows us to justify doing whatever we want, nor is it a mere "feeling" about what we should or should not do. Rather, **conscience is the voice of God resounding in the human heart ...**

Source: USCCB. Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship. Washington, DC: 2015, no. 17



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Common

- Participants listen in order to refute the other side's data and expose faulty logic in their arguments.
- Questions are asked from a position of certainty. Those questions are often rhetorical challenges or disguised statements.



Civil Dialogue

- Participants listen to understand and gain insight into beliefs and concerns of the others.
- Questions are asked from a position of curiosity, to be sure we understand one another.





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Tips for Engaging in Civil Dialogue:

1. Listen first and seek to understand the whole picture.
2. Ask questions for clarification.
3. Use 'I' statements; pay attention to body language.
4. Listen to what feelings are present and pay attention to how you respond.
5. Summarize what you've heard and ask for feedback.

Opening Prayer

Let us learn, first of all, to defend our belief without hating our adversaries, to appreciate those who do not think as we do, to recognize that there are Christians in every camp, and that God can be served now as always!

Let us complain less of our times and more of ourselves.

Let us not be discouraged, let us be better.

Frédéric Ozanam,
Baunard, Correspondence, p.304



This person ... like me

Bring to mind a person with whom you disagree. Silently repeat any of these phrases.

- ~ *This person has a body and a mind, just like me.*
- ~ *This person has feelings, emotions and thoughts, just like me.*
- ~ *This person has in his or her life, experienced physical and emotional pain and suffering, just like me.*
- ~ *This person has at some point been sad, disappointed, angry, or hurt, just like me.*
- ~ *This person has felt unworthy or inadequate, just like me.*
- ~ *This person worries and is frightened sometimes, just like me.*
- ~ *This person wishes to be loved, just like me.*
- ~ *This person has longed for friendship, just like me.*
- ~ *This person is learning about life, just like me.*
- ~ *This person wants to be caring and kind to others, just like me.*
- ~ *This person wants to be content with what life has given, just like me.*
- ~ *This person wishes to be free from pain and suffering, just like me.*
- ~ *This person wishes to be safe and healthy, just like me.*
- ~ *This person wishes to be happy, just like me.*

This person ... like me

Now, allow some wishes for well-being to arise:

- † *I wish that this person have the strength, resources, and social support to navigate the difficulties in life with ease.*
- † *I wish that this person be free from pain and suffering.*
- † *I wish that this person be peaceful and happy.*
- † *I wish that this person be loved.*
- † ***Because this person is a fellow human being, just like me.***

I Pledge:

Civility

- To recognize the human dignity of those with whom I disagree, treat others with respect, and rise above attacks when directed at me.

Clarity

- To root my political viewpoints in the Gospel and a well formed conscience, which involves prayer, conversation, study and listening.
- I will stand up for my convictions and speak out when I witness language that disparages others' dignity, while also listening and seeking to understand others' experiences.

Compassion

- To encounter others with a tone and posture which affirms that I honor the dignity of others and invites others to do the same.
- I will presume others' best intentions and listen to their stories with empathy. I will strive to understand before seeking to be understood.

[Pledge [on-line](#), join others]

Resources

- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops [Civilize It!](#)



- Society of St. Vincent de Paul, National Council of the United States, [Voice of the Poor](#)



- USCCB. [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#)
- [9 Rules for Civility from the Catholic Tradition](#), by Bishop David Zubik, America – The Jesuit Review, June 26, 2018
- On Being | [Civil Conversations Project](#)
- Speaking together differently in order to live together differently
- [The Practicing Democracy Project](#)



CIVILIZE IT
★ ★
DIGNITY BEYOND THE DEBATE
===== 2020 =====

**PLEDGE
CIVILITY, CLARITY, AND
COMPASSION
THIS ELECTION YEAR**

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Society of St. Vincent de Paul | Voice of the Poor Committee | 2020



State and Diocesan Toolkit

Vincentian-focused
Helps build consensus
Walks through the process

Voice of the Poor Regional Reps

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Position Papers: The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, USA

1. Self-Sufficient Wages for Employees of The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, September, 2014
2. Affordable Housing for the Poor, February 2002*
3. Health Care for the Poor, February, 2004
4. Immigration, January 2016
5. Fair Wages, September, 2005
6. Restorative Justice, September, 2006*
7. Predatory Lending, April 2007*
8. Homelessness, August, 2007*
9. Hunger, September, 2008*
10. Education, April, 2010
11. Human Trafficking, September, 2010
12. Environmental Stewardship and Ecological Conversion, April 2018

**Under revision*



National Council of the United States
Society of St. Vincent de Paul
End Poverty Through Systemic Change

*Vincentian
Information*



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[Programs/Tools](#) > [Programs](#) > [Voice of the Poor](#) > [How Can You Get Involved](#)

Getting Involved



Begin and Sustain Voice of the Poor

In the spirit of Christian love and justice, the Voice of the Poor Committee upholds Catholic values by researching, validating, documenting, advocating and promulgating issues related to the condition of those living in poverty and the disenfranchised for the purpose of helping Vincentians to live their faith by acting knowledgeably and credibly as a unified body, speaking with one voice to build up the kingdom of God.

[READ MORE](#)



VOP Congressional Guide

You may be wondering if the Society's involvement in the political process is worth the effort. What can we really accomplish? Will phone calls, letters or visits to elected officials have an influence? We believe our Vincentian voice can make a difference. Elected officials in Washington, D.C., in our state capitols, and in our city and county governments are there because of voters like us. Their central focus is to respond to voter concerns, and they need to hear from us. The more interest generated by constituents, the more likely they will respond!

[READ MORE](#)



VoterVoice Advocacy and Email

The Voice of the Poor Advocacy page allows you to contact your elected officials regarding upcoming legislative actions. You can also track recent votes, important issues, election results and spread the word to others.

[READ MORE](#)

Building the Voice of the Poor Network

| Title | Category | |
|--|----------|--------------------------|
| Building the Voice of the Poor Network (July 2018 Webinar) | PDF | Download |
| Building the Voice of the Poor Network Recording | Link | Download |
| Building State Advocacy Program (Webinar) | PDF | Download |
| Building State Advocacy Program Recording | Link | Download |

State and Local Advocacy Toolkit

| Title | Category | |
|--|----------|--------------------------|
| VOP State Advocacy Guide | PDF | Download |
| I. VoterVoice Action Alert Template | Word | Download |
| II. VoterVoice Informational Bulletin Template | Word | Download |
| III. Regional VPs-VOP Committee-State Leaders | PDF | Download |
| IV. VOP State Leader Role Description | PDF | Download |
| V. State Leader Potential Organizational Collaborators | PDF | Download |
| VI. VoterVoice Sign-up Cards | Word | Download |
| VII. State Catholic Conferences | PDF | Download |

- ❖ Complete Toolkit
- ❖ Fillable Forms
- ❖ State Contacts and Potential Collaborators
- ❖ Resources to help spread the word
- ❖ Additional Organizing Tools and Resources
- ❖ Advocacy Guide
- ❖ Webinars

svdusa.org/members/Programs-Tools/Programs/Voice-of-the-Poor/How-Can-You-Get-Involved

Voice of the Poor Advocacy Center



National Council of the United States
Society of St. Vincent de Paul

End Poverty Through Systemic Change

ACTION CENTER

Actions

1 advocacy campaign →

Find Officials

Look up and contact your officials.

ZIP Code



Quick Sign Up

Use the form below to sign up for alerts.

Enter Email

ZIP Code



votervoice.net/SVDPUSA/home

Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace: A Prayer for Civility

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where uncivil words prevail, show me how to model love.
Help me remember the God-given dignity of all and invite others to do the same.
Show me how to build bridges and not walls and see first what unites us rather than how we diverge.
Let me seek to understand before asking to be understood.
Give me a listening heart filled with empathy and compassion.
May I be clear in sharing my own position and respectful and civil in describing those of others.
Let me never tolerate hateful ideas.
May I invite all to charity and love.
Lord, help me to imitate your compassion and mercy.
Make me an instrument of your peace.
Amen.

Inspired by "Nine Rules for Civility from the Catholic Tradition", Bishop Zubik

Let Us Know How It's Going

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