

WHY IN THE WORLD SHOULD I BECOME A VINCENTIAN LEADER? PART 1 – SPIRITUALITY AND FELLOWSHIP

Vincentians have a general misunderstanding of what taking on leadership positions within the Society truly means, especially when it comes to assuming the office of President of a Conference or Council. Members might not appreciate the benefits of assuming the role of a Conference or Council leader. With this in mind, we sought input from a number of Council Presidents around the country who were selected randomly. This paper is based in large part on their feedback and experiences. Believe it or not, leaders told us there were personal benefits to be gained from serving as a Conference and Council president and, of course, there are benefits to the Society which translate into being better able to serve those in need. Please read on.

Growth in Personal Spirituality and Fellowship

Our Mission says we lead men and women to join together to grow spiritually. As Catholics, we should all have spiritual growth as a priority in our lives. We are called daily to know, love and seek to imitate Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate servant leader. He tells us that without Him we can do nothing. As Jesus took Peter, He takes us and, although we can give Him little, He takes it and multiplies it as He did with the Fish and Loaves. As one takes on the leadership role, Jesus is there to guide and help. Leadership is a wonderful opportunity to grow closer to Jesus and He generously provides.

Local leaders told us that serving as the president of a Conference (or of a Council) provides a different platform from which to enhance a leader's own spiritual life and allows leaders a unique opportunity to promote spirituality to other Vincentians. It also allows leaders the opportunity to associate with other leaders and develop new friendships while at the same time sharing common experiences and exchanging ideas.

It allows leaders to broaden their perspectives and skills, some of which are even transferable to the job or business world. Serving in a leadership position allows a member to gain a greater appreciation of the worldwide network of Charity that was the vision of Blessed Frederic.

Leadership in the Society is based on an understanding of our Vincentian Vocation and our Spirituality. Its success is based on Servant Leadership and an ability to listen and promote group decisions. The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve and a conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons: do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society: will they benefit or, at least, not be further deprived?