

## **COUNCIL LEADERSHIP**

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The founders of the Society, Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his companions, were first and foremost friends. Following Christ's example in the spirit of Vincent and Frederic, today's Council leaders are called to be servant leaders. (Rule: Part I, Article 3.11 and Part III, Statutes 11 & 12) They base meaningful decisions on the consensus of their members, who respect and care for each other as well as the needy. The President is first their friend, and only then the implementer of the Council's responsibilities. In the Society, moreover, the office seeks the person, not vice versa.

Presidents must understand "the big picture" and take the initiative, coaching and encouraging members to understand, shape, and embrace their Council's objectives. They must be committed to the values and goals of the Society overall, and enthusiastic about them. They must study the Rule and Bylaws to understand the essential structure, operations, and functions of all levels of the Society. Most important, they must cultivate a solid familiarity with the lives and spiritual legacies of the Society's patron, St. Vincent de Paul, and its founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam. Presidents must then help all members develop this same understanding of our ministry.

Effective Presidents engender friendships among members of the Council and Conferences and take a team approach to decision-making. Rather than give answers, they ask the right questions. They harmonize discord, heal injuries, protect rights, foster talents, and delegate wisely. They are open to new ideas and collaborate with others to accomplish the goals of the local, national, and international Councils, maintaining communication with all levels.

A District Council President visits Conferences both to teach and to learn, going as a friend rather than a superior, observing the agenda, waiting for an invitation to speak, and offering suggestions prudently.

The President ensures that the Council has strong working relationships with the local Church and its agencies (e.g., Catholic Charities and Human Concerns), the wider Vincentian Family, and local agencies serving the poor. Though a Catholic lay organization with its own identity, mission, and voice, the Society is very much a part of the Church and its mission.

From the beginning of the Society, Vincentians were called to be public witnesses of and for the Church. Blessed Frederic Ozanam loved the Church and worked closely with the clergy and bishops in Vincentian efforts to serve and evangelize the poor. Likewise, Blessed Frederic and his companions worked with the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul and Vincentian priests and brothers (Congregation of the Mission). Today, the wider Vincentian Family includes other followers of the charism of St. Vincent de Paul. Escalating needs and limited resources call for greater collaboration among them all.

## **Responsibilities of Council Presidents**

The president is called on to:

- Facilitate board meetings and council meetings
  - Identify and appoint board members and committee chairs
  - Incorporate National and Archdiocesan Council goals
  - Make the work of the Society better known
  - Ensure Conferences have properly elected Presidents
  - Be an effective participant in the Archdiocesan Council which meets quarterly
  - Attend committee meetings and area meetings, when possible
  - Supervise the position of Executive Director
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- The president must be Catholic and in good standing with the Archbishop