

President's Address to the Toronto Central Council AGM

Saturday, September 28, 2019 at Blessed Sacrament

Good morning my fellow Vincentians.

This is my third Annual General Meeting as the elected President of Toronto Central Council. I am pleased to share information about this past year as well as preview the activity planned for the next year.

You are witnesses and participants in the legally required Annual General Meeting of a not for profit corporation now registered under the Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act and subject to the laws of Canada. This change was accomplished in the last year and was previewed to you at the last year's AGM where you approved our new By-laws for future adoption and which we have been confirmed with your vote at this meeting.

We have completed a significant governance change today. We remain a corporate not for profit charity with an annual budget of \$ 8 Million plus, with over 300 employees and professional staff, with real estate (camps and homes) and other assets and liabilities that exceed \$13 Million. We have been efficient in completing our duties and responsibilities as Directors and voting members of the corporation and I thank you for being here and participating.

I also want to thank some important people who make this Toronto Central Council a working and living organization that makes a difference in thousands of people's lives in the Greater Toronto.

First, I need to recognize the Directors of our outgoing Board of Directors, Elisa Wever, Maureen Kerr, Mike McGinnis, Margaret Moday, Anita Fernandes, Omar Ellis, Rocco DiSerio, Diane Bennett. I want to thank all of them for their commitment, effort and support during this past year as the Board, who worked through the process required for these governance changes. Your support has set the table for the new structure we have put in place to support all the activity of the Council.

I also want to thank John Menary and Maurice Cusack, the Nominating Committee who worked so hard to reach out to our Vincentian community to identify, recruit, interview and recommend the impressive group of

Vincentians who applied to become a Director of the Greater Toronto Central Council Corporation.

I want to thank Louise Coutu and the professional staff at Toronto Central Council and the senior managers of our Special Works (many of whom are with us today) from Supportive, Recovery, Emergency Shelter Housing and our camps for girls and boys. Thank you for the care and diligence you take every day to protect the most vulnerable people in our community. I have been privileged to meet with the professional staff who are responsible for serving in these “homes” and camps we call Special Works. A very impressive group of leaders. The work our staff are doing in the name of our Society is both brilliant and inspiring. You make us proud to be called Vincentians and we truly understand that these “Special Works” are part of our Vincentian DNA.

When I spoke to you last year, I set out 3 goals for the immediate year at Toronto Central Council.

I want to share with you a brief review on how we are doing on achieving those 3 goals.

My first goal was to change our governance model to better deliver on our Vision Statement which is to support and assist Vincentians at the Council and Conference level and at the same time continue to support all our “Special Works”. We have accomplished the first step in changing our governance model today by confirming By-Law #1 and electing a new 10 member Board of Directors. This new Corporate Board will by necessity focus on the “Special Works” and at the same time be the governing body responsible for the work Vincentians do in the 114 Conferences and 11 Particular Councils in the Toronto Central Council. This Board’s work starts when they will meet for the first time on October 22. We are clearly on the road to execution of the plan.

The second goal was the creation of a dedicated Toronto Central President’s Council (made up of the 11 Particular Council Presidents and now identified in our By-Law #1 as the “Vincentian Council”). This Vincentian Council is charged with the sole responsibility to strengthen, collaborate with and support the work of all 11 Councils and 114 Conferences in Greater Toronto.

We have jump started the work of this Vincentian Council over the past year by having 3 special Particular Council Presidents meetings dedicated to defining the challenges and the support necessary for the 11 Particular Councils and 114 Conferences. The Vincentian Council as defined in By-law #1 will meet for the first time officially on October 23. The work ahead is clear. The Vincentian Council will be dedicated to supporting the recruitment, training and development of Vincentians at the 11 Councils and 114 Conferences.

The third goal was to appoint **3 Working Committees and a task force** that will report to the Board and help to ensure the desired outcomes of Toronto Central Council strategic plan. Well so first things first. We have to have a strategic plan so step one was the creation of a

The Vision, Mission and Strategic Planning Task Force with the mandate to establish the vision, direction and strategic plan for the TCC.

This task force was formed in October 2018 and was responsible for the survey of Vincentians most of you completed last December. The information provided by you by engaged Vincentians in the survey has been important in animating the Vincentian Council to review and make recommendations for the revision of the training that Vincentians should experience. The Task Force will have new members joining from the new Board and the goal is to have a Council Board approved Strategic Plan by March 30, 2020.

Step two was to start up the 3 new Working Committees

1. A Spirituality Committee with the mandate to assist councils and conferences to appoint an engaged spiritual facilitator and to provide guidance, training and mentorship to spiritual facilitators.

The Spirituality Committee has been active over the past year, sponsoring 3 workshops to determine the obstacles to appointing spiritual advisors and to solicit Vincentians input on what would be required to have an effective spiritual facilitator in every Council and Conference. These workshops instructed the committee to sponsor 3 more workshops led by Monsignor Sam and Tayo Dada providing guidance and mentorship to those interested in the

Spiritual Facilitator role. The committee will continue to build a plan to fulfill the mandate to have 125 spiritual facilitators trained, appointed and seen to be important contributors to the spirituality of our Councils and Conferences in the GTA.

2. A Communications and Development Committee with the mandate to

- review all existing communications tools
- revise and update those that are useful
- develop new tools as needed to help conferences recruit new members, inform and educate parishioners, benefactors and funding partners about the work of the society
- encourage all to support the Society's mission of serving, protecting and speaking for persons who are poor.

This committee was put on hold over the past year but will be formed in the new year Chaired and peopled by experienced communications professionals discovered during our search for new Board members.

3. A Coordination Committee with specific responsibility ensuring direct communication between the Board and the Vincentian Council. This Committee will ensure the effective stewardship of the Society's name and reputation, the promotion of its ideals and purposes in the spirit of the Rule and the effective and successful discharge of the Corporation's many and varied responsibilities. Membership of this Committee shall comprise the Chair of the Board, the President of the Vincentian Council and such others as are mutually agreed upon by the Vincentian Council and the Board of Directors. The Coordination Committee shall meet at a minimum quarterly. This Coordination Committee required under our new By-Law #1 will be appointed by the Board and will meet as required.

I am fully committed to the objectives set out here and with your help and support will strive to meet these goals.

In the next months as we move the working committees and Strategic Planning task force forward, the Board will be reaching out to you specifically and through you to our full Vincentian community to take on some of the jobs that need to be done.

In 2020 we will need 3 new Corporate Directors with specific skills and talents to join the Board in September 2020.

We will need new committee and task force members for the work outlined this morning.

We will need and seek your active and thoughtful involvement and advice in identifying potential talent in your Conference or Council. With your help to identify talent, we will succeed in strengthening our committees and achieving the strategic plan. We will be asking your help again next year.

Yesterday was SEPTEMBER 27, THE FEAST DAY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

The SSVP draws much of its inspiration from Saint Vincent de Paul's thoughts and his works. Members strive, in a spirit of justice, charity, mutual help, solidarity with the poor, and by personal commitment, to ease the hardships of those who suffer.

I will be coming to ask you to help us in this endeavor. I believe that with your support, our members' talents and our collective effort, we can achieve our common goal of being better Vincentians in every way.

Thank you and may God Bless us all.