



Interview with Fran Thie, Conference President

As a Conference of SVDP, we have been blessed with three dedicated presidents, Pat Flood, David Campbell and Fran Thie. Fran, our current president, shared these thoughts.

Fran, what has been most valuable to the growth of our SVDP Conference at SJN?

We are fortunate to have the encouragement of a generous and supportive pastor, staff, and parish family. When our SJN conference first began, we depended on our own fund raising efforts such as bake sales and parish dinners to finance assistance to people in need.

Now, with Msgr. Garrity's emphasis on service to the poor as a focus of our faith, we receive generous monthly financial support from parishioner donations for charity. This enables our ministry to broaden its outreach in the number of families served, the ways we can help them, and the time we can dedicate to direct service.

What are the most pressing needs in our community and for our Conference at this time?

While we give priority to any needs of our SJN family, through the example of St Vincent de Paul, "our community" stretches beyond SJN's parish borders to the entire Knox County and even beyond at times. People's needs also go far beyond utility bills and rent payments. Applying for low income housing, obtaining family counselling, preventing homelessness, learning budgeting skills, overcoming language barriers -- are all needs we frequently encounter. Our goal is not to just provide a quick handout but to walk with people and assist them as they maneuver their many life challenges.

Our clients frequently tell us their prayers have been answered. One client recently told me, when I called to explain how we could help her, that she had been "praying and praying" for somebody, somewhere, to show up for her.

The greatest need for our Conference right now is adding to our membership of dedicated, active, and compassionate people others who also want to make a difference in the lives of God's children in need.