

**Society of St Vincent de Paul Bathgate
Parish of the Immaculate Conception**

Annual Report of the Conference for the year 2014/2015.

Our members meet at fortnightly at 6.30pm on Mondays in the Hall. We made 220 visits to Hospitals, Nursing Homes and home visits this year. We have six Brothers, four of whom are employed.

The Bishops of Scotland operate a National programme for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults, All of our members have been through this Disclosure process. Our members can be contacted on our S.S.V.P. cell phone. The number is advertised weekly in the parish newsletter 07594 031 481. We receive and answer many calls for assistance on this phone throughout the year including calls from Armadale and particularly Blackburn, where there is no SSVP conference present.

We provide caravan holidays at Seton Sands where the Archdiocese has four large caravans. We had five families from the Bathgate area using our caravans .The families were taken to and from the site and given some pocket money, the cost was about £600.00

We sponsor several twin conferences of the S.S.V.P. in Kerala State, in Southern India and also three Technical Apprenticeships and five University Degree Courses. The Catholic Christians of Kerala have a number of parishes which are twinned with Saint Vincent de Paul conferences throughout Scotland, they are known as the St Thomas Christians. We in Bathgate now have 4 different schemes for sponsorship, the costs of these is about £850.00 annually.

We make a Mass offering for all the families who have suffered a bereavement in the parish. The conference provides a stipend for each bereavement. This year 43 Parishioners died, May God grant them Eternal Rest

During the Christmas period, about 30 Families received grants of money and groceries. We also distributed about twelve bags of toys

which were donated by a local family The amount distributed over the Christmas period was over £1500.00.

We also gave money to some young people living in Newlands House, a West Lothian Council Homeless Hostel at Hopetoun St Bathgate and provided Christmas parcels for seven people with learning difficulties some of whom live in a Social Work residence also in Bathgate. All the children attending the Easter Masses in 2014 , both pre-school and primary school received a chocolate Easter Egg , these were distributed by our members at the end of each Easter Mass , about 18 dozen eggs were provided .

Our members arranged a Remembrance Mass in late December for all the members of the families who had suffered a bereavement during the year. We wrote to them all inviting them to attend and light a candle for their loved ones, each family was given a Christmas cactus to keep or put on the grave and refreshments were supplied in our Hall after the service. About 120 parishioners attended

Three of our members attended the National Meeting in October this year at Celtic Park in Glasgow.

Our Conference is now an accredited member of the Trussel Trust Food Bank scheme, we are authorised to issue vouchers to enable recipients to visit a Food bank location and receive the appropriate allocation of food.

The Society is most grateful to all who contribute to our collecting boxes in the church every week, and to the many people who give us generous donations from time to time throughout the year. In total we gave away over £5000.00 in relief to help those in need.

J. Milligan Secretary