



As we respond to the merger of Parishes and our SVdP Conferences, this document may provide several tools to enable our members to better reach, educate and position ourselves with Pastors in the new “Parish Family Models”

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF A PASTOR

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. Developing and maintaining an active positive working relationship with the Pastor is a perpetual and HIGH priority for Vincentians.
2. The Pastor is the Gatekeeper to the Parish and no one is going to get access to parishioners unless he allows it to happen.
3. He may not really know SVdP or how your conference works, even if he says he does. The following topics will begin a conversation and a relationship.

WHEN IT IS TIME TO MEET

4. The first meeting with the Pastor (and Vicar?) should be led by the conference presidents. Each president of the merging conferences should be present. If needed, select one or two of your most knowledgeable, compassionate, and effective members to join you. If appropriate, invite the Parish Admin to join the meeting.
5. Start the meeting with a prayer.
6. Share the desire of the Vincentians to be an asset to the Pastor's ministry. Ask how the Conference can help him support his goals for the Parish.
7. Speak to the 3 essential elements of the Society -- spirituality, friendship, and service to the poor. Briefly expand on each one.
8. Talk about other ministries in the Parish that Vincentians are actively involved in beyond the works of the conference. This is an outgrowth of the spirituality and friendship fostered by the Society.

9. Give the Pastor an overview of the conference (number of Vincentians, basic needs requested by neighbors, importance of visits). Share how to contact the conference. If he has ideas, thoughts, or concerns, listen and take notes
10. Provide the meeting schedules of each conference, along with any Fun Committee events that are planned. Tell him he is always welcome to attend.
11. Ask how often the Pastor wants to meet (annually is the minimum).
12. Continue to publish information in the Parish bulletin. If this is not happening currently, ask for permission to do this.
13. Do not discuss finances at the first meeting. If the Pastor asks, be prepared with a high-level statement of annual income and expenses for each conference.
14. Do not ask for decisions or make requests and demands.
15. In closing, share a story of one or two visits and stress the importance of us encountering our neighbors, wherever it may be.

FOLLOW UP

16. Continue (or start) sending quarterly reports. Do not drop the communication. Based on the Pastor's preference, this could be via email and/or in the bulletin. Developing a consistent format for the conferences in the Family may be helpful
17. If you attend Mass as a conference, let the Pastor know in advance.
18. Ensure the conference is working to become a recognized presence in the Parish (through prayer, service, and friendship).

We want our Pastors to see and to know Vincentians as engaged parishioners that are a source of Christ's Light and Love inside and outside the Parish community.

The overall goal with the Pastor is to create a harmonious relationship that builds trust and a deeper collaboration where he sees and senses the Spiritual benefits of a thriving conference in his Parish.