Duties Of A Conference President

The President develops working relationships with the Pastor/Pastoral team, the Parish Council, District and Diocesan Councils, and with agencies and governmental welfare organizations. The President represents the Conference in contacts with religious and civil authorities.

There are a wide variety of Presidential duties. They are as follows:

- Appoints Officers: Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- Appoints Spiritual Advisor.
- Arranges a meaningful and interesting agenda for all meetings.
- Ensures meetings start and end with prayer. Spiritual readings may be included in the meeting, with sharing of the meaning of that reading among those present. (The emphasis is always on the spiritual development of the members.)
- Makes sure minutes of all meetings, as well as the Treasurer's Report, are taken maintained and shared. Notes or minutes of the Archdiocesan Council and District Council Meetings should also be made available to all present since what is done there is also to be shared.
- Acts as a two-way channel of communication between the Conferences and the District Council; the President should bring to the District Council those things of importance happening in the Conference, seek help from the District Council when needed, reflect Conference concerns to the District Council and District Council concerns to the Conference.
- Ensures pins, books of the Society’s Rule and the United States Society Manual, plus other printed Society materials, are available from the District Council or obtained through the National Council Office in St. Louis for the Conference members.
- Conducts meetings weekly, or more than once a month to ensure that the Spirituality of the membership is enhanced.
- Seeks Aggregation (official Society membership) for the Conference through the District, Diocesan and National Councils.
- Attends all Conference meetings and District Council meetings or arranges for a Proxy to represent the Conference. (See below.)
- Reports: It is the responsibility of the Conference President to submit the Annual Conference report to the District Council.
Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Summary of the Duties of Conference Officers

President:
- Elected for a three-year term which may be renewed once, with a three-year interval between terms.
- Attends to the overall progress of the Conference consistent with the Rule and Bylaws and Policies of the Society.
- Encourages good attendance at Conference meetings.
- Facilitates membership recruitment.
- Member of the District Council and responsible for the representation of the Conference at those meetings.
- Develops a working relationship with the Spiritual Advisor, Pastor, the Parish Council and the Human Concerns Committees.
- Represents the Conference before religious and civil authorities.
- Appoints Officers: Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- Appoints the Spiritual Advisor.

Vice President:
- Replaces the President at Conference, Council and other meetings when the President is unable to attend.
- Collaborates constantly and effectively with the President.
- Organizes the election of the next President.

Secretary:
- Prepares the minutes of the Conference meetings.
- Prepares and submits the quarterly report of the activities of the Conference to the District Council. (Secretary’s Minute Book available through the National Council Office.)
- Keeps an updated list of members with current addresses and telephone numbers.
- Sends names and addresses of member to the Diocesan Council or directly to the National Council of the United States for receipt of the Society’s Ozanam News.

Treasurer:
- Responsible for safekeeping of Conference funds.
- Presents bills for approval of payment.
- Keeps an accurate and appropriate record of all receipts and expenditures. (Treasurer’s Handbook and Journal available through the National Council Office.)
- Arranges for an annual "audit" of the Conference books by two members delegated by the Conference or by a qualified outside person.

Spiritual Advisor:
- Responsible for the development of the spiritual life of the members to enable them to better understand the meaning of charity and its practical application toward those in need. (Formation materials are available through the National Council Office.)

Note: All offices terminate when a newly elected President takes office.
Conference President Responsibilities to District Council

The Conference President is automatically part of the District Council and is a full voting member of this Council, responsible for its direction, its works and its relationship to the Conference. It is necessary that the Conference President be involved actively and prayerfully in all the activities undertaken by the District Council. Attendance at these meetings is required. Conference Presidents vote for and elect the District Council President.

Any member of a local Conference should be willing to serve in any office or function that is commensurate with the individual's talents. A District Council is always in need of effective leadership.

Make the Work of the Society Known

This is an important function of the Conference President because it

- brings the Society to the attention of those who need our help.
- is vital in assisting parish Conference fund raising efforts.
- aids the Extension efforts of the Society.
- assists the Pastor and parish in serving its poor and needy.

The Conference President must counteract the impression, held even by many Vincentians, that the Society is supposed to operate in silence and anonymity. The Society does operate in confidentiality, however, in regard to the identity of the people we serve.

The Conference President can make the work of the Conference known through:

- parish bulletins
- signs and announcements that tie in with special collections
- publishing an Annual Report which summarizes the Conference's parish work and sharing it with the Pastor and the parish
- regular communication with parish council and parishioners.

Relations with other Organizations

The Conference President can be an important channel of communication between the members of the Conference and service-providing organizations. Because one important role of the Conference is that of referral, the Conference President can help make sure that the Conference finds out about the many governmental and private programs available to those we serve. Some ways of accomplishing this are:

- coordinating the compilation of directories of organizations and/or programs serving the needy;
- arranging for speakers at meetings of the membership; and
- encouraging contact with services that offer opportunities for person-to-person Vincentian service. On the other hand, Conference Presidents can alert local agencies and churches to the kinds of help Vincentians can provide.
Duties Of A Conference Vice President

The **Vice President** replaces the President at Conference, Council and other meetings when the President is unable to attend. In keeping with this concept of delegated responsibility, the Vice President should be charged with specific duties. The designation of two such officers can be useful when Conference membership is fairly large.

As many Conferences do, the First Vice President can be charged with developing SVDP activities. Responsibilities then may be divided among Conference members. The Second Vice President can devote time and energy to the recruitment of new members. The Vice President(s) also organize(s) the election of the next President.

Duties Of A Conference Secretary

The **Secretary** carefully prepares the minutes of the meetings and reports thereon. The Secretary is responsible for keeping the records and for the statistical and clerical work of the Conference. Other responsibilities include: preparing and submitting quarterly reports and maintaining accurate and complete membership information. Current mailing information on all members for the *Ozanam News* must be submitted to the National Council Office. (See packet information sheet regarding mailing list requirements.) A Secretary's Minute Book is available through the National Council Office. It includes information on Conference aggregation, membership forms, minute sheet forms and instructions, case record sheets and instructions, and a variety of general information on the Society's Rule and organization.

Duties Of A Conference Treasurer

The **Treasurer** is responsible for the Conference's budget and for keeping accurate and appropriate records of all receipts and expenditures. Two members delegated by the Conference or by a qualified person, organization or District Council should audit the accounts at least once a year. The Conference's financial records must be kept up-to-date so that the financial condition of the Conference may be determined at any time. The use of the Society's *Treasurer's Handbook and Journal* is strongly recommended. (It may be purchased through the National Council Office.) Funds belonging to the Society must be kept separate from the Parish accounts and the Treasurer's personal assets. Conference funds should be deposited regularly and promptly in a bank account in the Conference's name. Only Conference officers should sign checks. Two signatures are strongly recommended.

A bank report and balance should be submitted at least quarterly and verified by the President or an audit committee of two members. For auditing purposes, invoices and statements are obtained before any disbursement is effected. Whenever possible, all payments should be made by check. The credit rating and reputation of the Conference must be safeguarded and, therefore, all just accounts should be paid when they are due.
Duties Of A Conference Spiritual Advisor

Each Conference should have Spiritual Advisor who may be a priest, brother, deacon, nun or lay person assigned to this task. The Conference meeting as a spiritual gathering is enhanced by the presence of a Spiritual Advisor whose role is to help the development of the spiritual life of the members and to enable them to better understand the meaning of charity and its practical application toward those in need. The presence of the Spiritual Advisor strengthens the bonds between the spiritual activities of the Conference and the apostolic activity of the Church. The National Council offers several publications which may assist the Spiritual Advisor in his/her role in providing a meaningful spiritual experience for the Conference membership. Please see the SVdP Catalog from the National Council for publication descriptions.