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**Title of Thesis:**

**An assessment of the impact of the charitable work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
(Port of Spain Conference) on the lives of the street homeless in the City of Port of Spain  
from 2018 to 2020.**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever!  
Let Israel say,  
“His steadfast love endures forever.”  
Let the house of Aaron say,  
“His steadfast love endures forever.”  
Let those who fear the Lord say,  
“His steadfast love endures forever.”  
—Ps 118:1-4*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper evaluates the impact of the charitable work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul on the lives of the street homeless in the city of Port of Spain from 2018-2020, showing that the charitable work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul over the years has effectively impacted the lives of the street homeless people in Port of Spain by lifting them out of poverty, promoting their human dignity, and providing them with basic needs (water, food, shelter, and more). The result of this evaluation, based on both primary and secondary data, shows that the charitable work of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul must be supported by the society and donors on a daily basis so that it can continue to restore and improve the lives of the street homeless in the city of Port of Spain.

**Keywords:** Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Port of Spain, Charity work, Homeless

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## INTRODUCTION

“Charity is not about pity; it is about love”

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Quote tab).

If Mother Teresa of Calcutta's statement is correct, it presents a clear picture of what charity is all about, and how a charity that seeks to change a society or the globe must do so out of love, not pity. The Conference of Charity, created in Paris in April 1833 by Frederic Ozanam, with a few younger men, and Catholic propaganda, gave birth to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (“*The Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul*” 274). The Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul had only one goal: to pray, reflect, and act in the footsteps of its’ patron saint. St. Vincent de Paul. As a result, the members of the society from all around the world band together, driven by the foundational aim to "serve Christ among the impoverished" (Provence 3).

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has developed tremendously around the world since its founder was moved by the Holy Spirit to organize it in 1833. With 800,000 members attending 48,000 conferences and 1.5 million volunteers and collaborators, the society now spans five continents and 152 countries. Every day, the society aids almost 30 million people all around the world. (“where are we SSVP Global”). The members of the society participate in what are known as "conferences". A conference in the society of saint Vincent de Paul is known as a unity of saint Vincent de Paul, it is made up of Catholic volunteers who give their time and resources to aid individuals in their communities who are in need. A conference (union of Saint Vincent de Paul) can take place at a church, a community centre, a school, a hospital, or a variety of other locations.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the society of saint Vincent de Paul began with a Roman catholic Bishop, Bishop Spaccapietra in 1854 when Trinidad was hit by a cholera epidemic. (*Society of saint Vincent de Paul Trinidad and Tobago. 15*). The Society was established to continue and expand the work of charity, to care for the sick and dying, and to bring the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and Frederick Ozanam to Trinidad and Tobago. As it is customary for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to work through conferences, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Trinidad also operates under conferences such as the Port of Spain Conference, Santa Rosa Arima Conference, San Fernando Conference, Saint Charles Tunapuna Conference, Woodbrook Conference, Belmont Conference and many others (32). Although these conferences have different commitments when it comes to helping the poorest of the poor, the Port of Spain Conference cares for the street homeless, referred to as the displaced, at the Riverside Plaza parking lot at 19 Main Street in Port of Spain. Currently, the Riverside Plaza automobile parking lot has been converted into a centre, which is now recognized as a residence for the socially displaced, where the Society of St. Vincent de Paul serves the homeless, by alleviating them from poverty, promoting their human dignity and providing them with basic needs such as food, clothing and much more.



Fig. 1. Riverside Plaza Car Park, Port of Spain, where the homeless are sheltered by the society of saint Vincent de Paul (Cholai).

## Rationale

The problem of street homelessness has long been a major concern around the world, and it continues to be a major issue in many countries today. A few barriers to resolving the problem of the homeless on the streets could be a lack of government support, a lack of societal support for housing the homeless people or a lack of information about how to deal with them. Although there are a number of charitable organizations and centres in Trinidad and Tobago that cater for the needs of the street homeless individuals, it seems that the problem has not changed, but rather the number of homeless people on the streets appears to be rising. Some viewers appear to see no need to assist a street homeless person on the street because they perceive a homeless person on the street to be insane or on drugs. In this case Sr. Leela Ramdeen, in her document *Building Relationships with the Homeless*, quotes Rajiv Gopie, a recipient of the President's Medal, who stated in an article titled "Tackling Homelessness in Trinidad and Tobago" on June 28, 2012, that

“Homeless people are not nameless or faceless. They are not sub-human or inhuman. They are human beings and citizens of Trinidad and Tobago just like the rest of us.” Therefore, the street homeless are persons who need assistance. As a Catholic Christian, my faith teaches me that a homeless person on the street requires assistance and that he or she is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). I am sure that by assisting the homeless on the street, I am reaching out to Jesus Christ, who was also homeless when He was born because "there was no room for him at the inn" (Luke 2:7). Therefore, this assessment, makes it clear that the street homeless person needs special attention because he or she is a human being, and that societies or institutions that assist street homeless persons require ongoing assistance.

### **Thesis Statement**

This paper will show that the charitable works of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Trinidad over the years have effectively impacted the lives of the homeless in the city of Port of Spain by lifting them out of poverty, promoting their human dignity and providing them with basic needs (water, food, clothing).

### **Methodology**

This research will assess the impact of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's (Port of Spain Conference) philanthropic activity on the lives of the homeless on the streets of Port of Spain. A literature review of written sources such as the Catholic social teaching on the homeless and Welcoming the Stranger, St. Vincent de Paul and the Homeless advocating for the well-being of the street homeless will be conducted, as well as oral interviews with people who have associated

themselves with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul on a different level, such as workers, volunteers, spiritual directors, and benefactors.

### **Parameters**

Although the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has many conferences throughout the island, such as the San Fernando Conference, the Arima Conference, and many others, and these conferences carries out different charities on the lives of different Homeless people - this assessment will focus on the street homeless of the Port of Spain Conference, because it is in port of Spain where majority of street Homeless people are found , it is where the Society's headquarters are located and it is where most of the work concerning of the homeless across the island is done and organised.

### **Objectives**

This assessment has two goals: to promote awareness in today's society about the life of the street homeless on Port Spain's streets, and to demonstrate that, according to Catholic social teaching, the homeless on Port Spain's streets are to be treated in a manner befitting their human dignity. Another main goal is to increase public knowledge of the activities of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It underscores that the government and donors should not take the work of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society for granted, but rather should support it on a daily basis.

### **Chapter Outline**

The first chapter examines two separate sources of literature: Catholic social teaching on the street homeless and Welcoming the Stranger, St. Vincent de Paul and the Homeless. Both

sources promote and advocate for the wellbeing of street homeless persons. There's also a discussion on the author's flaws and what he or she might have thought about the welfare of homeless people on the streets. Chapter two outlines how the Society of Saint. Vincent de Paul's humanitarian work has influenced the homeless on the streets of Port of Spain from 2018 to 2020. Interviews and questionnaires will be used in the third chapter to assess the impact of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul's charity activity. The associates' responses to the interviews and questionnaires will determine how the street homeless have benefited from Saint Vincent de Paul's (Port of Spain conference) humanitarian initiatives, which are scored on a scale of one to ten (one being the lowest and ten being the highest). In this third chapter, Catholic social teachings on the street homeless will be utilized to support the associates' comments, as well as the associates' proposals for what the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul may do to help the street homeless.

## **CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

Concerning the aforementioned topic of assessing the impact of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul's charitable work (Port of Spain Conference) on the lives of the street homeless in the City of Port of Spain from 2018 to 2020, Nothing was written about it, according to the research, except in an article "UWI Open Campus investigates Homelessness and Street Children in the Caribbean" where Dr. Ronald Marshall highlights his views on poverty as the main causes of Homeless in the Caribbean. However, at the global level of humanism, there are various charities and teachings that seek to advocate, inform, guide, and promote the welfare of the homeless. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a charitable organization in Trinidad that works for the welfare of the homeless and is influenced directly or indirectly by such norms and attitudes. Documents dealing with charity for the homeless are examined in this section.

### **The Catholic social teaching and homeless**

The Catholic social teaching is one of the world's leading supporters for the homeless. According to the author Tablan, Ferdinand, Catholic social teachings refer to a wide range of writings issued by the Catholic Church's magisterium in response to the modern world's evolving social and economic issues. There is a great deal of material supplied concerning the well-being of a homeless person in the contexts and information of Catholic social teaching. The catholic social teaching reminds one that everyone is expected to recognize Christ in each person on the street (hungry, thirsty, and naked) (Matthew 25: 31- 46). People's reactions. The clearest criterion for the gospels' judgment of one's life is how one responds to these encounters. In this narrative, Christ's self-identification with the least is clear and unmistakable. The story of

Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31) is told as a parable about the "total indifference" to the beggar at the gate. These Gospel passages in the catholic understanding are the most often referenced biblical scriptures in discussions of the welfare of the homeless (Regan 29).

Furthermore, the Church's teachings remind one that housing is not an afterthought in leading a dignified human life, but rather an essential component of it. Shelter is a basic human right that the Church recognizes as a critical component of recognizing and honouring our individuality. Assuring that everyone has access to safe, stable, and adequate housing is part of working for the common good. As a result, social, economic, and political arrangements must be established in such a way that home ownership or renting is equal for all, rather than limited and unjust for some. While the Church supports private property, it has stated in numerous Papal and other official documents that it is not an absolute right and that property should be used for the common good, with a consistent recognition that all goods come from God and are meant to benefit everyone, not just a select few ("Justice and Peace Office"). This shows why it is inequitable for some people to have more than they require while others live without basics. The structure of this housing system does not reflect the principles and gospel ideals that underpin it. It doesn't promote the common good, doesn't prioritize the poor, and isn't a solidarity gesture because it denies people the dignity to their houses.

Despite the fact that Catholic social teaching suggests that the greatest approach to aid a homeless person is to perceive Jesus Christ in them. Some of the dangers that might be linked with someone who wants to aid a homeless person are not depicted in social teaching. One of the most difficult aspects of assisting a homeless person on the street is that some of homeless persons may have mental health issues, which may be related to drug addiction. Because some homeless persons who are drug users are not always in the best of moods, they may injure

someone who is trying to aid them. As a result, I believe Catholic social teaching would have deemed it more necessary to emphasize the risks of assisting the homeless, so that someone who is willing to help will not only help but also consider taking safeguards. Otherwise, one may end up putting one's life in jeopardy.

### **Welcoming the Stranger, St. Vincent de Paul and the Homeless.**

One of the ways to miss out on reaching out to Christ is to dismiss the street homeless person who may appear to be a stranger. The Gospel of Luke reminds one that Jesus Christ and His parents were homeless and strangers on earth because they were rejected by many people, including their own people, and this defined them as strangers because there was no place for them in the inn when the child Jesus was about to be born (Luke 2:7). There was no room for a young carpenter and his pregnant wife, no room for the long-awaited child whose birth angels declared would bring "good news of great joy to all mankind" (Luke 2:10). There isn't any, the initial bed for their new-born infant was an animal feeding trough. (Mahoney 73). Furthermore, Matthew's account also reminds one the story of Jesus' birth, in which joy gives way to sadness:

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child

and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son (Mathew 2:10-15).

Matthew shows one the life-threatening conditions that forced Joseph and Mary to flee with Jesus from their homeland. "The Holy Family of Nazareth, who fled to Egypt as émigrés, is the model of every refugee family and homeless person." According to Mahoney, 1.2 billion individuals share Joseph, Mary, and Jesus' fate in one way or another today.

Listening, according to Mahoney, is the cornerstone of all spirituality, and it is one of the best ways to embrace Jesus through the stranger. Nothing penetrates one's mind and heart if one does not listen, according to Mahoney. The Bible emphasizes the importance of listening. "Blessed are those who hear God's word and put it into practice," Jesus says (Luke 11:28). "Seeing, they did not see, and hearing, they did not hear," he laments on the other hand (Mark 4:12). Mahoney's experience has taught him that while some people are good listeners, many others are not. Unfortunately, some people are so preoccupied with their own technical knowledge and talents, or with their own aspirations, that they are unable to hear the voice of the person in need who is pleading for assistance. One might wonder how many people actually pay attention to the homeless. When it comes to systemic change, listening is crucial... it is through listening that one begins to comprehend and address another person's problem.

Mahoney's perspective on extending a helping hand to a homeless person in the framework of the holy family (Mary and Joseph's family), leads one to reach out to the destitute because one sees Christ in the needy. Despite the fact that Mahoney is correct in that one must recognize Christ in the homeless, his writings are considerably more spiritual in nature. one believes that Mahoney would have given greater thought to the physical part, whereby one

would not only see Jesus Christ in the homeless but also attempt to create a relationship with them, since one might simply see Christ in the homeless person and give money and leave, but there is no relationship. Relationships between people is vital because it makes a person such as a homeless person on the street to feel loved.

While nothing was written specifically about the impact of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's (Port of Spain Conference) charitable work on the lives of the street homeless in the City of Port of Spain from 2018 to 2020, Catholic social teaching and Catholic writers have dealt in general terms with the necessity of treating the less fortunate, of which the homeless and street dwellers make up a significant number.

**CHAPTER TWO: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CHARITABLE WORK  
OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL TO  
THE STREET HOMELESS OF PORT OF SPAIN FROM 2018 TO 2020**

"Homelessness" is a compound word made up of three words: "home + less and Ness." it denotes a lack of a home and identity (Sudarshan 2). Homelessness is defined by some scholars, such as Diaz, as individuals who spend their days on the streets with nowhere to go at night, and many street homeless people eat and sleep on the street and in public places such as bus stops and temples. A street homeless person, according to Tipple, Graham, and Suzanne Speak, is an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence; and an individual who has a primary night-time residence that is: a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill).

Furthermore, with all of the global difficulties that the world is facing today, one of the most significant challenge is homelessness. In the 1950s, Rajbari and Aahil claimed that the concept of homelessness was just that: a concept. Around 70 percent of the world's population of 2.5 billion people lived in rural areas. Today, however, at least 150 million people are projected to be homeless around the world, with 1.6 billion people lacking adequate or appropriate housing. Despite the fact that homelessness is a global issue, some governments attempt to address it by utilizing philanthropic groups. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is one of the charity organizations in Trinidad and Tobago that works to address the problem of the street homeless by elevating the homeless out of poverty, supporting their human dignity, and providing them with basic necessities.

**Alleviation from poverty**

Poverty is one of the most major root causes of homelessness on a global scale. Poverty, according to Mahwish Moiz, is defined as a lack of sufficient goods or assets to meet one's basic necessities. Poverty and homelessness are serious socioeconomic problems in nearly every country. In his research of homelessness and street children in Trinidad, Dr. Ronald Marshall discovered that poverty is a major reason behind homelessness. He highlights the importance of rising living costs, housing and apartment prices, employment redundancy, and job loss. However, he did name "personally challenging and multiple circumstances or issues," such as absentee dads and failed marriages, as specific social-situational and psychological causes driving homelessness. Other variables, according to Marshall, include a scarcity of low-cost housing, a lack of health care, mental illness, abuse, and emotional or functional consequences.

Additionally, the problem of the increasing number of deportees who return to no home and no friendship networks is also identified other key variables that contribute to homelessness, according to Mahwish, a lack of affordable housing, mental illness, and substance misuse. Unemployed people, people who rely on government benefits, and immigrants from developing countries are the people who are most likely to slip into poverty. Poverty is a complex socioeconomic issue that cannot be remedied overnight in today's environment. It is caused by a number of structural flaws that can only be corrected if all members of society work together to give opportunities for everybody.

Poverty is still one of the primary causes of street homeless in Trinidad, and it has resulted in the eviction of many people. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, on the other hand, works tirelessly to alleviate poverty among the homeless on the streets. One method the Society

of Saint Vincent de Paul has used helped the street homeless, according to Fr. Michael Cockburn, is by providing a suitable place for them to sleep. But, in the opinion of one of the respondents to the questionnaire Gary, Tigalie, in his opinion, poverty is multifaceted. As one approach of alleviating the street homeless, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has offered shelter and meals, both of which are essential for human survival.

Furthermore, Tigalie thinks that people in poverty require rehabilitation in order to be able to care for themselves, which the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul provides based on their capabilities, through good jobs, shelter, health care, and belonging to a community. Giving a street homeless person in the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul's care the means to reintegrate into mainstream society, according to the president of saint Vincent de Paul Angelique Taylor, it is no easy task. Taylor, on the other hand, as a president of the society of saint Vincent de Paul, has seen many success stories of the street homeless (ex-residents) who were once homeless and, on the street, and have now graduated with degrees from different Universities, and they have achieved all this with the help of the society Saint Vicent de Paul. Taylor also mentioned that in 2018, two homeless people who were once in the care of Saint Vincent de Paul society because of drug addiction were transferred to the United States for rehabilitation as and, after completing the Drug Rehabilitation, went on to study at the University of the West Indies, and one of the two is now employed by the State's Drug Rehabilitation programme as a Peer Counsellor. These are examples of the example of the society of saint Vincent de Paul alleviated the street homeless from poverty.

**Promotion of Human dignity**

Human dignity is the view that everyone has a unique value that is completely based on their humanity. It has nothing to do with their social class, race, gender, religion, or ability, and everything to do with the fact that they are human. According to Lebech Mette, the concept of human dignity has evolved over time, and human dignity is a combination of two words: human and dignity. The term "human" is etymologically related to the Latin word *humus*, which means "earthly" (as an adjective) or "earthling" (as a noun) (as a substantive). In general, it refers to what makes them special as a "human being," the species of rational beings to which they belong, with a focus on their intelligence. The word "dignity" derives from the Latin noun *decus*, which means "ornament," "distinction," "honour," and "glory."

Furthermore, dignity refers to what in a creature (especially a personal being) causes or ought to induce respect: quality or incomparability of value. According to Mette, when the words "human" and "dignity" are combined, they produce the phrase "human dignity," which refers to the status of human beings that entitles them to respect, a status which is first and to be taken for granted. It alludes to their ultimate worth or to the fact that they are a presupposition to value because they are the people who understand value. In addition, because human beings are made in the image of God, the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity affirms that the concept that human dignity is an inherent trait in all human beings, every human being should be treated with respect, regardless of age, ability, status, gender, ethnicity, or other factors. According to author Alison Miller, a variety of things exist now in the world that degrade the dignity of a homeless person on the street. One of the issues is the government's failure to provide enough care to a homeless person on the street and when someone, especially the homeless on the street, feels uncared for, it is an indication of his or her lack of dignity.

The loss of human dignity among the homeless on the streets of Trinidad is still a concern. However, the society of saint Vincent de Paul tries its best to promote human dignity to make sure that the street homeless are recognised as human being. In the opinion of Tialie and Roger Watson one of the members of the society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has contributed to the promotion of human dignity among the homeless on the streets by providing proper care and resources. Tialie and Watson also believe that the society of Saint Vincent de Paul has not only promoted human dignity in the years leading up to 2020 but has done so throughout history. Even today, the society of saint Vincent de Paul promotes human dignity, particularly in terms of providing a refuge for the homeless on the streets, where they can sleep, bathe, eat, and receive medical care. For example, in the catholic news Lara, Pickford-Gordon reports that when COVID 19 broke out in 2020, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, as a manner of promoting human dignity, made sure that the dwellings were equipped with masks, sanitizer sprays, liquid soap, and other items to keep the street homeless from being infected and dying from the disease.

### **Provision of basic needs**

Apart from oxygen, the majority of human beings' essential necessities for survival are water, food, housing, cleanliness, and a variety of other things. When one lacks some of the basic essentials, one's chances of survival aren't guaranteed. The absence of basic needs for the homeless in Trinidad is still a concern. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, on the other hand, assists the homeless in determining their fundamental needs. According to Carol Duppely one of the benefactors of the society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has been able to address the needs of the street homeless, particularly food, through benevolent

persons and groups of concerned people. Every day, the charity serves three meals to the homeless, including breakfast, lunch, and supper, ensuring that the street homeless do not go hungry. Frank Cooper one of the senior member of the society of saint Vincent de Paul , also noted that during the pandemic in 2020, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, in collaboration with the State, established a temporary shelter below the Centre for Socially Displaced Persons on the ground floor. The reason for this was to facilitate Street homeless who do not reside in the facility, but those who would come not to sleep but just to get a meal, and a proper shower to refresh themselves and afterwards they go back on the street.

### **CHAPTER THREE: ASSESMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE CHARITABLE WORK OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL**

To learn from their perspectives Several questions were addressed to twenty responders who had been connected with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. In order to gain insight into their opinions. The following are some of the most important questions:

1. Can you rate the society of Saint Vincent de Paul's philanthropic work in terms of alleviating poverty among the street homeless on a scale of one to ten, and reason why you gave that certain rate?
2. On a scale of one to ten, how much do you believe Saint Vincent de Paul's philanthropic work has improved the dignity of the street homeless and give the reason why you gave a certain rate?
3. On a scale of one to ten how has Saint Vincent de Paul assisted the homeless in obtaining basic necessities like water food and sanitation and give the reason why you gave the certain rate.

The replies of these respondents will be considered alongside Catholic social teaching and its understanding of the homeless on the streets. Essentially, the purpose of this assessment is to determine, on a scale of one to ten (one being the lowest and ten being the highest), how the street homeless have benefited from Saint Vincent de Paul's (Port of Spain conference) humanitarian activities and what more can be done for the society of Saint Vincent de Paul to improve the lives of the street homeless.

**A metric for alleviating the poverty among the homeless on the streets**

When it comes to alleviating poverty on the streets, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has done very little, possibly for a variety of reasons. As a result, ten percent (5%) of respondents rated the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul five (5) marks on a scale of one to ten. According to the respondents, relieving poverty among the street homeless entails assisting someone in finding work or a pleasant place to sleep rather than relying on others for a living, and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society has not done much to assist the street homeless in finding work. Furthermore, the respondents stated that the bulk of the street homeless persons worked as barbers, electrical engineers, carpenters, and masons before attending the Saint Vincent de Paul night shelter, but the organization of Saint Vincent de Paul was unable to find work for them all. The statements of the respondents show that there is a need for significant coordination between people of the country and organizations that assist the needy, such as Saint Vincent de Paul, to help the street homeless find work. According to Catholic social teaching, all citizens of the country hold responsibility for assisting the needy. Individual citizens have a responsibility to assist the less fortunate by philanthropic activities and personal commitment. Private donations and volunteerism, on the other hand, are insufficient (David 52).

In terms of what the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul could do to improve the lives of the street homeless, respondents suggested that, because the street homeless have worked as barbers, electrical engineers, carpenters, and masons before entering the Saint Vincent de Paul night shelter, it might be a good idea for the society to find small businesses or individuals or some small companies that can hire the street homeless. In this way, they will be able to lift the street homeless out of poverty, and this will benefit both the government of Trinidad and Tobago and the street homeless themselves.

### **A scale for promoting human dignity among the homeless on the streets**

In terms of how the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has fostered human dignity among Port of Spain's street homeless, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has done a fantastic job. On a scale of one to ten, ten percent (10%) of respondents gave the Saint Vincent de Paul Society a ten (10) out of 10 rating. Some of the respondents stated that promoting human dignity among the homeless is a difficult endeavour because the majority of the street homeless in Port of Spain are drug addicts, and that reintegrating a drug addicts into the life that they are meant to be in is difficult and time-consuming. It isn't easy; it necessitates a lot of effort. It is not easy; it takes a lot of effort, but the Saint Vincent de Paul Society makes sure that street homeless people who come to the facility while they are addicted get helped.

Furthermore, while treating a drug-addicted street homeless person is one approach to promote human dignity, some respondents advocated for a street homeless person having a shelter on top of his or her head as another way to promote human dignity. The statement of this reply presents a compelling argument that appreciates a street homeless person with a shelter over their heads which distinguishes a street homeless person from the wild animals which lives in the bush. Thus, according to Catholic social teaching "lack of housing is a severe problem in many parts of the world, both in rural and urban areas," Therefore for a street homeless person to have a house contributes significantly to a sense of his or her human development. Hence, according to Meghan Shelter is unquestionably defined as a precondition for full human development As a result, some respondents advise that, in order for the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul to improve the human dignity of the street homeless, the society of saint Vincent de Paul

should create more night shelters that can accommodate a significant number of street homeless so that they can feel appreciated and more human.

**A measure based on the provision of basic needs to the homeless on the street.**

When it comes to providing basic requirements to the homeless on the streets, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has proven to be a lifeline. Ten percent (10) of respondents scored the Saint Vincent de Paul Society nine (9) points on a scale of one to ten. This is because providing a person with basic needs from January to December is a difficult task. It is a difficult task that necessitates sacrifice, but the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has accepted this challenge. According to one of the respondents, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Port of Spain conference provides a "three-square meal (breakfast, lunch, and supper)" to the street homeless. The giving of these three-square meals by the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is akin to providing a life to the street homeless.

Another respondent noted that, despite the fact that non-governmental organizations support the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in giving food as one of the basic necessities, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul also supplies bed and mattresses for the street homeless to sleep on. According to the reply, the bulk of the homeless on the streets prior to arriving at the Saint Vincent de Paul night shelter had nowhere to sleep. The majority of them used to sleep on cardboard on the street, but the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has supplied beds and mattresses to the homeless on the streets, making their lives much more comfortable. "Catholic social teaching, with biblical references, teaches that when one loves the poor, one loves Christ, and this is what the Saint Vincent de Paul Society has done." I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me;

I was naked and you gave me clothing; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?" (Matthew 25:35-37).

Moreover, in order for the Saint Vincent de Paul Society to better the lives of the street homeless, particularly in terms of supplying basic requirements, the majority of respondents requested that the society of saint Vincent de Paul must look into resources that can create cash for the street homeless, such as fundraisers. The Saint Vincent de Paul Society should invite churches all across the island to help them by providing money or any other material item.

## CONCLUSION

The impact of Saint Vincent de Paul's philanthropic activity (Port of Spain conference) on the street home has come a long way since its inception. The humanitarian activity of Saint Vincent de Paul has been demonstrated to be an on-going dedication work of love and compassion, bringing faith alive among Christians, bringing light to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, most especially in Port of Spain, and new life to the street homeless.

The Saint Vincent de Paul Society has lifted the street homeless out of poverty by defending their human dignity and meeting their basic needs. Despite the challenges that the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul faces on a daily basis in meeting the needs of the homeless on the streets, Saint Vincent de Paul's charitable work has lived Catholic social teaching and it has brought the gospel of Christ to life by fulfilling God's second greatest commandment. "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). However, while the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul continues to carry out charity work in accordance with the Christian gospel, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul urgently requires greater financial and material support in order to perfect its work.

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## **APPENDIX A: LIST OF RESPONDENTS TO INTERVIEWS**

1. Angelique Taylor
2. Carol Duppely
3. Gary Tagalie
4. Roger Watson
5. Michael Cockburn
6. Andrew Patrick

**APPENDIX B: LIST OF RESPONDENTS TO QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Andrew Philip
2. Awlyn Hunte
3. David Villafana
4. Debbi Garcia
5. Carol Slusher
6. Christopher Alexander
7. Frank Cooper
8. Elena alexander
9. Jason Manning
10. Mathew Kevin
11. Maryann Lee
12. Melissa Brumant-Jules
13. Mohammed Sheikh
14. Natalie Jacob
15. Petra Ophelia
16. Natasha Diana
17. Shirley Alexander
18. Simon Philip
19. Twinzuela Rita
20. Velma Seanley

**APPENDIX C: SOME OF THE RESPONDENTS' EVALUATIONS  
OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL'S CHARITY ACTIVITY**

- In terms of how society the society of Saint Vincent de Paul relieved poverty among the street has homeless, 5% of respondents said the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has not done much. It has not assisted the street homeless in making use of their natural talents and gifts in order to find small-time work and lift themselves out of poverty.
- In terms of how the Organisation of Saint Vincent de Paul has promoted human dignity for the street homeless, 10% of respondents responded that the society is doing well because it is saving lives, and saving lives is one way of prompting human dignity.
- In terms of how society has provided basic requirements to the homeless, ten percent (10%) of those polled believed that the society of saint Vincent de Paul is doing a good job. Although the street homeless may not be able to receive the essentials of their choice, Saint Vincent de Paul Society does help them obtain food, water, and shelter, which are the most basic necessities for survival

## APPENDIX D



Fig. 2. A man sited outside the locked temporary shelter for street homeless at Riverside Plaza in East Port of Spain (Hamilton).

## APPENDIX E



Fig. 3. Homeless people on the ground floor of the Centre for Socially Displaced People at Riverside Plaza in Port of Spain (Gioannetti).

## APPENDIX F



Fig. 4. Loraine Reyes-Borel, executive director of the Social Displacement Unit, and Martin Alves, administrative manager of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, talk to Christopher Julien, a 92-year-old resident of the Riverside Plaza car park's Centre for Displaced Persons (Ishmael).