

SSVP South Africa			
Vincentian Spiritual and Service Guidance			
Members, Councils and Conferences			
Revision No 4 - July 2023			
Issued for Members Usage			
Item #	Function	Christian and Vincentian Service Description	Source Reference
1	Christian Service	SSVP members are all called to Christian Service and to do this we look to Christ and the Holy Spirit for guidance in our thoughts and prayers. When faced with a problem we can ask ourselves, what would Christ, think or say or do? St Patrick was aware of this when he said; "Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me." If in our Vincentian actions, we are as Christ centred as St Patrick, we will be demonstrating "Christianity in Action" for all to see.	
1,1	Christian Example	The Beatitudes provide the perfect example of Christian beliefs and therefore a guide to Christian behaviours as professed by Jesus at the Sermon on the Mount. If our Vincentian actions in giving service to the poor give truth to the Beatitudes, we can have confidence that we are providing a worthy example of "Christianity in Action" for others to follow. The Rule of the Society and our motto tells us that 'Vincentians serve in Hope'. Hope is that virtue which helps us look to a future with confidence that will be better due to our actions in serving God through the poor. This is our calling to Christian Service to follow Christ's example every day in our journey of faith and hope to personal sanctification, salvation and to be with God in our eternal home in Heaven.	
1,2	Christian Beliefs The Beatitudes	Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Vincentian behaviour and action can help to demonstrate, fulfil and deliver Christ's message of hope and faith expressed in the Beatitudes	
1,3	Catholic Social Teaching	Catholic Social Teaching emphasises that we should have and show respect for the human person, promote the family, protect property rights, work for the common good, practice subsidiarity, respect work and workers and pursue peace and care for the poor. In modern times, Pope Francis's encyclical "Laudata Si" emphasised the need for all of us to be good stewards of God's creation and the ever increasing need for us all protect the environment. As Vincentians we promote the values of Catholic Social Teaching and our obligation to protect the environment both in doing our good works and our spreading of the word of our duty to respect and protect God's creation.	
2	The Corporal Works of Mercy of the Catholic Church	SSVP good works are based on the traditional Catholic Church Corporal Works of Mercy, these are: 1. To feed the hungry; 2. To give drink to the thirsty; 3. To clothe the naked; 4. To harbour the harbourless - (give shelter to travellers); 5. To visit the sick; 6. To ransom the captive - (visit the imprisoned); 7. To bury the dead. As Vincentians, we include the Corporal Works of Mercy and the Christian principles and values of equality, respect, justice, peace, love of neighbour and service to the poor as key aspects of our good works.	
2,1	1. To Feed the Hungry	Christ and more recently, Pope Francis has told us that we must "look into the eyes of the poor" when doing our good works. This call to be open to our own vulnerability and show our empathy for the poor and hungry is key to doing our core work in accordance with our Christian and Vincentian values. "For I was hungry and you gave me to eat." (Matthew 25:35). It provides the opportunity for us to show the hungry that we care in a tangible way and, in our shared vulnerability, enables the poor to help to sanctify us in this personal contact. This interaction is a powerful experience that can promote a deeper understanding of the plight of the poor.	
2,2	2.To give Drink to the Thirsty;	SSVP feeding centres can become more than just places of nourishment if we encourage community activities and interdependence. The sharing of meals and difficulties in a caring environment can provide beneficial connections, build camaraderie and even friendships between all involved. In our Vincentian environment this means that we should start each distribution or feeding activity with a prayer encouraging us to give thanks to the Lord for the gift of nourishment that we are about to receive.	
2,3	3.To Clothe the Naked	When we enter this world, we are all helpless and vulnerable just like the Christ child Jesus. How can we not treat the destitute and naked with the same care and compassion as our own new born babies, children and adults? Like Jesus, they may have been born into poverty and need. Unlike the rich, they haven't yet been able to rise above their disadvantages. Now we, as Vincentians and like Joseph and Mary nurturing Jesus, are privileged to be able to "look into their eyes" and help one of God's own children in need. "Stretch forth your hand to the poor" (Sirach 7:32). This is a gift from God to look into Christ's eyes and reach out to the poor with love.	

2,4	4.To Harbour the Harbourless	If God's plan is salvation for all , and the poor and homeless are closest to God, could the poor be on earth to provide the rich with the opportunity to accept God's gift of salvation by helping them? The homeless may sometimes be inconvenient to us with their ever increasing visibility on street intersections? Are they a call to our Christian consciences to wake up and count our blessings? Could this be God's task for the poor? If so, it seems to many that the poor and homeless are playing their part in God's plan. How are we doing as part of God's plan, could we be rejecting God and His proffered gift of our salvation?	
2,5	5.To visit the sick;	"Whatever you do to the least of my brothers that you do unto me". Matthew 25:31- 46 Matthew reminds us of our Christian obligation to help others and particularly those who can't help themselves. We can visit and minister to the sick and be consoled that the discomfort and vulnerability we see in them are a reflection of Christ Himself as Christ suffered His Passion and death on the cross. This provides consolation to us for any negative feelings and discomfort when looking into the eyes of the sick.	
2,6	6.To Ransom the Captive;	"I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me."To whom do we make ourselves strangers? Can we do more for them?	Matthew: 25:43
2,7	7.To Bury the Dead.	Just as when we enter this world, we leave it unable to help ourselves. We rely upon our family to bury us with dignity and respect. Christians bury the dead in respect of us all being created in the image and likeness of God. We Vincentians are therefore duty bound to undertake the Corporal Work of Mercy to bury the dead when the need arises. We can do this by attending funerals, comforting the mourners and helping with the burial expenses for the poor.	
2,8	Personal Contact is a key requirement of SSVp good works	"Any action of the Society, to be fully justified from a Vincentian point of view, always has to arise from personal contact with individuals who suffer. It is far from our intention to become simply pressure groups. The Society and each Conference must first live close to those who suffer, and only then build on this experience by helping them to overcome difficulties". The Rule's guidance that we "Must live close to those who suffer" may have been appropriate in bygone days but could be misleading if taken literally in the modern world. Practicing non-judgmental empathy may be the modern applicable and equivalent guide for Vincentians to follow in our service to the poor.	The "Rule" Page 40/41 6.2.9 Notes
2,9	Home Visits	Home visits are the core of the Society and can sometimes be uncomfortable experiences. Home visits can present situations that make us uncomfortable and even guilty about our own levels of comfort or situations. Christianity and our Vincentian obligation can force us out of our comfort zones into the reality of other much less fortunate people's realities. We should embrace our discomfort and this increased awareness as a gift from the Holy Spirit to help those in need without judgment of their needs, cultures or backgrounds. If Pope Francis can say, <i>"I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon."</i> How can any of us <i>"cast the first stone"</i> in judgement of others? Can we open our hearts and leave judgement to God?	
2,10	To Seek out the Poor Wherever they May be	Vincentians strive to seek out and find those in need , the forgotten and the victim of exclusion or adversity. We must not be content to serve the list of people we currently help. We should not expect the poor to come to us	The "Rule" Page 19 -1.2.4
2,11	Projects Promoting Self-Sufficiency	Hand up Project work is distinct from SSVp core works based on the Corporal Works of Mercy outlined above. They require a more formal approach that may preclude some conferences from participation. Nevertheless, SSVp members should be open to participating in project work in collaboration with others if the poor are likely to benefit. These are projects that will identify key issues and the extent that they affect the poor with the aim of promoting and empowering self-sufficiency. The projects will/may need dedicated and skilled resources with sufficient time to complete the required research. It is likely that the business and school twinning programmes will be able to provide these resources. SSVP's National Development Plan outlines options that may be suitable projects.	The "Rule" Page 20 -1.3.4
2,12	Visibility of "Good Works"	"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven". Matthew 5:16. But Matthew 6:3-4 appears to contradict this as in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, <i>"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you"</i> . This is sometimes taken that Vincentians should work in secret and this can limit awareness of and the extent of SSVp good works, and consequently, it's income. Secrecy should not be confused with confidentiality and we can therefore shine a light on Vincentian good works with humility as a group giving glory to God, but we do so confidentially to protect and maintain the dignity of those we serve.	
2,13	Charity Begins at Home	Charity begins at home can be used as a stick to beat Vincentians with but this should not be so. Vincentians have a duty to ensure that they don't neglect their loved ones in doing their good works for God's human family. Mother Teresa has said; <i>"Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do, but how much love we put into what we do. . . I want you to find the poor here, right in your own home first. And begin love there. Be that good news to your own people first"</i> . This message is clear, Vincentian's must serve both their own and the poor in a balanced way.	Mother Teresa
3	Spirituality of Service	"Come Holy Spirit, Fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, And you will renew the face of the earth." Christian Spiritual values should permeate all SSVp members thoughts and actions. Vincentians should pray to God to be imbued with the Holy Spirit to guide us to work fraternally, with humility, perseverance, and with compassion in all our dealings with the poor and to "make them channels for the peace and joy of Christ".	The "Rule" Page 19 -1.3.1
3,1	Member Awareness	Members to inform themselves and receive ongoing training of the duties and obligations of the Spiritual Guidance officer at each level of SSVp SA, to encourage and assist those office bearers to act in accordance with their Spiritual requirements at each applicable level of SSVp structure that the member is active in <i>"to deepen their knowledge of it and their spirituality, improve the sensitivity, quality and efficiency of the benefits, resources and opportunities that are available to the poor"</i> "Own and read your own copy of the "Rule" and/or refer to the SSVp SA online version" .	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.12 commentary
3,2	Our Journey with God	"Vincentians are called to journey together towards holiness because true holiness is a perfect union with Christ and the perfection of love, which is central to their vocation and the source of its fruitfulness. They aspire to burn with the love of God as revealed by Christ and to deepen their own faith and fidelity". The "Rule" Page 22 - 2.2	
3,3	Serving God and the Poor	"Seek God's grace in selfless actions working fraternally to relieve the suffering of the poor with compassion". The Rule advises that we seek God's grace, glory and wisdom in our Vincentian actions without thinking of any reward or advantage for themselves	The "Rule" Page 22/23 - 2.2
3,4	Serving our Members	SSVP servant leadership requires office bearers to be understanding and attentive to members concerns and needs. We walk together though our differences which are managed and resolved democratically with Christian empathy and understanding.	
3,5	Serving SSVp Councils	Members serve their district and central council by supporting their conference office bearers in discussions and decisions of conference compliance to SSVp requirements or to raise democratically reached queries or concerns with the next higher level of SSVp. Members do not serve in isolation but as a collective, serve and guide each other <i>"in a spirit of fraternity, simplicity and Christian joy"</i> for the service to the poor.	The "Rule" Page 28 - 3.4
3,6	Serving SSVp Conferences	Members serve their conferences by supporting the conference policies and decisions of the actions required to undertake their agreed good works. Members raise conference unresolved democratically reached queries or concerns with the next higher level of SSVp for discussion and agreement <i>"within the spirit of the "Rule" before implementing actions</i>	The "Rule" Page 30 - 3.9

3,7	Serving the Parish, Diocese and Community within SSVP Autonomy	"The Society is legally autonomous in its existence, constitution, organisation, rules, activities and internal government." Even though this is true and should not be undermined by any other organisation or authority outside SSVP, all conferences should cooperate with their Parish Council, Priests, Deacons and Parishioners guided by SSVP rules and Vincentian principles. SSVP SA Statement of Autonomy confirms; "Although SSVP autonomy is a longstanding fact and operational reality worldwide, SSVP in South Africa is committed to the establishment and maintenance of harmonious working relationships between its conferences and their parishes. Section 8 below expands on this SSVP commitment.	The "Rule" Page 35 - 5.2
3,8	Serving SSVP History	Commemorate the SSVP Feast days with festival meetings, one on each of the Sundays nearest to the feast days: 19 March - Feast of St Joseph 23 April - Birthday of Blessed Frederick Ozanam and SSVP foundation anniversary 29 June - Feast of St Peter and St Paul 4 July - Feast of International Day of Vincentian Youth 9 September - Feast of Blessed Frederick Ozanam 27 September - Feast of St Vincent de Paul 8 December - Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Mother Mary in our Patron) SSVP Themed Stations of the Cross SSVP Themed Stations of the Resurrection. Other feast days to be confirmed in the online SSVP National Diaries.	The "Rule" Page 81/82 - 12
3,9	Serving SSVP Dead	SSVP members to be aware of Clause 20 of the "Rule". - "Deceased Members" . Clause 20 states; <i>"It is recommended that, in November of each year, we remember with gratitude the foundations laid by our deceased brothers and sisters. Accordingly, wherever possible, their names should be mentioned in the De Profundis prayed at the conclusion of each meeting in November."</i>	The "Rule" Page 86. - 20
4	Service in Leadership	SSVP Presidents and Office Bearers demonstrate their commitment to service in all of their thoughts and actions. The SSVP leader is a "servant in all things" in relationship to God, the Society and all of its members. This is the Christian servant leader's higher purpose. It is also a "servant first" in relationships with and to members and people outside SSVP. Presidents <i>"have special responsibility for promoting Vincentian spirituality"</i> .	The "Rule" Page 30 - 3.11
4,1	Member Awareness	Members to inform themselves of the duties and obligations of the various officer bearers at each level of SSVP SA, to encourage and assist those office bearers to act in accordance with their leadership requirements at each applicable level of SSVP structure that the member is active in. "Own and read your own copy of the "Rule" and/or refer to the SSVP SA online version" .	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.12 commentary
4,2	Servant Leaders	Jesus provided the perfect example of Servant Leadership in the washing of the feet of his Apostles. Jesus then sent his Apostles out to do his work as we are sent today to serve the poor in humility knowing we have God's blessing. Vincentians have a special invitation from God to give expression to the Beatitudes in our lives through works of charity serving in hope for a future that is uncertain. Servant leadership requires a balance of morality, practicality and achievement that produces the best outcomes in the interests of our members, the poor, the parish, and the wider community. Vincentians align our hope and faith with the development of a personal and group prayer life that allows time to listen to God, hear his wishes and act on them.	
4,3	Serving and Nurturing Members	SSVP leaders nurture and encourage their members to take up their roles and responsibilities to ensure that all participate and share the workload and grow together in a Vincentian Spirit. SSVP leadership is the ability of a single individual through their example, Christian/Vincentian behaviour and actions to inspire and motivate others to higher levels of shared achievement and personal sanctification.	
4,4	Service	Presidents and Office Bearers act as "Servant Leaders" promoting Vincentian spirituality. <i>"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law".</i> Galatians 5:22-23	The "Rule" Page 30 - 3.11
4,5	Service	And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." Mark 9:35	
4,6	Service	As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: Peter 4:10	
4,7	Service	For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. Luke 22:27	
4,8	Service	In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive, give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.' Luke 6:38	
4,9	Service	For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45	
5	Serving During Elections and Appointments	Search for suitable members who can serve as office bearers from all levels of SSVP. Servant leadership is a key requirement for office bearers at all levels of SSVP to serve with a spirit of humility within Christian and Vincentian values. A suitable member would ideally have the necessary skills and experience for the specific role and its required duties. However with God's grace this need not be a prerequisite, as the right attitude and a willingness to learn can be sufficient. "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Philippians 4.13	
5,1	Member Awareness	Members to inform themselves of the Election Guidelines document content and the duties and obligations of the Electoral Board Officers at each level of SSVP SA, to encourage and assist those office bearers to act in accordance with the Election Guidelines at each applicable level of SSVP structure that the member is active in. "Own and read your own copy of the "Rule" and/or refer to the SSVP SA online version" .	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.12 commentary
5,2	Suitability	God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called. God equips His people for His work. We are mistaken if we use the world's standards to judge the qualities of a Christian. A person's eloquence, coolness or success in the workplace or social situations may impress us but this is not necessarily God's evaluation. <i>"I chose you and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last"</i> John 15:16. Confirmation that suitable office bearers can be found throughout SSVP and shouldn't be prevented from their calling by exclusive thinking or perceptions of limitations. The Holy Spirit will guide and equip new office bearers	
5,3	Faith in our Calling	<i>"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them"</i> . Ephesians 2:10	
5,4	Wisdom	<i>"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him"</i> . James 1:5	
5,5	Succession	Emphasise the need for succession plans for office bearers throughout SSVP in thought, action and example. <i>"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field"</i> . Luke 10.2. The workers are few if current members are not inclusive and persistent in encouraging new members from their parishes and friends and work colleagues. Exclusive attitudes promote stagnation and can result in the flogging of the same willing horses until they tire of it and the Society, leaving SSVP short of experience and expertise.	

5,6	Nurture the Young	Look to the future and nurture those who further develop SSSP in South Africa. Suitable fresh blood in sufficient numbers is required if the Society is to continue to evolve and flourish. Continuously seek new and preferably young members for inclusion in SSSP activities. Young members keep the group young, they see with new eyes and provide a balance between youth and experience. If we achieve the right balance at each level of SSSP, we will not overwork current senior members who can pass on their knowledge, skills and experience to newer and younger members. Paraphrased from the "Rule" Page 29 - 3.7	Paraphrased from The "Rule" Page 29 - 3.7
5,7	Promotion of Youth	"In particular, councils at appropriate levels should promote youth conferences, helping them to be fully integrated into the life of the Society. The youth conferences shall have the same relationship with the council under which they operate as the rest of the conferences linked to the same council." The "Rule" Page 70 - 2.	The "Rule" Page 70 - 2.
6	Service in Meetings	Provide an example of Christian/Catholic Servant Leadership in all interactions with SSSP members. Meetings are held in a spirit of fraternity, simplicity and Christian joy. The "Rule" Page 28 - 3.4 "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another". John 13:33-35. The Rule and St John are clear in respect of members behaviour in both internal and external meetings	
6,1	Member Awareness	Members to inform themselves of the duties and obligations of meeting behaviour at each level of SSSP SA, to encourage and assist office bearers and fellow members to act in accordance with them at each applicable level of SSSP structure that the member is active in. " Own and read your own copy of the "Rule" and/or refer to the SSSP SA online version ".	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.12 commentary
6,2	Parish Liaison	Reciprocal harmonious communication, respect and cooperation with the Parish Priest and Religious are to be maintained and our conduct should present a good example to observers. Refer to section 8 for more details.	The "Rule" Page 34/35 - 5.1/5.2/5.3
6,3	Debate	In having discussions about decisions we must make, we should not seek to gain advantage or to "win" the debate, but rather to strive to reach the best decision for the benefit of those we are called to serve. This requires selfless debate mindful our Vincentian and Christian values and obligations to those we serve. " I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment ". Corinthians 1.10	
6,4	Listening	SSVP service ethos requires inclusive listening and the discernment of the sometimes hidden complexities of the issues raised. In SSSP we walk together with the poor and each other wherever and whenever possible. Conflict is managed with Christian empathy and understanding and never to gain the advantage for our personal viewpoints. The democratic collective will of the group is to be adhered to with Christian humility with the Servant Leader only deciding actions that are deadlocked.	
6,5	Empathy	Listening to people demonstrates our willingness to consider and understand their point of view. We might not agree with their view in part or whole, but in "really listening", we show them respect and dignity and enhance our ability to empathise with them and their circumstances.	
6,6	Reflection of our Communications	In our communications with others, how do you think they feel during discussions, what impression did our words and tone convey to our listeners, those that were intended by us, or something different? Are they likely to result in better relationships and action between us and our listeners? If we are unsure, pause and try to communicate in a Christ like manner, we have no better example than Christ to follow that will improve levels of trust, empathy and communion with each other.	
7	Service in Disagreement	The Rule is very clear in respect of how we resolve our disagreement, it states: "Any member, conference or council that takes legal action through civil or other tribunals, without express authorisation from the Council General, in order to resolve disputes between members, conferences or councils, shall be automatically separated from the Vincentian friendship by virtue of this action and shall be excluded, for all intents and purposes, from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul." We must deal with our differences internally and follow "The Rule" with Christian and Vincentian Spirituality in doing so.	The "Rule" Page 67 6.11.1.
7,1	Member Awareness	Members to inform themselves of the duties and obligations of meeting behaviour at each level of SSSP SA, to encourage and assist office bearers and fellow members to act in accordance with them at each applicable level of SSSP structure that the member is active in. " Own and read your own copy of the "Rule" and/or refer to the SSSP SA online version ".	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.12 commentary
7,2		"A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another." God's commandment to us all.	
7,3		"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. <i>The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself. "There is no commandment greater than these."</i> Mark 12.31-32. If we love God as commanded, how can we not treat our neighbour as Christ did and would, how do we treat our neighbour in conflict situations?	
7,4		"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." We normally associate Matthew's reading with the Corporal Works of Mercy and hope that we do provide respite for "the least of our brothers and sisters". Our fellow SSSP members are also our brothers and sisters, how do we treat them when we differ in our views to a situation? How will the Lord judge our behaviour in our disagreements with others?	
7,5		Jesus still calls us to be his disciples and to be united with one another. He still wants us to speak to each other and the people of the world to promote faith, peace, hope and love. We must continue through our disagreements and pray to the Holy Spirit for patience, wisdom and tolerance of other views. " We cannot be sure through whom the Holy Spirit will speak ". The Holy Spirit will always provide us with guidance and discernment when most needed.	The "Rule" Page 30 - 3.10 commentary
7,6	Debate	In discussion and debate of the merits of the issues and the decisions we must make, we should not seek to gain advantage or to "win" the debate, but rather to strive to reach the best decision for the benefit of those we are called to serve. This requires selfless debate mindful our Vincentian and Christian values and obligations to those we serve. " I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment ". Corinthians 1.10	Corinthians 1.10
7,7	Discernment and Mercy	Vincentians practice Christian judgement and discernment in the evaluation of the poor and the circumstances of which they inform us. Although we may probe further and should try to obtain the truth, we should understand that they may not be able or willing to tell us their true circumstances which may be too painful for them to share with us. This need not necessarily mean that we do not provide the assistance that they need if we believe that the need is genuine despite their story being doubtful. Vincentians are in the business of being mislead and accept this as part of their vocation. " Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven. " (Luke 6:37) We help those we believe to be in need even if we suspect that they may not be telling the truth, we give the poor the benefit of any doubt we may be harbouring.	
7,8	Open Decision Making	Vincentians are open to the alternative views in their decision making. SSSP serve the "poorest of the poor" but understand that this is not to be taken literally to prevent us from helping those who may not appear to be in this category. Poverty can be subjective in that it is not always a shortage of material things, it can manifest itself in other ways that affect human spiritual and mental wellbeing. Vincentians may also help those who appear to be far from the poorest of the poor if this intervention can prevent them from falling into poverty relative to their current circumstances. " Let us consult, let us comment, with charity and clarity, about all the issues. Light will frequently arise from the one of whom we expect the least. The Lord will enlighten whoever He wishes ". The "Rule" Page 30 - 3.10. Prevention of poverty can also be appropriate in certain circumstances and this type of intervention may be appropriate and can be considered.	

8	Serving the Parish	"A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another". The Parish is the Catholic base for our conferences and provides some of the needs and some of the means with which we undertake our good works. SSVP members should prioritise the nurturing the relationship between the Conference and the Parish Structures to develop strong bonds of deep trust.	John 13:33-35
8,1	Member Awareness	Members to inform themselves of the duties and obligations of meeting behaviour at the PPC, to encourage and assist fellow SSVP members to act in accordance with them. "Own and read your own copy of the "Rule" and/or refer to the SSVP SA online version".	
8,2	Obedience to Rules	SSVP members adhere to the parish rules and requirements already in place and participate in the ongoing interaction between the Parish Structures and its SSVP Conference. <i>"Faithful to the clear intentions of Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his companions, the Society has a close relationship with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Respect of the members for the hierarchy provides the foundation for harmonious reciprocal cooperation".</i> The "Rule Page 34 - 5.1	The "Rule" Page 34 - 5.1
8,3	Parish Liaison	Appoint SSVP parish liaison representative to serve on the Pastoral Council and act democratically in accordance with the PPC rules within its structures attending meetings consistently, on time and participate fully in their content	
8,4	Parish Liaison	Develop reciprocal harmonious communication and cooperation with the parish priest, deacons, parishioners and the diocese	
8,5	Example	SSVP members to promote the concept of service and provide a good example of Christian Spirituality to parishioners	
8,6	Hospitality and Awareness	Invite parishioners to attend SSVP information sessions at least twice per year on an ongoing basis to promote an awareness of the good works of SSVP throughout SA with a focus on local activities	
8,7	New Member Recruitment	Follow up the awareness presentations with Invitations to interested parishioners to attend the local SSVP conference meeting or to discuss our good works in separate meetings in the hope of recruiting new members	
8,8	School Twinning	Meet with schools local to the parish conference individually or schools in a wider area in conjunction with other conferences to develop a cooperative relationship in which the school pupils can be involved. Ask the Central or National Council Twinning officers to help in these twinning efforts	
8,9	Visibility of "Good Works"	"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven". Matthew 5:16. But Matthew 6:3-4 appears to contradict this as in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, <i>"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you".</i> This is sometimes taken that Vincentians should work in secret and this can limit awareness and the extent of SSVP good works and consequently, it's income and the extent of it's good works. Secrecy should not be confused with confidentiality and we can therefore shine a light on Vincentian good works with humility as a group giving glory to God, but do so confidentially to protect and maintain the dignity of those we serve.	
9	Service in Finance	<i>"Vincentians should never forget that giving love, talents and time is more important than giving money. Nevertheless, the Society uses money and property to help relieve the suffering of those in need. The Society's funds must be handled with the upmost care, prudence and generosity. Money must not be hoarded. Decisions regarding the use of money and property are to be made in reflection of the light of the Gospel and Vincentian principles. Accurate records must be kept of all funds received and spent."</i> The "Rule" page 31 - 3.14. Office bearers and members are obliged to demonstrate care of and accountability for the God given resources that they manage and utilise in providing their service to the poor. Vincentians are accountable to our own conscience, to each other, to our donors and beneficiaries and above all to God.	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.14
9,1	Member Awareness	Members to inform themselves of the duties and obligations of the treasurer and financial officer at each level of SSVP SA, to encourage and assist those office bearers to act in accordance with them at each applicable level of SSVP structure that the member is active in. "Own and read your own copy of the "Rule" and/or refer to the SSVP SA online version".	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.12 commentary
9,2	Member Support	Members to encourage office bearers to follow SSVP duties and rules that provide for the optimal use of money and property in the sharing of resources as widely and equitably as possible throughout SA to the maximum benefit of all those in need	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.14
9,3	Member Liaison	Members to assist in liaison with potential and current donors as and when it becomes necessary and/or as when specifically requested by any treasurer, fundraising officer or other office bearer throughout SSVP SA structures	
10	Service in Training	The "Rule" reminds all members that: "It is essential that the Society continually promotes the formation and training of its members and officers, in order to deepen their knowledge of it and their spirituality, improve the sensitivity, quality, and efficiency of the benefits, resources and opportunities that are available for the poor." We have a duty to the poor to ensure that we are well informed Vincentians maximising our service to the poor.	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.12 commentary.
10,1	Member Awareness	Members to inform themselves of the duties and obligations of the training officer at each level of SSVP SA, to encourage and assist those office bearers to act in accordance with them at each level of SSVP structure the member is active in. "Own and read your own copy of the "Rule" and/or refer to the SSVP SA online version".	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.12 commentary
10,2	Awareness	Members to be aware of all available training modules and to identify those modules that each member should be trained in to ensure they are comfortable with the requirements of each area of SSVP operations that they are currently active in and also those they may wish to follow in the future	
10,3	Participation	Members to request and/or enquire as to the availability of training in your District or Central Council areas and attend the required training module presentations.	
10,4	SSVP History Awareness	Members to ensure that they attend the training modules that present the history of the Society including its Patron St. Vincent de Paul, its founder Alexander Wilmot and the details of the founding of the Society	
11	Service in Compliance	SSVP office bearers and members at all levels of the Society of SA are responsible for operational compliance with "The Rule", their individual office bearer responsibilities and this Spiritual and Service Guidance for Members, Councils and Conferences document. SSVP office bearers and members are to hold fellow office bearers and members to account for the actions taken or wrongful inaction. Office bearers and members are obliged to demonstrate care and accountability of the God given resources that they manage and utilise in proving their service to the poor. Vincentians are accountable to our own conscience, to each other, to our donors and beneficiaries and above all to God.	
11,1	Member Awareness	Members to inform themselves of the duties and obligations of the various officer bearers at each level of SSVP SA, encourage and assist those office bearers to act in accordance with them at each level of SSVP structure the member is active in. "Own and read your own copy of the "Rule" and/or refer to the SSVP SA online version.	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.12 commentary

11,2	Discipline	"It is in the interest of all Members to read and sometimes study the Rule to acquaint themselves with the structure and the guidelines that pertain to the Society, internationally and locally." Members are encouraged to politely remind office bearers of their duty to be similarly disciplined in their decisions and actions within the structure and guidelines of the "Rule" for the ultimate growth and development of the society as a unity as opposed to work being done in isolation. Brother Mike Nolan, who served as SA National President and SA National Spiritual Advisor for many years once observed, "Let us not bluff ourselves that we can be loyal members of this Society without knowing its rules and its spirit". Sage advice for all Vincentians from a revered SSSVP member.	The "Rule" Page 4 - National President June Rehman preface.
11,3	Discipline	Members to inform themselves of the content and requirements of the SSSVP SA "Rule", the constitution and the development documents when discussing and voting on issues that are covered by them. Members must vote in accordance with the requirements set out in the SSSVP compliance documents unless they believe they contradict Vincentian values.	
11,4	Discipline	In the event of a proposal to vote against SSSVP compliance documents at any level of the Society, the President at that level must set out the circumstances and context of the vote in writing to the next level of the Society , request and receive formal written ratification of the proposed vote before the proposed action can be implemented	
11,5	Participation	Members and office bearers participate dutifully in SSSVP activities in accordance with the rules and requirements of the levels of the structures that they are in involved with. We do this in cooperation with our fellow Vincentians in a Christian spirit seeking to serve the best interests of the poor we serve and God.	
12	Service in Development	Members should be aware of SSSVP SA national development objectives and have access to and opportunity to discuss the National Development Plan in all of its aspects both online and through the serving office bearers at each level of SSSVP	
12,1	Member Awareness	Members to inform themselves of the duties and obligations of the Development Officer at each level of SSSVP SA, to encourage and assist those office bearers to act in accordance with them at each level of SSSVP structure the member is active in. "Own and read your own copy of the "Rule" and/or refer to the SSSVP SA online version".	The "Rule" Page 31 - 3.12 commentary
12,2	NDP Participation	Members to contribute to a facilitated review of the current National Development Plan (NDP) each year and to consider the implementation of any projects outlined in the NDP that may be applicable in their areas of activity. If Members think that other projects are more appropriate for SSSVP in SA, they should provide the details to the National Development Officer through SSSVP structures and request that it be discussed and if appropriate, included in the next revision of the NDP.	
12,3	Project Participation	Members to confirm which development options are to be pursued in the coming year in their areas of activity	
12,4	Project Participation	Members to review the progress of the initiatives and identify any corrective actions required	
12,5	Project Participation	Members to confirm the required input from other SSSVP members and office bearers are required to enable correction actions	