

# Conference Spiritual Advisor

## Job Description, Qualifications, Appointment and Desired Outcomes

### JOB DESCRIPTION

Introduction. “Because the primary purpose of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is to increase the holiness of its members, the role of Spiritual Advisor is essential to its life and mission.’ (Rule: Part I, Article 3.13 and Part III, Statute 15). The Spiritual Advisor assumes responsibility for the spiritual growth, development, and life of a Conference with full knowledge of and dedication to the mission and ministry of the Society.” (*Manual: 2.5 – Introduction*)

Functions. “The Spiritual Advisor’s task is that of spiritual animator. The Spiritual Advisor enables members to better understand the meaning of charity and its practical application toward those in need, and assists with the development of their Vincentian spiritual life. Spiritual Advisors play an important role in promoting the work of the Society. In keeping with changing times and needs, they provide inspiration and challenge for the adoption of new works. The Spiritual Advisor attends the meetings, participates in the discussions, and provides guidance to the Conference membership on spiritual matters. As circumstances permit, Spiritual Advisors actively participate with other members in direct service to the needy.” (*Manual: 2.5 – Functions of the Spiritual Advisor*)

Knowledge & Commitments. Spiritual Advisors have knowledge of, and are committed to:

- Jesus and the Gospels
- Vincentian spirituality
- St. Vincent de Paul Rule, Manual, and Spiritual Advisor Handbook, mission and ministry
- Personal witness in their own spiritual life
- Catholic social teachings
- Value of lay ministry in the church
- Active service to neighbors/clients in need
- Understands “poverty”
- Leading prayer and sharing
- Praying with clients

Responsibilities. The role of the Spiritual Advisor is *manifested* in the following ways:

- Attend the annual SVdP-Georgia Spiritual Advisor Formation, in-person or virtually. Inform the SVdP-Georgia Director of Vincentian Support ([astricklin@svdpgeorgia.org](mailto:astricklin@svdpgeorgia.org)) of completion.
- Attend virtual SVdP-National Spiritual Advisor Formation.
- Attend conference meetings regularly, and remain for the entire meeting. Facilitate opening and closing prayers. Prepare and facilitate spiritual reflections during meetings, including the discussions.
- Plan and execute special prayers, sessions (retreats, formation, and commissioning services, for example), and plan special Vincentian Catholic Masses.
- Mentor fellow Vincentians using national and Georgia resources.
- Provide inspiration, guidance, and challenge.
- Help develop the spiritual life of fellow Vincentians.
- Utilize the Society spiritual formation resources.
- Promote the works of the Society by suggesting resource material that may be used to deepen the faith of fellow Vincentians.
- Manifest love for those who are poor and participate in direct service to them.
- Remind members of their Vincentian vocation - their primary purpose to grow in holiness.
- Encourage Vincentian friendship among members.

- Grow together in their knowledge of Vincentian spirituality.
- Strive to learn more about St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, and Blessed Rosalie Rendu.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Ideal Characteristics of Spiritual Advisors (*Some of the characteristics may be developed after entering into this role.*)

- Individuals with ongoing experiences with God, who have a strong prayer life, and can witness to their own spiritual growth.
- Persons who are balanced and approachable.
- Persons capable of being a spiritual companion, mentor, and friend.
- Person who is willing to commit to increasing their knowledge of Vincentian resources, mission, and ministry of the Society.
- Person who is willing to commit to the responsibilities listed in this job description.
- Non-judgmental but prepared to share Vincentian values.
- Exemplifies Vincentian virtues: humility, simplicity, gentleness, selflessness, and zeal.
- Persons who can foster friendship in conference and with those served.
- Persons who can deal with tension and ambiguity.
- Someone who has a commitment to the value of the laity in the church.
- Someone with good listening and communication skills.
- Someone who has the ability to lead prayer and facilitate sharing.
- Someone able to recognize and encourage others' gifts in the Vincentian mission.

## APPOINTMENT

“The Conference Spiritual Advisor, Priest, Deacon or lay, is determined in prayerful deliberation by the Conference members and is appointed by the Conference President.” (*2021 Spiritual Advisor Handbook, Part VII, Spiritual Advisor Guidelines, page 16*)

“Conference leadership must select a person who is both willing and able to devote the necessary time and energy to the role of Spiritual Advisor. Spiritual Advisors are indeed full Conference members, but they do not serve as officers; if ordained, they do not vote. Often a Catholic lay member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul will be chosen, though an ordained Priest<sup>1</sup> or Deacon, vowed religious, or parish pastoral staff may fill this role.” (*Manual, 2.5 - Introduction*)

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- ✓ We can see the link between service and holiness.
- ✓ We can see conference members as a faith community.
- ✓ We can see each moment as an opportunity for holiness.
- ✓ We can see the face of Christ in everyone we serve.
- ✓ We can see that our ministry is no longer just a business transaction; instead, we can see growth of spiritual friendship (1) between Vincentians, and (2) between Vincentians and the neighbors (the “suffering Christ”) they serve.

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<sup>1</sup> “If the Pastor wishes to be the Spiritual Advisor but is not able to fulfill the responsibilities of the role, the Conference President will appoint an appropriate Vincentian as the Associate Spiritual Advisor.” (*2021 Spiritual Advisor Handbook, Part VII, Spiritual Advisor Guidelines, page 16*)