

5 Questions for Ron Weston



*"The Essential elements of the society of St. Vincent de Paul are spirituality, friendship, and service"
From Statute 1: The Rule. I believe in SVdP's national program to be 'subservient leaders.' As a leader
I would be of service to conferences and to the poor."*

1. Why are you interested in becoming the next DC President?

St. Vincent de Paul's mission resonates with me: "Inspired by Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization, leads women and men to join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul."

I've been a Vincentian at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Parish for 22 years, serving the poor in the area. I was also Executive Director of St. Vincent de Paul Contra Costa County's District Council under the leadership of Jim Noe. I learned quite a bit from him, and I approve of his style of serving the society. In addition, I've been president of the Hope Conference for 3 years helping our clients and other conferences with funds that they cannot handle. I've spent 3 years going to every district council meeting (I may have missed 1). And I'm just not happy with how the current administration is being run. I believe there has not been enough change in the past 3 years, and there are many more opportunities for growth.

2. Describe your overall vision for SVdP.

The most important attribute to SVdP is its Spirituality, which I believe has been increasing. If elected president, I would like to focus on putting an end to financial losses by being more proactive in our retail

stores and reviewing our expenses. I think we should, as a nonprofit serving the poor, do our best to break-even and not to show losses each month.

I also feel that we have steered away from the bylaws, in particular, not being inclusive of Conference Presidents when it comes to making decisions. I hope to expand the Board of Directors by skill (including those with finance, real estate, and operations backgrounds), by adding more female representation, and by encouraging Conference Presidents to consider joining the board or submitting members of their conferences to join the board.

3. Identify areas you see SVdP excel and explain why.

SVdP excels in spirituality. Our current administration has done a great organizing spiritual trainings for our Vincentians.

4. Identify areas you see the biggest need for improvement and explain why.

I believe the board needs to be expanded and the president should be delegating more to the board so that there would be proper advice to the district council. I believe that the reserve should be reduced to 6 months and the excess funds spent to serve the poor possibly in the form of a new store to increase employment and justify expenses. I also believe that we should increase the amount of conferences that are using the mentoring program which has come from national.

5. What do you think your biggest challenges in this position might be?

Gaining the confidence of the presidents so we can better serve the poor. Finding better ways to improve our current voucher system to serve the poor. And reducing prices for our clients in our thrift stores.

6. Describe your spirituality and how it might impact SVdP if elected president.

I am an active catholic giving service to the church, a daily mass communicant. I was born and raised a catholic and truly believe in the Christian way of life. "Be Christ to others as Christ is to us."