



St Vincent
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR





PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR



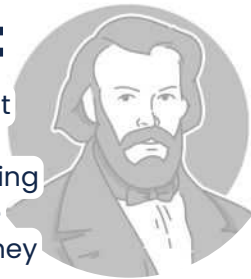
The option for the poor is simply the idea that, as reflected in Canon Law, "The Christian faithful are also obliged to promote social justice and, mindful of the precept of the Lord, to assist the poor." It indicates an obligation on our part to care for the poor and vulnerable, which includes all those who are disadvantaged, isolated or marginalized in society: widows, children, people with disabilities, the elderly, and victims of oppression, among others.

The SVP response

The SVP look to help anyone experiencing poverty in England and Wales or overseas at any point before, during or after a crisis, through a network of local conferences run by members and staff. Best summed up in this short video as a society the challenge is to adapt and remain open minded to the needs we encounter. [Click here!](#)

Founder's Thought

Knowledge of the poor and needy is not gained by pouring over books or in discussions with politicians, but by visiting the slums where they live, sitting by the bedside of the dying, feeling the cold they feel and learning from their lips the causes of their woes. **-Blessed Frédéric Ozanam -**



Matthew 25:40

And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'



Case Study: We all need a helping hand sometimes

Holly, is a 999 phone operator. She contacted the SVP in tears saying that she had not eaten in two days and had resorted to stealing food from the office fridge. The SVP were able to provide her with a food parcel. It also became apparent that Holly was struggling to pay her electricity bill and as a result was in debt. This had created a vicious cycle for Holly: she was unable to pay for food as well as her gas and electricity bills. She had also been saving money by showering at work instead of at home. Holly was shocked that she was struggling to make ends meet on her salary which she had previously managed to live on. She is not alone: with the cost of food items rising sharply, and UK food prices inflation at 12.4%, we are seeing more and more people use our services, many of whom had never relied on foodbanks before.

More than by a fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by fear of remaining within structures that give us a false sense of security...while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: 'Give them something to eat' (Mk 6:37)

Pope Francis: Evangelii Gaudium, paragraph 49, 2013.

Question Point

- What is poverty?
- Can you give any of Jesus' teachings on how we should respond to the poor?
- What poverty do you see where you live?



OPTION FOR THE POOR

NOTES

DEFINE PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR:

The option for the poor is simply the idea that, as reflected in Canon Law, "The Christian faithful are also obliged to promote social justice and, mindful of the precept of the Lord, to assist the poor." It indicates an obligation on our part to care for the poor and vulnerable, which includes all those who are disadvantaged, isolated or marginalised in society. Whilst giving them autonomy and dignity, by giving them a say in **how and what** we help them with.

QUOTE:

Knowledge of the poor and needy is not gained by pouring over books or in discussions with politicians, but by visiting the slums where they live, sitting by the bedside of the dying, feeling the cold they feel and learning from their lips the causes of their woes. **-Blessed Frédéric Ozanam -**

BIT OF BIBLE:



Matthew 25:40

And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

CASE STUDY: We all need a helping hand sometimes

With the cost of living crisis even people in full time employment who have in the past managed are now struggling. Holly, is a 999 phone operator and an example of the people the SVP are now supporting. Holly was shocked that she was struggling to make ends meet on her salary which she had previously managed to live on. She is not alone: with the cost of food items rising sharply, and UK food prices inflation at 12.4%, we are seeing more and more people use our services, many of whom had never relied on foodbanks before.

THE SVP RESPONSE:

The SVP look to help anyone experiencing poverty in England and Wales or overseas at any point before, during or after a crisis, through a network of local conferences run by members and staff. As a society the challenge is to adapt and remain open minded to the needs we encounter.

CONCLUSION:

The SVP tries at all times to not just 'give' aid to others, but to bring them into community, and to discuss what it is they need and want. It is often very challenging as someone in need to lose any control over what you eat, where you live or what support you receive. The SVP tries to live the Church's principle of preferential option for the poor, by giving those accessing our services some autonomy and agency in their support, giving them dignity.

