

SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL- ST. JOSEPH'S CONFERENCE

During the months of July and August we take a summer break and meet again in September. Our meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00pm in the upstairs room of the church.

The only activities we do during the summer are emergency food hampers for the people we serve and the collection of used eyeglasses. The eyeglasses are then dropped off at various Optometry Centres in Port Moody and Coquitlam for distribution to the Third World Eye Care Society. Over the years we have collected hundreds and hundreds of pairs of used eyeglasses for distribution.

The Third World Eye Care Society is a 100% volunteer registered Canadian charity that began in 1995 with a \$100 donation to the founder, Dr. Marina Roma-March, by the Mount Pleasant Lions Club of Vancouver for an eye project in Tecomán, Mexico. TWECS eye teams are made up of 10-15 members that include eye surgeons, eye doctors, opticians and lay volunteers who have no optical experience yet have a great desire to help. Each volunteer who joins a project pays their own expenses. They set up a mobile clinic in a church, a schoolhouse or a town square, anywhere that people from the mountain villages or city barrios can find them. During a project they can help 4,000 to 5,000 people depending on the number of team members and the number of eyeglasses that are collected and sorted in the eyeglass warehouse at the Burnaby-Lougheed Lions Club. If an Ophthalmologist is available and a proper operating theatre can be arranged, cataract surgeries are performed.

St. Lucy: also called St. Lucia, born around 283AD is a Christian martyr. She is most notably the patron saint of the blind, eye disorders, virgins and the poor. "Lucy" means light or lucid. After her mother's blindness was healed through prayer to St. Agatha, St. Lucy secretly pledged her life to God and to remain a virgin for life, in the tradition of Saint Agatha. Instead of marrying, she planned on distributing her dowry to the poor.

Facts about St. Lucy: There is a famous 10ft 4in statue of St. Lucy holding a palm branch on the North Colonnade of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. She has a country named after her, the Caribbean Island of Saint Lucia. This makes the country one of only two in the entire world to be named after a woman. The country also has a major shrine in her honor. She appears in Dante's famous poem, "Divine Comedy", she appears in all three parts of the famous poem.

St. Lucy is one of only seven female saints listed in the Roman Canon of the Mass. After the consecration of the Eucharist the priest will often mention the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, the 12 apostles and 27 saints in addition to St. Lucy and six other female saints. They are the only female saints mentioned during the Eucharistic Prayer.

The story of St. Lucy's martyrdom is one of the most inspiring from early Christianity. A victim of the bitter rule of Emperor Diocletian, she is a powerful reminder that one's religious faith can survive even in a society that tries to crush it.

St. Lucy's canonization date is unknown. She was recognized by the early Christians because of her martyrdom, and by the whole Catholic Church by the 6th century.

St. Lucy's feast day is celebrated on December 13th, the date of her martyrdom

There is a container on the bookcase in the vestibule of the church for you to drop off your used eyeglasses. Thank you for your donation.

Margaret Rowe