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An Analysis of the Cases Under Care with the Society of St. Vincent De Paul of Racine, Wisconsin from January 1, 1947 to January 1, 1948

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE CASES UNDER CARE WITH THE SOCIETY
OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL OF RACINE, WISCONSIN
FROM JANUARY 1, 1947 to JANUARY 1, 1948

BY

Margaret Pieh Rogan

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
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CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

IN RACINE, WISCONSIN

The organization of the Racine Particular Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in 1934 marked a milestone in the development of the Society's work in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. St. Peter's Conference, the original parish conference in Milwaukee, was formed December 24, 1849, under the careful guidance of the Bishop of Milwaukee* and formed a base on which was built the subsequent history of the Society in Milwaukee.¹ Conferences were formed in many of the parishes in the city and the idea was carried to outlying parishes by pastors assigned to them. These pastors worked patiently and steadily to help their members develop the Vincentian spirit as taught by their founder, Frederick Ozanam. The only reward they sought was sanctification of their souls through good works in the interests of the poor.

The development of the Particular Council of Racine and of Madison under the direction of the Archbishop** in 1934 initiated the organization of

* Most Reverend John Martin Henni

1 Albert Paul Schimberg, Humble Harvest, Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1949

** Most Reverend Samuel A. Stritch

the Milwaukee Archdiocesan program, and on August 1, 1940, the Metropolitan Central Council of Wisconsin was formed. Previous to this time two parish conferences had been working quietly and unobtrusively in Racine. St. Joseph's Conference was formed on June 15, 1926, under the direction of the president who has served continuously for twenty-four years, and St. Mary's Conference was formed on November 14, 1915. In St. Mary's Conference, the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul worked cooperatively with the conference, and, together, they made a definite contribution to the privately supported charity program of the city.

On May 6, 1934, the Racine Particular Council was formed with officers* approved by the Archbishop. Within a few months parish conferences were organized in St. John, St. Rose, Sacred Heart, St. Patrick, St. Edward, St. Stanislaus, and Holy Name parishes, making a total of nine conferences affiliated with the Particular Council. These early conferences worked untiringly, relieving the physical needs of the poor in their parishes at a time when the country was faced with a serious business recession. Stimulated and guided by their Archbishop and his priests, the Vincentians strove to dispense charity in a prudent manner. With the great increase in the volume of work, and the recognition that many families came to them with problems requiring case work services, the Vincentians, through the officers of the Particular Council, made plans to open an office under the direction of a family case worker.

* Officers included: Rev. Anthony Erz, Spiritual Director; Lewis J. Quinn, President; William L. Bushell, Vice-President; John B. Kosterman, Secretary; Matthew E. Keefe, Sr., Treasurer

In September, 1934, the Racine Community Chest admitted the St. Vincent de Paul Society as a member agency designated as a Catholic family welfare agency; however the Community Chest stated that "non-Catholics were not to be excluded".² \$6,218.75 was supplied by the Racine Community Chest with which to secure an adequately equipped office and to hire a full time family case worker and a secretary. Through the cooperation of a company interested in the welfare program of the city, the Society received a suite of offices, rent free, for the first two years. The agency submitted a budget request for \$7,015.00 for the year 1935-1936 and the Archbishop's Emergency Campaign of the Archdiocese contributed \$13,000.00 for a building and other agency needs.

Early in 1935 a case worker was engaged to serve as the agency executive and to give case work services. Her duties were to be partly administrative, and as a case worker, she was to assist the parish conferences with their families and to accept direct applications for service. Applications were studied cooperatively with conference presidents and, through this means, many families were referred to the conferences. At the same time the parish conferences turned over to the office many families in need of professional service. Thus the work of the Central Office has maintained the standards required of agencies participating in the Community Chest and having membership in the local Welfare Council. The office staff was increased and in 1947 it included an executive, who was a case worker, a second

case worker, a registrar, who served as intake worker, and a bookkeeper-stenographer. A caretaker divided his time between the office and the Thrift Shop since both projects shared the agency's building. The Community Chest increased the annual allotment to meet the agency's expanding program, and in 1947 the Chest grant amounted to \$12,513.95.

The parish conferences have financed their own charitable activities through donations of active members, benefactors, honorary members, "poor box" collections, special parish collections, and the sale of religious papers. The Catholic Charities Council of the Milwaukee Archdiocese has contributed annually toward the support of the special works of the Society and, in 1947, \$5,000.00 was received from this source. Other income is derived from gifts and bequests which are often contributed for some specific purpose, such as, child health service, clothing, or Catholic high school scholarships.

The special works of the Society are developed and carried out by means of special committees. A Thrift Shop Committee has directed the operation of a resale shop, known as a Thrift Shop. Through this source, conferences and case workers are able to supply at small cost clothing and household furnishings to the families under care. An Institutional Visiting Committee of Vincentians make weekly visits to the Racine County Institutions, cooperating with the chaplains* appointed to give spiritual help to the patients. Religious literature in various languages is supplied to the patients of the County Home, County Hospital, and the Tuberculosis Sanatorium.

* Augustinian Fathers

Specially constructed altars and other needs have been supplied by the Society for the celebration of Mass in these institutions. A New Conference Committee has the responsibility of working toward the establishment of parish conferences in all parishes of the County. St. Rita's Conference was formed in 1942 and was aggregated by the Council General in 1949. The Central Office accepts for service or relief families from Racine County who are referred by their pastors or who make personal applications for assistance.

The program of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Racine was organized in the belief that both volunteers and professionally trained workers are needed to carry out a Catholic charity program. Together, they can serve the needy efficiently and economically and, at the same time, these workers can, through their service, strive toward self sanctification. On October 12, 1947, the Holy Father, Pius XII, addressed by radio the annual meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Charities and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul which was assembled at New Orleans, Louisiana. He said:

Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul and all apostles of Catholic Charities: Yours is a sublime vocation. When that great exemplar of Christian Charity, Frederick Ozanam, first launched his conferences, his purpose was to demonstrate that the teachings of Christ are still workable in the present. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was the challenge of Catholic youth to the race of men that had grown skeptical of men being able any longer to live their lives according to the principles of the Gospel. Though you be only laymen of the world, accost this great invalid and while you bring bread to nourish its body and strive personally to provide for its varied needs, like good Samaritans, bend low, gently probe its wounds and pour into them the oil of Christ's alleviating message. Whisper into ears, long since perhaps dead to priestly counsel, words of encouragement, hope and peace, and the example of your Christ-like love will hasten the day

when the embittered victim of sorrow or of failure and injustice will return to those whom God has constituted guardians and physicians of souls.³

Thus the Vicar of Christ counselled the volunteers who have traditionally been the builders of organized private charity. He counselled also the professional workers, who seeing Christ in the poor, have, through study and training, prepared themselves to be specialists in the field. Working cooperatively, each one can help the other to relieve the distress of others and to reach his own ultimate destiny.

Vincentians in Racine have made a definite contribution to the welfare program of the city during the past thirteen years. Many children have had the benefit of parochial school training through their encouragement and financial help. \$41,223.78 was expended by them in their work with families whose problems were chiefly financial. They have served as counsellors to many young men who were unable to secure counsel and guidance from their parents. The aged and chronically ill have welcomed the Vincentian visitors and hundreds of homes have been made more comfortable and habitable through their assistance. Parish conferences expended \$3,196.33, and the Central Office and Particular Council expenditures totalled \$19,382.77 during 1947. Furthermore, in keeping with the traditional religious program of the Society, the parish conferences have given spiritual counsel under the direction of their parish clergy, and the case workers have been guided by the Spiritual Director of the Particular Council in their effort to assist their clients toward spiritual development.

³ The Holy Father's Message, Proceedings of the 33rd National Conference of Catholic Charities at New Orleans, October, 1947

This study is concerned with an analysis of the cases which have had service or relief from the Central Office staff of the Society in Racine. The cases studied include only those applicants who were served through the case work division of the Society and on each of the 185 cases there is a case record on file to substantiate the data tabulated. There were twenty-four persons to whom the agency loaned or rented hospital beds or wheel chairs. These applicants neither requested nor received any other service. There are no case records of these applicants, therefore they were omitted from this study.

The year 1947 was selected for study because it was the first normal year since the organization of the Racine office. Since 1934 the staff had pioneered in a new community embracing an industrial city of 70,000 people, most of whom earn their living through employment in industry. Therefore, anything like the depression of the 1930's, which interferes with employment or production is reflected immediately in the worker's pay check. On the other hand the war production program drew into the factories hundreds of mothers and great numbers of young people attending high school. This meant that in many instances home supervision was relaxed and, although day care services protected the small children of working mothers, teen agers who were wage earners were exposed to unusual dangers. By January, 1947, the population had swung back into normal living habits and the service men were home with their families. War wages and widespread employment of school children had ended and the period was more conducive to healthy family living.

The year 1947 also marked a year of normal operation in the

St. Vincent de Paul office. From past experience it has been found that a staff of two case workers, a registrar, and a bookkeeper-stenographer can adequately serve the members of the thirteen Catholic parishes of the city and give needed service to the outlying parishes of Racine County. In 1947 the staff included these four employees. The focus of this study is to learn about the persons who came to the Society's office during 1947, to define the problems which caused them to seek help, and the services which they received. This analysis of problems and services includes data on the number of families and unattached persons who received material assistance, other services, or both relief and service.

Historical data were secured from the minutes of the meetings of the agency and from staff members who have been in the office since its organization. Statistical data were obtained by listing the families active in January, 1947, and breaking down the distribution of applications according to months.⁴ Case records were then read and the indentifying information and services were recorded on individual schedules* prepared for this purpose. Findings were later tabulated and presented in tables included in this report. The twenty-four persons to whom hospital beds or wheel chairs were loaned or rented are not included in the data tabulated. Therefore only 185 cases were actually studied. From this study it may be possible to point up the areas of unmet need and to help the agency improve its community service in the future.

* See Schedule in Appendix

⁴ Statistical Reports of the Racine Particular Council - 1947

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF CASES ACTIVE IN 1947

The cases active with the agency during 1947 were studied both from the standpoint of agency function, and to secure pertinent information about the applicants themselves.

An analysis of the applications received shows that, of the 185 applications, 66 were new to the agency, 56 were carried over from the previous year, and 63 of the cases had been known previously and were reopened during the year 1947. The applicants were all members of the white race, 65 per cent were born in Wisconsin and 38 per cent indicated Racine as their birthplace. About 10 per cent had come to Racine from nearby states and 6 per cent were from more distant parts of the United States. Fifteen birthplaces were unknown and 19 persons were foreign born with Polish born predominating in this group.

Other information about the cases active in 1947 is presented under four major divisions: (1) referral source, (2) distribution by month of openings and closings, (3) the disposition of the case. Table I shows the distribution according to the source of referral.

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF 185 APPLICATIONS ACCORDING TO SOURCE OF REFERRAL

Source of referral	Number of referrals
Court	14
Public Health Nurse	20
Other Agencies	21
Doctors, Lawyers, Employers	41
Church	44
Personal	45
Total	185

According to Table I, 70 per cent of the referrals came from three sources: personal, church, and doctors, lawyers and employers, with a minimum of numerical difference among the three. Personal applications came about as a result of the applicant's knowledge of the agency and of the services which it was prepared to give. Referrals from the Church came through the pastor, the parish conference, or the parochial school, and included cases of marital conflict, of disturbed family relationships, of truancy, and of financial need. The persons referred by doctors, lawyers, and employers included a number of unmarried mothers for confinement plans, alcoholics referred by their employers for treatment, and families in need of

other special service.

The remaining 30 per cent of the referrals came from three additional sources and in smaller numbers. Agencies referred cases requiring services they were not able to give. The district attorney, the clerk of municipal court, and the juvenile probation officer referred marital cases and cases of parental neglect of children, which had been brought to their attention but did not fall within their function. The public health nurses, serving the parochial schools, referred cases of medical care which the parents, because of marginal incomes, were unable to provide.

The analysis of cases included information as to the distribution by month of openings and closings. This information is presented in Table II.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF 185 APPLICATIONS MADE TO THE SOCIETY DURING THE 12 MONTHS OF 1947 ACCORDING TO MONTH AND THE CLOSINGS OF 1947 ACCORDING TO MONTH

Month	Openings	Closings
January	16	6
February	4	8
March	12	8
April	10	7
May	19	8
June	12	12
July	4	10
August	10	7
September	8	12
October	15	12
November	5	17
December	10	17
Totals	185	124

The agency carried over 60 active cases from 1946. According to tabulated data, applications during January were high in 1947. This is not unusual since in that month many industrial plants have a two-week layoff for

inventory. About 50 per cent of the applications necessitated material assistance and in 33 1/3 per cent there were health problems requiring medical or hospital care. One unmarried mother applied for confinement plans, and one aged Catholic person, who died in the County Home, was buried through the arrangements made by the Society. After light intake in February, applications of a general nature increased until in May the intake reached the highest point. One third of the applications were referred by school faculty members because of truancy, pregnancy, or health problems requiring treatment during the summer. The remainder included marital cases, aged persons requiring institutional care, and persons in need of emergency medical or hospital treatment. Intake increased in October as a result of the annual health survey by the public health nurses of children attending parochial schools. This trend is apparent each year. December applications are likewise high each year because of the special referrals at Christmas time.

There seems to be no special reason governing the number of closings each month, although it has been noted that closings are usually higher toward the end of the year. This is probably a result of short contacts with persons referred at Christmas, and the completion of medical or dental treatment of the children referred in September and October. In June, 1947, closings were higher than in preceding months because a number of dependent children living in a non-Catholic institution had been assisted with transportation and school lunches while attending a parochial school. This service was completed with the close of the school term.

In addition to information on sources of referral, monthly distri-

bution of applications and closings, the disposition of cases, according to four possible categories, was also included in the study. These data are shown in Table III .

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF 185 APPLICATIONS ACCORDING TO
DISPOSITION BY THE AGENCY

Disposition	Number of Cases
Accepted	124
Accepted and Referred to Conferences	12
Accepted and Referred to Agencies	30
or Other Persons	7
Closed or Rejected	12
Total	185

Of the 185 applications received in 1947, 12 were closed or rejected. Two cases were closed because the families moved from the city. Ten cases were rejected for the following reasons: Five were active with other agencies, three were rejected because the agency was not prepared to give the service requested, another case was rejected because the child needed institutional care, and in one case the child who needed service died shortly after referral.

Another twelve applications, which included requests for household furnishings, assistance with parochial school expenses, and visits to aged persons, were referred to parish conferences.

Under the agreement between the Society and the Community Chest, the St. Vincent de Paul office gives only temporary financial assistance to meet some special need, or to those persons who are ineligible for public assistance. Frequently the agency meets emergent needs before referring a family for public assistance. Thirty cases were served temporarily by the agency before they were accepted by the public welfare departments for some form of public assistance. Other referrals included: four to pastors, two to the court, and one to an attorney. The remaining 124 applications were accepted by the agency for continued service. In addition to the 185 cases studied, 24 persons loaned or rented sick room equipment. These figures indicate that of the total 209 applications filed with the agency, 197 or 94 per cent received some service.

THE APPLICANTS SERVED

From a review of the case records, it was possible to secure the identifying data and the background of the persons served. The religious affiliation was predominantly Roman Catholic, but of the 170 persons reporting their affiliation with parishes, only 100 could be considered practical Catholics. The remaining seventy persons were either "fallen away" or were lax members. Twelve applicants were non-Catholic and three applicants did not indicate their religious affiliation.

The social or marital status of the persons included in the study group is of importance because of the fact that the agency is a distinctly Catholic family welfare agency. Such information, therefore, has been tabulated in Table IV to show the social status of each applicant.

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO SOCIAL STATUS OF APPLICANTS

Status	Number of applicants
Child	1
Widower	2
Separated	14
Widow	20
Divorced	23
Single	26
Married	99
Total	185

Over 50 per cent of the applications were from married couples. About one-third were family groups in which one parent was out of the home as a result of death, divorce, or separation. Twenty-six single persons, or approximately 14 per cent, were accepted for service. This group included seven unmarried mothers, eight aged persons living in county institutions and the remaining applicants were single persons living alone or with relatives or friends.

Since the presence of parents in the home is important to the normal functioning of the family, the study had included a tabulation of the living

and deceased parents. This information is shown in Table V.

TABLE V

DISTRIBUTION AS TO THE LIVING PARENTS INCLUDED IN 185 APPLICATIONS

Parent	Number	Parent	Number
Father Living	139	Mother Living	157
Father Dead	39	Mother Dead	22
Unknown	7	Unknown	6
Total	185	Total	185

A study of the family composition discloses that 75 per cent of the families were complete with both father and mother living. In 39, or 21 per cent, of the applications the father was dead, and 19 widowed mothers were being assisted with ADC grants. A few of the mothers maintained their households either through their earnings, or through the contributions of employed children, or through Social Security Survivor's benefits. Included in the applications were 39 in which the father was deceased, 22 in which the mother was deceased, 11 aged persons receiving Old Age Assistance, and 6 persons living in county institutions.

The size of the family is an important item in studying the problems of families living in an industrial area where fathers, regardless of their

responsibilities, work forty hours a week at an hourly wage. Therefore, this study includes in Table VI information as to the size of families known to the agency.

TABLE VI

DISTRIBUTIONS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF FAMILIES OF 185 APPLICANTS

Number of children	Number of families	Total children
1	25	25
2	38	76
3	26	78
4	21	84
5	19	95
6	10	60
7	2	14
8	2	16
9	0	0
10	2	20
11	1	11
None	31	
Unknown	8	
Totals	185	479

Table VI shows that there were 479 children born into the families which were assisted. Of 185 applications, there were 27 single persons and 5 of these were unmarried mothers. Two divorced women gave birth to children out of wedlock. Therefore 158 applicants were studied to determine the number of children in these homes. It was impossible to secure this information from 8 applicants, and 31 applicants, including 20 single persons, were without children. Therefore in 147 families, there were 479 children. The largest number of families had 1, 2, or 3 children, and only 4 families had no children.

Seventy-eight per cent of the families had no outsiders living in their homes. In 14 per cent of the homes relatives were present, and of the remaining 8 per cent, one-half of the applicants were living in institutions. Therefore, only 4 per cent of the family groups included friends or roomers.

Since the housing shortage in industrial areas has given rise to problems in the family, it is important to understand the living arrangements of these families. Table VII shows the types of homes occupied by the families studied.

TABLE VII

DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE 185 APPLICANTS

Type of home	Number
Boarding Home	4
Institutions	8
Trailer	8
Relatives	8
Rented Home	18
Room	22
Apartment	55
Home Owned	62
Total	185

Although housing has been inadequate in Racine for about ten years, only 16 of the 185 applicants were forced to make use of government trailers and relatives' homes to meet their need in 1947. A review of the case records shows that existing problems made it difficult for these families to find desirable homes. Three were limited by racial restrictions, and 2 families were considered undesirable because of the excessive drinking and irregular employment of the fathers. One of these families with eight children was living in one room until the agency assisted them in securing a

government trailer reserved for service men and their families. Another woman with three little girls suffered a nervous collapse following her divorce when the family was boarding with a tavern keeper's family. The agency arranged for the mother to enter a sanitarium for treatment, placed the children in temporary foster homes and, with the help of relatives, arranged for the rental of a home in a government project in preparation for the mother's return to her family.

Relatives' homes were also used for the temporary shelter of 8 families. About one-half of this group made use of such an arrangement because of the illness or incapacitation of a parent. One divorced mother was evicted with her three children because of the neglect of her home. In this case relatives proposed assisting the family in order to give the children better training. Others in the study group who were living with relatives accepted the plan as a temporary shelter, establishing themselves elsewhere in a short time.

Those in boarding homes were predominantly aged persons without relatives who could care for them. Three families, broken by marital conflict, boarded until more permanent living arrangements could be worked out. The institutional group was made up largely of aged persons living in county institutions or in private homes for the aged. Some of these were maintained through public funds, and others, through their legal guardians, reimbursed the institutions for their board and maintenance. One hundred thirty five families were living in fairly adequate homes or apartments, and one-third of the family groups owned their homes or were buying them on monthly install-

ments. Single persons were living in rooms, boarding homes, or in institutions for the aged.

In addition to living arrangements, the occupation and economic status of the persons in the study group were considered. The occupations are classified according to the information contained in the agency records, and the distribution is shown in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII
DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT OF 185 APPLICANTS

Type of employment	Number of employees	Type of employment	Number of employees
Architect	2	Cook	4
City Employee	2	Housework	4
Railroad Company	2	Salesmen	4
Taxi Cab Driver	2	Office Work	18
Barber	2	Factory Work	91
Janitor	3	Unemployed	42
Laborer	3	Others	6
Total	16	Total	169

A review of the case records of the 185 persons showed that 42 persons, about 22 per cent, were unemployed and unemployable. This group

included widowed mothers of small children, incapacitated persons, aged persons, and those applicants who were living in county institutions. The classification "others" includes a painter whose family was forced to seek help because of the father's excessive drinking, and out-of-state gambler who wished to adopt a Catholic child in Wisconsin, an alcoholic plumber, a disabled veteran who worked part time in a laundry, a bakery salesman, and an out-of-state contractor who had been injured in an accident and needed transportation to his home community. The two architects were also transients who had been without employment and therefore requested assistance with living expenses and transportation to jobs that had been offered to them.

There were 22 persons whose employment was unskilled work which paid a wage inadequate to meet the needs that arose in their homes. Forty-nine per cent of the applicants were employed in factories. One-half of this number were office workers or skilled workers who earned adequate salaries. Ten per cent of the persons served were employed in other offices in the city, and 21 per cent were salesmen in stores. These employees received adequate salaries and their families were not troubled with financial problems. The complete breakdown of applications according to economic status is shown in Table IX.

TABLE IX

DISTRIBUTION OF 185 APPLICATIONS ACCORDING TO THE
ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE APPLICANT

Classification	Number of applicants	Percentage
Dependent	42	22.7%
Adequate	63	34
Marginal	80	43.3
Totals	185	100%

In the classification of applicants included in Table IX, the terms, Dependent, Adequate, and Marginal, have been used in this study to indicate the ability to provide family needs without financial assistance. The dependent group includes those who were maintained through some form of public assistance, the marginal group required only a small amount of financial help to meet a temporary emergency, and the adequate classification included those persons and families who were able to adequately provide, unassisted, the total needs of their families.

In this table 22.7 per cent of the persons served were economically dependent. These are the unemployed persons listed in Table VIII. Only 34 per cent had incomes adequate to meet their living needs and unanticipated expenses which arose in their households. Another 43.3 per cent of the applicants had marginal incomes necessitating financial assistance with

unplanned demands, such as, medical, dental or surgical care, homemaker service, or tuition in a school for exceptional children.

PROBLEMS PRESENTED

In this analysis, the cases active in 1947 were also studied as to the problems presented by the applicants. Table X gives the distribution and frequency of all problems evident to the worker during the time the case was served. The frequencies represent a duplicated count in that several problems may have occurred in a variety of combinations in any one family.

TABLE X
DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROBLEMS PRESENTED BY 185 APPLICANTS

Problems	Frequency	Problems	Frequency
Alcoholism	7	Housing	21
Burials	3	Limited Intelligence	9
Behavior	45	Marital Conflict	35
Child Neglect	18	Religious Neglect	34
Displaced Person	1	Special Training	17
Financial Dependency	105	Unemployment	18
Health or Handicap	88	Unmarried Mother	7
Home Management	14		

Table X indicates the major problems as stated by the applicants, however in many of the applications there was a multiplicity of problems. For example, one family referred by the Juvenile Court because of repeated complaints of child neglect was found to have in its group a lazy, deaf, domineering father who seemed unable to support his family, a feeble minded mother who was unaware of her children's needs, and six young, untrained children who tested the patience of the neighbors, the teachers, and the pastor. The home was filthy, and the children were ostracized because of their uncleanliness and objectionable behavior. The family was strict in the practice of their religion, however, and through their loyalty to the Church and to their pastor, the Catholic agency gained their cooperation. Assisted by the services of a visiting homemaking teacher, the agency was able to improve the living standards in the home, to arrange for the commitment of a feeble minded son to a Catholic school for retarded children, to provide special speech instruction for another child, and to help the family gain acceptance in the community. Although the case was accepted during 1942, the service was continuous through 1947 and into the following year.

In another case, the school requested that a home be visited because of the truancy of a small boy. In this family there was a financially distressed Catholic mother attempting to meet the needs of her three children with no assistance from the husband she had divorced without the sanction of the Church. One of the boys was involved with other boys in petty thievery and another son dominated the smaller boy who refused to attend school. Through the cooperative efforts of the case worker, the teacher, and the

guidance clinic", it was possible to relieve the problems in this home.

The largest classification, financial dependency, included eleven short term contacts with families who were in need of household furnishings only, or with children referred by the school nurse for short term health care. In 88 applications poor health or physical handicap was present and arrangements were made with the family for its treatment or correction. Occasionally the family shared the expense of the treatment. The agency shared with a number of young men and women the expense of training in a Catholic high school and arranged for two children to have training and care in a private school for the mentally retarded. A homemaking teacher gave service in nine homes of families where the mother was of limited intelligence.

According to Table X religious neglect, marital conflict, child neglect, and behavior problems of adults and children represented the greatest frequency. These were often present in a single family. In one family in which there was constant discord, the parents never attend to their religious duties nor did they give their children any religious training. The home was poorly cared for, the children were dirty and malnourished, the mother spent her husband's pay for childish pleasures, and the parents mistreated each other and their children. Through home visits and the service of the homemaker, an effort was made to correct these conditions and to help the parents to a more mature understanding of their duties as parents.

Although the St. Vincent de Paul Society is primarily a service agency, it includes in its family services some relief giving on an emergent basis or to meet some special need. However, the agency recognizing the

responsibility of the government welfare agencies for supplying basic maintenance relief, controlled its own relief policies in a way to avoid undermining the concept and reality of public assistance as a general community problem.

Table XI shows the distribution of 185 applications according to the type of material assistance given by the agency.

TABLE XI

DISTRIBUTION OF 185 APPLICATIONS ACCORDING TO MATERIAL ASSISTANCE GIVEN

Type of relief	Number of applications
Burials	3
Food, Clothing, and Fuel	39
Hospitalization	6
Household Furnishings	12
Medical, Dental, and Surgical	30
Moving Costs	1
Rent	1
Tuition	8
Transportation	5
No Relief	80
Total	185

A study of the applications according to the material assistance provided shows that, of the 185 applications, 105 or 56.8 per cent received some form of emergency relief on a subsidy basis.

It has always been the policy of the agency to cooperate in providing burial for Catholic indigent persons living in the county institutions. Racine County assumed the expense of burial of its legal residents. Burial space is provided by the Catholic Cemetery Association. If the deceased is not a resident of the county and relatives cannot be located, it sometimes becomes necessary for the agency to assume the complete burial cost. The Catholic chaplain, appointed by the Archbishop to serve the county institutional patients, arranges for the Requiem Mass to be celebrated in his parish church if the deceased person had no parish connection.

Material assistance is most often provided in the form of health services or emergency food, fuel, or clothing for families faced with some unusual situation. Occasionally when the father of a large family became ill and could not work, the family was in need until sick benefits were received, or until the family was accepted for public assistance. A few aged persons receiving the maximum Old Age Assistance granted by the state were given emergency orders of food, fuel, or clothing. A limited number of transient men applied at the agency's office for clothing since the Thrift Shop was prepared to offer clothing or a small amount of cash relief to those persons who were willing and able to work for it. This shop, a resale store occupying the lower floor of the St. Vincent de Paul Society's building, collects donations of used furniture and clothing. The case workers draw on this stock

for their families and the balance of the merchandise is sold to the public at nominal cost. According to Table XI, twelve families were assisted with household furnishings from this source.

The Society, in its case work division, as well as its parish conferences, has striven constantly to help Catholic children secure Catholic education in the grades and in high school. Each year the office assists, usually on a sharing basis, a number of young people who wish to attend the Catholic high school. Assistance with tuition was also given to a small number of children of limited mentality who were referred to a nearby Catholic school for exceptional children.* During 1947, eight children of families known to the office staff had assistance with school expenses.

SUMMARY

The analysis of cases active in 1947 showed that the majority of applications were either personal or were from the Church. Doctors, lawyers, and employers referred a slightly smaller group. Applications ran highest in May, chiefly due to the problems of school children. Intake was also high in December and January, which is inventory time in most factories. Closings were highest toward the end of the year. Only twelve applications were closed or rejected at intake because they were active with other agencies or because their request was not in keeping with the agency's function.

* St. Coletta School for Exceptional Children, Jefferson, Wisconsin

The survey also disclosed that over one-half of the applicants were married couples, and only four were without children. Most families had one to three children. Father and mothers were living in 75 per cent of the families. The majority of the families served lived alone in their own homes, maintaining themselves chiefly through factory employment. One-third of the applicants had adequate salaries, 22.7 per cent were economically dependent, and 43.3 per cent required some financial help. Although the agency dispenses some material assistance, it is constantly aware that its function as a Catholic family agency is to preserve, protect and foster secure, satisfying and happy Catholic family life among its families and their individual members. For this reason the following analysis of the other services of its case work division is of importance.

CHAPTER III

SPECIAL SERVICES

Table X shows the problems presented by 185 clients with some illustrations of the types of situations covered. Table XI presents the breakdown as to types of cases requiring financial assistance. In this chapter, other types of family service will be illustrated by means of case summaries, which point up the problems presented by the applicants, and the special services that were provided by the agency. During 1947, the special services provided to clients fell into six categories: Services to displaced persons; to the aged and chronically ill; to children; to unmarried mothers; counselling services; homemaker services.

Late in 1947 the first displaced Catholic person came to Racine. The office of the St. Vincent de Paul Society was notified by the National Catholic Welfare Conference as to the time of his arrival. The worker visited the sponsor offering the services of the agency and suggesting that the Health Department Clinics be utilized to check the health needs of the new comer. This offer marked the beginning of a variety of services to the many displaced persons who followed in later years. In this connection, the agency also assumed responsibility for assisting Mexican agricultural workers sent to Racine County each summer. Arrangements were made with their employers to



make it possible for them to attend religious services on Sunday, and nearby parishes made them welcome in their parishes. One pastor arranged for special sermons and instructions in Spanish, and, as a result, was able to validate some marriages and baptize many children of these families.

Although the Institutional Visiting Committee visited patients each Sunday in the county hospital, the home for the aged, and the tuberculosis sanatorium, the case workers worked closely with the institutional staffs in meeting the special needs of many patients. Among these special needs were those of a father, who had held two factory jobs simultaneously in an effort to purchase a home. Twenty five hundred dollars had been accumulated, and the couple was about to buy a home. The father collapsed at work and was ordered to the sanatorium when his condition was diagnosed as tuberculosis. He resisted institutional treatment, and the agency was requested by the parish priest to accept the family for service. The worker visited the wife who was emotionally upset over her husband's illness and his removal from the home. She appreciated that his continued presence might result in the infection of other members of the family. At the same time, she feared the burden of responsibility for the care of her family, and she was concerned about being evicted, since the family had already notified the landlord of their intention to vacate his apartment as soon as a pending real estate transfer was completed. Furthermore, she expected that the department of public assistance would require her to exhaust her savings before relief would be provided.

The case worker showed sympathetic understanding of the mother's problems and suggested that, together, they review the situation with the

director of the pension department, who also supervised the granting of Social Security Aids. The director was kind to the mother and permitted her to file an application for aid. With her permission, he offered to check with the family's attorney the legal phases of the real estate purchase, and to discuss the entire situation with the State Department of Public Assistance. The mother, in her insecurity, considered withholding information and required guidance in presenting actual information. She feared that she would be unable to explain the ADC program to her exacting husband. The worker, therefore, arranged with the pension director and her husband an interview to discuss the recommendations of the state department. In this way, the incapacitated father was able to participate in planning for the purchase of a home and for the maintenance of his family.

Although an adequate grant maintained the family during the year the husband was under treatment, the Society's case worker continued to give service to the patient and to his wife. She was a liaison between the patient, his family, and the agency maintaining the family. This service relieved the patient of the anxiety that was aggravated by his wife, who visited him frequently, burdening him with every minor family problem. He recognized his wife's dependency, and he often requested the worker to assist her in discussing the special needs with the worker of the public agency. She was most reluctant to request medical care and hospitalization when her baby was born. Both the father and mother trusted the Society's worker, therefore, she was able to help them meet this and other problems with less fear and insecurity. Gradually, Mr. S. progressed under the treatment and within a year he was able

to return to his family.

Other patients under treatment in this institution, in the county's home for the aged and chronically ill, in the county mental hospital, and in private homes for the aged were included in the agency's services to clients. Their needs were varied and were met on an individualized basis. Frequently, the assistance of the Catholic chaplain of the institution was solicited in matters with which the priest alone was qualified to deal. Through the chaplain services of the county home and sanatorium, the Catholic patients were able to hear Mass and receive the Sacraments regularly. Psychiatric help was utilized in a few cases where the patient's condition or her family's problems called for such knowledge and skill. Aged persons, having custodial care in either the publicly or the privately operated homes, frequently were financially able to pay for their care. In a few instances a guardian of the property was appointed by the court, and he sometimes solicited the cooperation of the agency's workers in arranging shopping trips or visits to relatives and friends.

Child welfare activities of the agency were limited to those with children living in the homes of their parents. This included service to neglected children, special training, health care, and service to children with behavior problems. The Community Guidance Clinic accepted ten children referred by the agency in 1947. In these cases the agency continued to work with the family in an effort to secure its cooperation in the treatment plan of the clinic. In one case, involving two mentally limited parents with six children, the juvenile authorities solicited the assistance of the St. Vincent

le Paul worker when one of the children was reported for having stolen money, and for setting fire to a building. This child was of limited intelligence, and he had had inadequate and inconsistent training at home. Through the cooperation of the Guidance Clinic, the parents were helped to recognize their inability to properly care for this child at home, and they petitioned the Juvenile Court for the boy's commitment to a special school for retarded children. The court assumed the statutory allowance for his care and the father contributed the balance of the fee requested by the school. When this boy was removed and a homemaking teacher was assigned to the home, there was a gradual improvement in the care of the other children and in their adjustment at school. Other services to children included the arrangement for four children living in a local non-Catholic orphanage to attend parochial school. Funds were provided for transportation, school lunches and school expenses, and during the summer months several children were provided with camping fees in Catholic camps.

The third category of special services to clients was the service to unmarried mothers. Seven unmarried mothers were accepted for local service preceding and following the birth of their babies. The Catholic maternity home of the archdiocese is located in Milwaukee, where Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, a Catholic licensed child placing agency, is established. Maternity plans for Catholic unmarried mothers of Racine are routed through this office. The St. Vincent de Paul worker assisted the girl until she was accepted into the maternity home and upon her return to Racine if that were necessary. One of these girls, who came in the seventh month of pregnancy, was the daughter

of a family the agency had previously assisted, when the father's excessive drinking and non-support of his family caused serious hardship to his wife and children. In her anxiety, this girl wished to marry a newly acquired boy friend who sympathized with her. She distressed her parents by going about freely discussing her condition, and she seemed to enjoy their shame. The worker focussed her attention on helping the girl to accept the immediate need for protection and care in a maternity home. Following the baby's birth, the mother accepted case work help in arranging for her baby's adoption and for her return home. She eventually married the young man who had previously offered to marry her.

Another unmarried mother was a very attractive, well-mannered college girl, who was very anxious to marry the alleged father. Such a marriage was not possible in the Church because of his previous valid marriage to a Catholic woman from whom he had been divorced because of her unfaithfulness. The worker had several interviews with the girl and with her mother, who believed that the man should be forced to marry her daughter. The alleged father, a young man receiving college training under the G.I. Bill, wished only to pay all expenses and thus to discharge his responsibility to the girl. He admitted paternity, and offered to make contributions to the agency to meet the lying-in costs and the care of the baby until its adoption. The girl became very bitter toward him and was an unhappy member of the group in the maternity home. The St. Vincent de Paul worker, in cooperation with the worker of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, visited her frequently, arranging outings for her. On these visits, it was possible to help the girl

accept the fact that the alleged father did not wish to carry out their earlier plan of marriage. She needed a great amount of supportive help during her pregnancy and following the baby's birth. She terminated her parental rights after learning that the young man had married another girl, and within a year, this client was married in her parish church. Three of the mothers were older women, two of them having been married and divorced from Catholic husbands. In each case there were problems of adjustment, and a laxity in religious practice. In all of these cases strictest observance was given to the confidentiality of their disclosures.

Counselling services included in the case work program of the agency were provided to many persons who were attempting to escape reality by resorting to truancy, sickness, or the use of alcohol. Others who came for guidance included some with religious needs, and many married persons whose marriages were precarious. Seven alcoholics were also among the applicants that came to the agency for counselling service. Those referred by their employers, under threat of loss of position, came to the agency prepared to do something about their problem. In these cases, the company suspended the employee until such time that the worker was able to recommend his return to work. The alcoholics drank for various reasons: Some drank as an escape from undesirable home conditions, some were in need of medical care, and others started as pay day celebration, gradually finding it impossible to carry on without this support. Three of this group, upon being barred from their homes, voluntarily entered state mental hospitals for treatment of the disease. One elderly woman, who was well known to the police because of her drinking, made a

spectacular change when the worker helped her to secure employment in a local hospital under the supervision of a tolerant supervisor. Each alcoholic had neglected his religious duties for a long time; therefore the worker attempted to help each client develop a desire to return to the practice of his religion. Not all cases responded to the service given, and at the close of the year, two patients died following heart attacks, and two husbands were still drinking periodically.

Thirty-five couples with marital problems were helped to a better understanding of Catholic marriage and of what is implied in their marriage vows. One of the cases which came to the agency in 1947, through a report service of the Divorce Counsel, involved a young Catholic couple with one child. In clearing the pending divorce action with the pastor of this couple, the agency was asked to visit the home to investigate the cause of the conflict, and, if possible, to help the young wife realize that, as a Catholic wife, she was not free to institute a civil action without first discussing the matter with her pastor. The young couple lived in the second floor apartment of a duplex which they had bought cooperatively with the wife's parents. The parents occupied the lower flat and although they had not invested more than the young people, they considered themselves the principal owners in the partnership.

The young wife had been an indulged child, and she had never had an opportunity, even after her marriage, to emancipate herself from the control of her mother who dominated everyone, nor had she learned to care for the well being of others in an adult sense. The young husband, who had been

known to the agency as a child, had grown up in a very unsatisfactory home with an alcoholic father and a mother who had worked to provide for her children. This young man had entered marriage with a strong determination to provide a good home for his wife and family. In his eagerness to accomplish this objective, he had granted his spoiled wife every conceivable wish. Her home was well furnished and she received his entire pay check each week, giving him only a few dollars for actual expenses. They had few social contacts and their only form of recreation was to attend an occasional movie. When their daughter was born, even this outing was sacrificed. The wife devoted her entire day to the care of her child and home, and to visiting with her mother. Frequently, the meals she prepared for her husband were very inadequate for a factory worker; however he did not dare to displease her by referring to his nutritional needs. In spite of his precaution, his wife found an opportunity to order him out of the home, and she then charged him with desertion.

The mother-in-law met the worker at the door and objected to her visit. When informed that the pastor had sent an important message to her daughter, she made a later appointment for the worker to return. The wife was interviewed privately, the worker exploring with her the important events preceding the separation. In justice, the wife enumerated not only her husband's undesirable qualities, but also some ways in which she had been unfair with him. She finally agreed to consult her pastor, who helped her to appreciate the indissolubility of marriage. The husband cooperated with the worker in bringing about a reconciliation before the case was scheduled for

hearing. Because of the interfering relatives, it was necessary for the couple to move to a new location and the husband required help in taking over his rightful position as the head of the home before the young couple was able to establish the home on a sound basis.

In another case a public health nurse referred a young college trained couple to the agency for marriage counselling. The wife, who was considering a divorce, complained that her husband pursued other women. She wanted the worker to "talk to him," and she arranged the appointment. The husband, who had embraced the Catholic faith at the time of their marriage in an army camp, believed he had tried to provide a happy and comfortable home for his wife and their two small children. His wife felt ashamed that he was happy in his work as a shoe salesman, and, through her jealousy and mistrust, she frequently injured him in her violent rages. At the age of two, the eldest child was displaying behavior which indicated his insecurity and fear. The husband offered cooperation, and he recommended that the worker arrange for regular weekly interviews with the wife. She trusted the worker, and she gradually unfolded the story of her own unsatisfactory childhood and gained some understanding of the effect it had had on her attitudes toward her husband and marriage. The wife's mother was interviewed several times when she visited the family, and she was helped to understand her daughter's attitude which was coloring her feeling toward her husband. The husband came to the agency office for three interviews during the year for interpretation of his wife's behavior and for guidance in his relationship with her. His final appointment was to request worker's advice regarding a transfer to another

city where he would have greater opportunities for advancement in his work. The worker was present at the home when he discussed the matter with his wife, and she helped them explore the advantages of the transfer. They seemed more united and trusting than they had been early in the year, and both felt confident that they had become more adequate parents due to the service which was given to them.

Homemaking service of a teaching nature was provided to sixteen families during 1947. In each of these homes, the mother lacked the ability to properly care for her children without supervision. The homemaker followed a schedule and program of activity prepared with the case workers serving these families, and there are frequent conferences between homemaker and case worker to discuss the needs of the families and to plan methods of meeting these needs. Budgeting of the income, meal planning, shopping help, and all other home duties were included in this teaching project, which was valuable in strengthening family life.

SUMMARY

Family service must meet a great variety of problems and frequently gives multiplicity of services. In a previous case summary, it has been pointed out that early childhood training and experiences affect the attitudes which young people carry into marriage. The security of marriage can be threatened by other causes also. Financial dependency over a prolonged period may become a serious factor in precipitating a breakdown in family life. In twelve families with marginal incomes budgeting service gave the necessary

guidance to save the families from accepting relief which was objectionable to them. In others, it was found that medical assistance accepted on a reimbursement basis met an emergent need and prevented the parents from developing feelings of inadequacy and failure. This presentation gives an overall picture of the duties of a private family welfare agency in an industrial community of 70,000 population. Although the function of the agency was determined by the objectives of the organization and the area of service designated to it, it was necessary for the board and staff to remain flexible in order that the services met the needs of the community that supports it. Time and effort were devoted to interpretation of the agency's services and to the development of good public relations. Through close cooperation with other community resources, clients were able to secure adequate service without expensive duplication of effort. According to Table X, 18 per cent of the applicants were neglectful of religious duties; therefore the case workers attempted to integrate religious counselling with other services to these clients. In this connection, Father Doyle states in his article, "Techniques Used in the Spiritual Development of Clients," that

Having understood his client's problem and having interpreted the problem within proper limitations, the Catholic worker, if he is to make a real contribution to the spiritual development of the client, must give to him something more than advice and direction. He must give him something of himself. He must make him thoroughly understand that the Church is vitally interested in him, whatever may be his condition, however perverse or degraded he may be. He must further make him understand that he is still loved by the One who died that he might live. The social worker must be to the client the prophet of a new and better hope. He must succeed in

establishing a rapport that will effect not only a breaking down of all spiritual resistance, but an engendering of confidence in himself and in his ability to meet and solve his problems.⁵

⁵ Rev. M. J. Doyle, "Techniques Used in the Spiritual Development of Clients," Catholic Charities Review, May, 1939

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In presenting a study of the program of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Racine, it has been necessary to review the history of the organization in Racine and to describe the program it has undertaken as a member agency of the Racine Community Chest. The Central Office was set up to give case work services to Catholic families of Racine and to assist in the direction of the services of the volunteer lay members of the parish conferences.

The analysis of applications was concentrated on the cases which were served by the case work division of the program. Identifying information secured from the case records included such items as, referral source, dates of opening and closing, status of the case and its disposition. The statistics obtained showed that, of the 209 persons served during the year 1947, 24 applications were requests solely for the rental or loan of sick room equipment. Therefore, these applications were not included in the cases studied. 185 applications were studied as to the nature of applications, the people coming to the agency, and as to the services the agency was prepared to give.

The largest number of applications were personal requests as a result of the applicant's knowledge of the agency's program. The Church through its pastors, school teachers, and parish organizations referred the second largest group, and social agencies referred a comparable number of

persons. To the agency these referrals by the Church and other agencies indicated an approval of the agency's services and a cooperative attitude among the agencies.

The study of the time of the openings and closings of case indicated that the greatest number of applications were received during the month of May and the smallest number came to the agency in February, a trend that has been noticeable in other years. Closings were greatest in number in December as a result of short term contact with some families at Christmas time. In January, intake is usually high as a result of industrial trends in the city, and there are very few closings.

Few cases have been refused or rejected and, in each such case, refusal was based on a real factor, such as, the residence of the applicant, a request for service not within the agency's function, or the fact that another agency was actively serving the family. Study of the applications received sometimes disclosed a need for continued financial help. These applicants were given interpretation of the agency's function, and they accepted referral to public agencies for adequate maintenance. One hundred twenty-four cases were accepted by the agency for continued service.

A study of the persons coming to the agency, their religious affiliation, their family composition, their homes and their employment and income brought interesting results. The applicants were predominantly Catholic married persons, a situation which should exist in a Catholic family welfare agency. Seventy-five per cent of the families were complete families with both a father and a mother, and in 147 families there were 479 children

with the greatest number of homes having one, two, or three children. Only four family groups had no children.

One-third of the applicants had adequate incomes and were home owners. One hundred thirty-five families were living in fairly adequate homes. The largest number of applications came from the marginal income group, and 22.7 per cent were dependent. This explains the reason 105 applicants received some form of financial help from the agency, as well as services. A consistent effort has been made to avoid becoming a "relief agency," although physical needs are recognized and often corrected in the plan of service offered to a client. Financial help has been predominantly in the form of food, fuel, or clothing, or medical services.

In addition to financial needs, many family groups were faced with other problems requiring case work services. The majority of these services fell into the following categories: Services to families, to children, to unmarried mothers, and to the aged and chronically ill. Nursing care and home-maker services were utilized whenever the family could not properly care for their homes and children unassisted. Through the guidance of the Spiritual Director, and the cooperation of the various pastors, the case workers were assisted in their service to persons with religious problems.

APPENDIX

Schedule

CASE NUMBER _____

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Source of Referral _____ Date Opened _____ Date Closed _____

Status of Case) New
) Old Social Status of Applicant _____
) Reapplication

Place of Birth _____ Father Living _____ Mother Living _____

Size of Family _____ Others in Household _____

Religious Affiliation _____ Religious Status _____

Occupation of Wage Earner (or Earners) _____

Economic Status _____ Living Arrangements _____

II. THE PROBLEMS AS OF 1947

III. THE SERVICES PROVIDED

Material Assistance

Other Services

IV. THE DISPOSITION OF THE CASE

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