

St. Francis de Sales accepts the challenge

Members of the St. Vincent de Paul committee at St. Francis de Sales, Abingdon, signed their parish up for a \$1 million challenge sponsored by the Feinstein Foundation to help fight hunger in their community.

“Through the St. Vincent de Paul Society we set aside time for people in the community to come in and ask for help,” said Patti Kazlo, vice president of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. “Any given week we get about 30 people coming in for help with money or food. Toward the end of the month we start to run low on food.”

A parishioner for more than 20 years, Mrs. Kazlo said this challenge will help to keep the food pantry full longer. The challenge isn’t really about what the Feinstein Foundation can give these organizations, it’s about getting people more involved in giving of their time and resources, said Mrs. Kazlo.

During the months of March and April, parishioners have been collecting food and putting donations in the poor boxes. The financial donations haven’t been calculated, but the food donations have increased considerably, said Mrs. Kazlo. Through March 25, 3,251 food items were collected with each item counting as \$1 toward the Feinstein challenge.

“We can see the volume of food donations has increased these past few weeks,” said Mrs. Kazlo.

For about 12 years the St. Vincent de Paul society has been feeding the hungry and helping to give shelter to the poor. Just recently the organization was given a grant from the United Way to help those in need to pay their rising utility, electric and

housing costs.

“It takes something like this to show that the need is there. It creates awareness,” said Mrs. Kazlo. “It unites everyone to help improve the situation of people who aren’t as fortunate as we are.”

In 2005 more than 1,400 organizations signed up for the \$1 million challenge, and 25 of them were in Maryland.

“We are always encouraging parishioners to bring in food,” said Mrs. Kazlo. “This was more of an incentive to give more.”