

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

September is the month when Vincentians celebrate the lives of St. Vincent de Paul on the 27th and Blessed Frederic Ozanam on September 9th.

St. Vincent de Paul. 1581-1660.

He was born into a peasant family in Gascony, France. Due to his intellectual talents his father enrolled him in a boarding school run by the Franciscans. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1600. His ambition was to find an ecclesiastical post, which would provide prosperity for him and his family. After receiving a degree in Canon Law from the University of Paris he secured a position as Chaplain to Queen Marguerite de Valois. During this period he suffered an intense spiritual crisis. He promised that if God were to take away the darkness he was experiencing, he would dedicate his life to the service of the poor. The anguish went away and he remained faithful to his vow for the rest of his life. He founded the Vincentians in 1626, whose mission was to the poor and to help in formation of priests. In 1633 the Daughters of Charity was co-founded by Father Vincent and Louis de Marillac to carry on a hands-on ministry to the poor.

"You, Lord Jesus, live in the person of the poor ... Looking into their eyes, I find myself looking into yours" St. Vincent de Paul.



Blessed Frederic Ozanam 1813-1853.

Recognized as the main founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Frederic's parent's, resident's of Lyon, France, were devout Catholics. He studied law in Paris where at this time society was in deep turmoil and detached from the faith. He came to the unshakable certitude that Christianity was the only remedy to cure the evils of the time. He and other like minded Catholic students met to discuss philosophical and religious issues. The group was challenged by a fellow student, a non-Catholic, whose question was "What are you doing for the poor, you Catholics- show us your works!" Frederic and five other students met this challenge with the help and guidance of Sr. Rosalie

Rendu, a daughter of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, who taught them how to minister to the poor with love and respect. In 1834 the group numbered over 100 and was named the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He was beatified by St. John-Paul II in Paris in August 1997.

"Christianity is not about ideas, but about deeds inspired by love" Blessed Frederic.

Today the Society of Saint Vincent-de-Paul is present in more than 150 countries on 5 continents. It has 800,000 active members and more than one million volunteer members..

In Canada we have 15,000 active members.

The Mission of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul implies that as Vincentians we

- see Christ in anyone who suffers
- come together as a family
- have personal contact with the poor
- help in all possible ways.

