

Information about St. Vincent DePaul

St. Vincent de Paul was born in Pouy, France on April 24, 1581, and was ordained a priest on September 23, 1600. Vincent devoted himself entirely to the alleviation of suffering of the poor. To that cause, he established the Confraternities of Charity, later known as the Ladies of Charity, in 1617. In 1625, he founded the Congregation of the Mission, his community of priests and brothers. With Louise de Marillac, he cofounded the Daughters of Charity in 1633. Vincent died in Paris on September 27, 1660 and was canonized in 1737. Pope Leo XIII declared him patron saint of all works of charity.

More information can be found: https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=326

Information about Blessed Frederic Ozanam

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam was educated in law, literature, and philosophy, and he taught at universities in Lyon and Paris. Challenged by a detractor of the faith to demonstrate the social good the Church was doing in France, Frédéric and six companions founded the Society of St. Vincent de Paul on April 23, 1833. On June 23, 1841, Frédéric married Amélie Soulacroix, and their only child, Marie, was born in 1845. He succumbed to ill health and died on September 8, 1853. Pope John Paul II beatified Frédéric Ozanam in Paris on August 22, 1997.

More information can be found: <https://www.ssvpglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/18.-Frederic-Ozanam.-Biography.pdf>

Information about St. Louise DeMarillac

St. Louise de Marillac was born August 12, 1591. She married Antoine LeGras on February 5, 1613, had a son named Michel, and was widowed on December 21, 1625. St. Vincent de Paul then became her spiritual director and, under his guidance, she became active in caring for the poor and in visiting the Confraternities of Charity. With Vincent, Louise cofounded the Daughters of Charity on November 29, 1633. She died March 15, 1660, and was canonized in 1934. In 1960, Pope John XXIII proclaimed her the patron saint of all Christian social workers.

More information can be found: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Louise-de-Marillac>

Prayers

St. Vincent de Paul

Tender God, refuge of the poor, You filled Vincent de Paul with the strength of the apostles to work for the salvation of the poor and the instruction of the clergy. May we who follow the example of his life be driven by unceasing charity to continue the mission of Your Son in the world. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

St. Louise de Marillac

O God, You inspired St. Louise de Marillac with a great love for the poor and abandoned. Grant us the grace to serve those whose lives touch ours with the same spirit of love and courage in these challenging times. May the Company of the Daughters of Charity continue to grow and multiply throughout the world so that the poor will know God's love in a tangible way. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

Almighty God, You blessed Frederic Ozanam with gifts of grace as husband and father, educator and defender of the faith, and founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. In this way he spent his life in loving service. Through his example and prayers, may we faithfully follow the path to which You have called us and one day join the saints in praising You forever. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

About the Society of St. Vincent DePaul

The Beginnings of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

In the midst of the political, social, religious, and economic turmoil of early 19th century France, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul originated. As a young student at the Sorbonne, Antoine Frédéric Ozanam was appalled by the conditions he saw in Paris. At a student meeting, another student challenged Ozanam and other practicing Catholics, admitting that while the Catholic Church had done much good work in the past, he could not see what good the Church was doing currently.

On April 23, 1833, his 20th birthday, Ozanam invited five other students to a meeting, where they founded the first Conference of Charity to assist the poor. This Catholic lay organization was intended to help members increase in holiness by loving service to those in need.

The six students chose Emmanuel Bailly, a married layman, as their first president. Shortly thereafter, they changed their name to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in honor of their patron saint.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the United States

Just 12 years after its founding in France, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul established roots in the United States. On November 20, 1845, the United States Society of St. Vincent de Paul was established in St. Louis, Missouri at the Basilica of St. Louis, King of France, popularly called “The Old Cathedral.”

Several people were instrumental in the Society’s growth and development in the U.S., including Father John Timon, an American Vincentian priest from Pennsylvania who brought copies of the Rule of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul from Dublin, Ireland, to St. Louis. Timon spoke with various people about the Society’s work with the poor, including Bishop Peter Richard Kenrick. Kenrick asked Father Ambrose Heim, known for extraordinary zeal and ministry with the poor, to establish the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and be its spiritual advisor. Father Heim became known as “The Priest of the Poor.”

The Conference was formally recognized by the Society’s International Council in Paris on February 2, 1846, and would never have opened without the dedicated laypeople who accepted the initial invitation to become members and serve the poor.

With nearly 90,000 Vincentian volunteers serving their communities, today’s Society of St. Vincent de Paul works in 4,428 parish-based Conferences across the United States. Our founding activity, still practiced today, is the face-to-face Home Visit, in which Vincentians visit the homes of those they serve, to identify both immediate and longer-term needs, including emergency assistance with utilities, rent, food, and clothing.