



ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Vincent de Paul was born in 1581, in the South Eastern corner of France, in a village called Pouy which is now named St Vincent de Paul. He was the son of farmer who was bright and therefore was encouraged to pursue a career in the priesthood. His aim was to gain a good living and look after his family.

Vincent went to work at the court Queen Marguerite but the appeal of this life quickly wore thin for him. He became a tutor to the sons of the wealthy de Gondi family and while visiting their estates realised that poor country folk were in need of spiritual care. He then went to work in a parish in which he encountered people living in poverty. He preached about a sick family one day and so many people responded that the family was overwhelmed. He then realised that people would like to help but that they needed to be organised, so he created the Confraternities of Charity which provided assistance to the sick poor in their own homes. After this he founded an order of priests called the Vincentians to minister to country people.

Vincent was a passionate man who was able to inspire people from different parts of society to help the poor by volunteering or by donating. He was able to address many different needs of people living in poverty by drawing on these resources. He collaborated with many people and most importantly with St Louise de Marillac.

Vincent de Paul served the poor for 43 years. He died in 1660, aged 79 years old and is known as the Apostle of Charity.

Frederic Ozanam and his companions chose to name the Society after Vincent de Paul and Frederic wrote:

"To choose a patron saint does not mean simply adopting a figurehead which will help us to cut a good figure in the religious world. A patron is a model whom we must try and imitate. It means trying to carry on the work he has started and endeavoring to acquire something of his warm heart. A patron saint provides a model for us to copy on this earth and a protector who will watch over us."

Vincent and Louise together started a movement called the Vincentian Family which has many different groups as part of it. The Society is one of these groups. As are the Daughters of Charity and the Vincentian priests.

The 27th of September is Vincent's feast day.

Prayer

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.