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THE  
FOUNDER  
AND THE  
PATRON

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FREDERIC OZANAM  
AND  
ST VINCENT DE PAUL

# F R E D E R I C O Z A N A M

## H E A D A N D H E A R T

In a work like this, I think we should abandon ourselves much more to the inspiration of our heart than the calculations of our head. Providence sends us counsel and advice in the form of external circumstances, of thoughts and inspirations. I think that you will do better to follow this guidance freely, and not hamper yourself with rules and formulas.<sup>1</sup>

Psalm 51:9-12

Turn away your face from my sins, and wipe away all my guilt. God, create in me a clean heart, renew within me a resolute spirit, do not thrust me away from your presence, do not take away from me your spirit of holiness. Give me back the joy of your salvation, sustain in me a generous spirit.

### Reflection

Frederic is saying that we should trust our hearts more than our heads. The words of the Psalm encourage us to allow God to cleanse our hearts so that we are able to walk in the ways of God. How do you keep the right balance between head and heart?

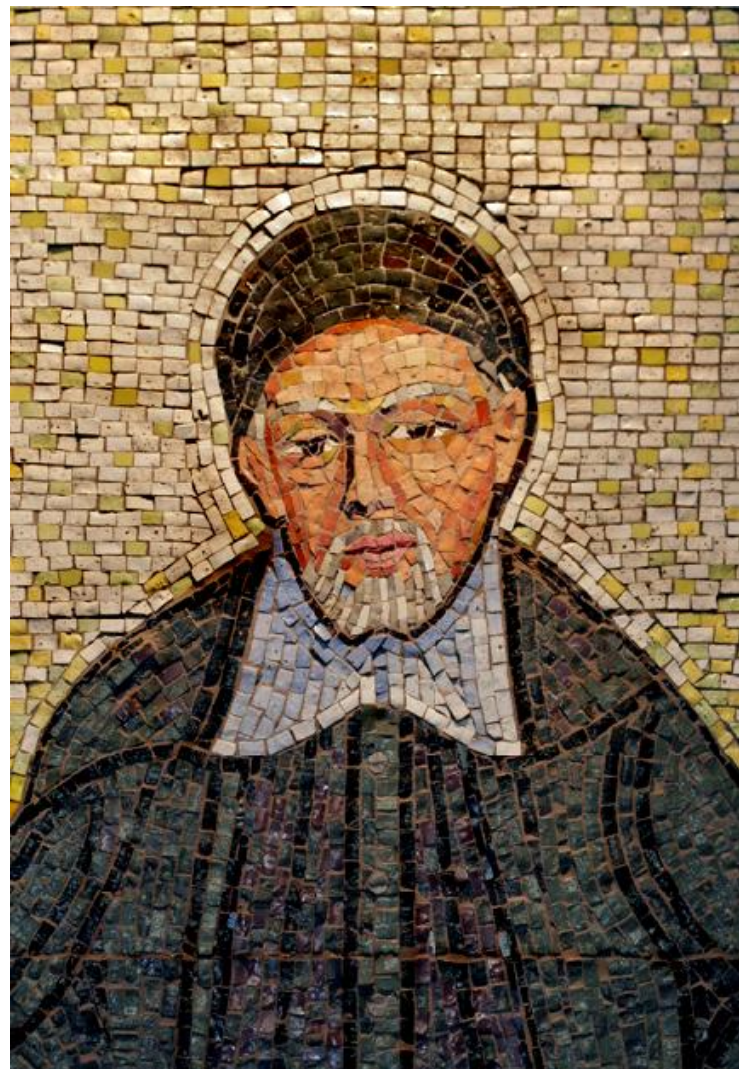


# S T V I N C E N T D E P A U L D I V I N E P R O V I D E N C E

In the name of God, Monsieur, reflect on this and on what I had told you about it at other times, and do not let yourself get carried away by the impetuosity of your impulsive ideas. What usually deceives us is the appearance of good according to human reason, which never or rarely attains the divine. I have told you on previous occasions. Monsieur, that the things of God come about by themselves, and that wisdom consists in following Providence step by step. And you can be sure of the truth of a maxim which seems paradoxical, namely, that he who is hasty falls back in the interests of God.<sup>2</sup>

Speak to the people more familiarly and in a softer tone, making them come closer to you, for, in the final analysis virtue is not found in extremes, but in prudence, which I recommend as strongly as I can.<sup>3</sup>

Matt 10:26-31



# T H E F O U N D E R A N D T H E P A T R O N

September brings Spring and with it the promise of longer and warmer days, blossoms, new growth with the sound of new life chirping around us. For Vincentians it also means the feast days of our founder and our patron. In the images above both are reaching out towards our Companions offering food and clothing. This is because each see that this simple act of charity is the way to bring Christ to those in need, while at the same time seeing Christ within them. Matthew reminds us of Jesus' words, 'Truly, whatever you did for one of the least of these sisters and brothers of mine, you did it for me.' (1)

This call from Christ also spurs us on to undertake 'good works' following the example of Blessed Frederic and Saint Vincent de Paul. Blessed Frederic reminds us why this work is so important, 'there are two reasons why we join together...the first is, that by drawing closer to the poor, we draw closer to God, the second reason is, that our membership in such a union will bear silent and humble witness to the faith that is in us'. (2)

St Vincent de Paul was outwardly looking seeking ways to bring Christ to all this he encountered but especially to those in great need. He was a person of great humility, truth, and equanimity who saw service to others is akin to service to God and that such service should be undertaken in a spirit of humility and simplicity. Vincent reminds us that 'from all eternity, 'God had His thoughts and designs on us and for us'. (3). Because, 'we are destined to represent the Goodness of God to the poor'. (4)

Our vocation within the Society therefore provides us with a richness and fullness of life, as St Therese of Avila reminds us, "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours'. (5) Our prayer then is that Blessed Frederic and St Vincent De Paul guide our steps as we undertake the work they began.

B L E S S E D F R E D R I C O Z A N A M  
A N D S T V I N C E N T D E P A U L

P R A Y F O R U S

1. Matthew 24:40

2. From Love and Politics: The Revolutionary Frederic Ozanam by John Honner

3. St Vincent DePaul, 9 February 1646, Conference 24

4. St Vincent DePaul, 11 November 1657, X, Conference 85

5. St Therese of Avila

At the very heart of Vincentian Spirituality is the belief that every person is unique, valued and does matter, each is worthy of our respect, love, and care. Both our founder, Blessed Frederick Ozanam, and patron, St Vincent de Paul, have shown us that every person radiates God's love and that we must seek to recognize this as we reach out in greeting and support. Our aim as Vincentians is always to be open, in service, to everyone regardless of their culture, ethnicity or background.

The Society's Vision provides guidance because as we bring it to being, we are respecting everyone's dignity, sharing our hope for life, and encouraging each other in their ability to take control of their own destiny.

## G O D ' S L O V E

