

SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT
DE PAUL INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL GENERAL

GLOBAL TRAINING

VINCENTIAN SPIRITUALITY





Give me a man of prayer
and he will be capable of
everything ...

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL



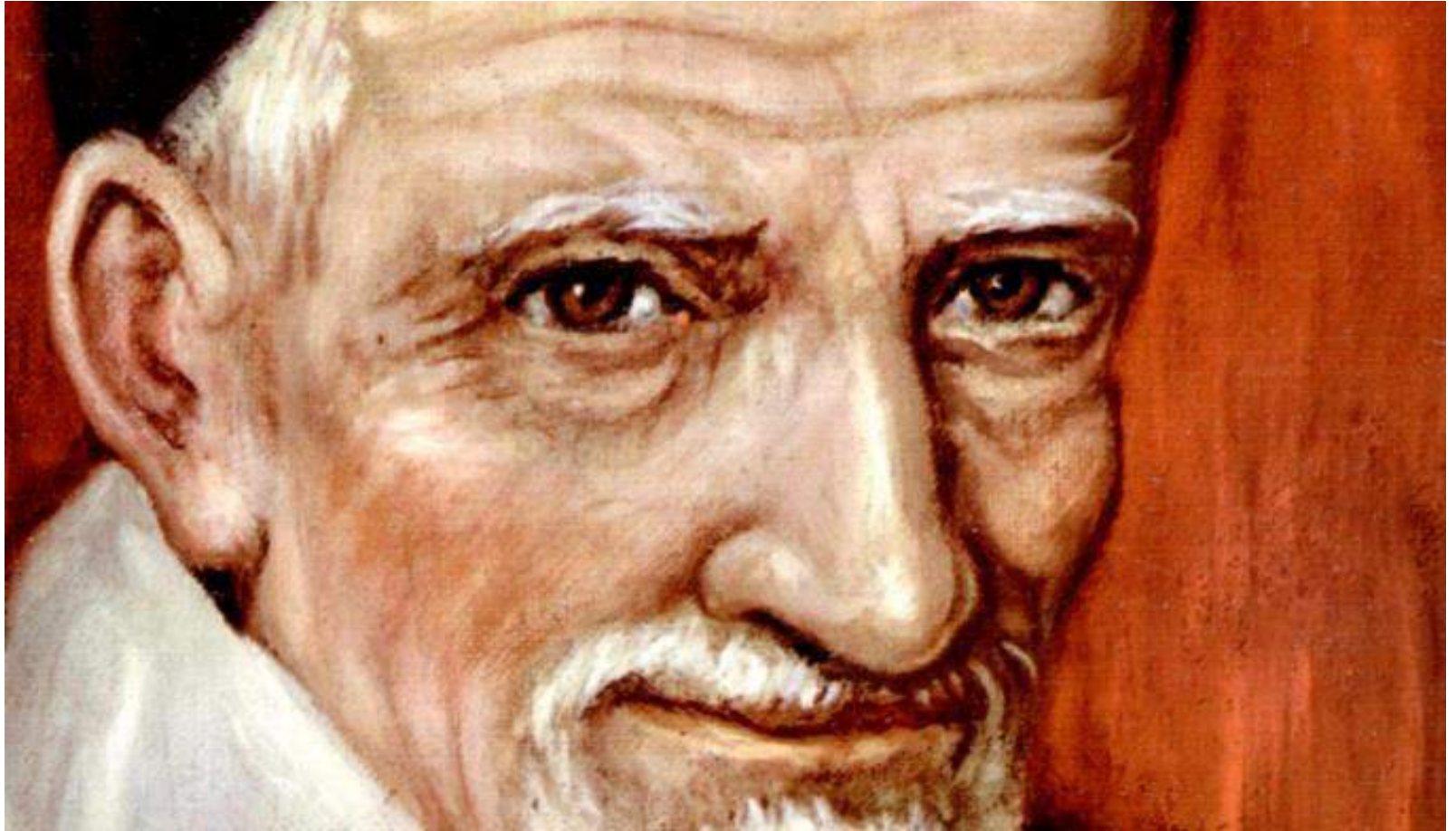
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1 THE FOUNDING EXPERIENCE OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

2 KEY ELEMENTS OF VINCENTIAN SPIRITUALITY

3 THE CONTRIBUTION OF OZANAM
AND OF THE SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL





MEETING AND CONVERSION

Touched by the spiritual sadness of a dying man

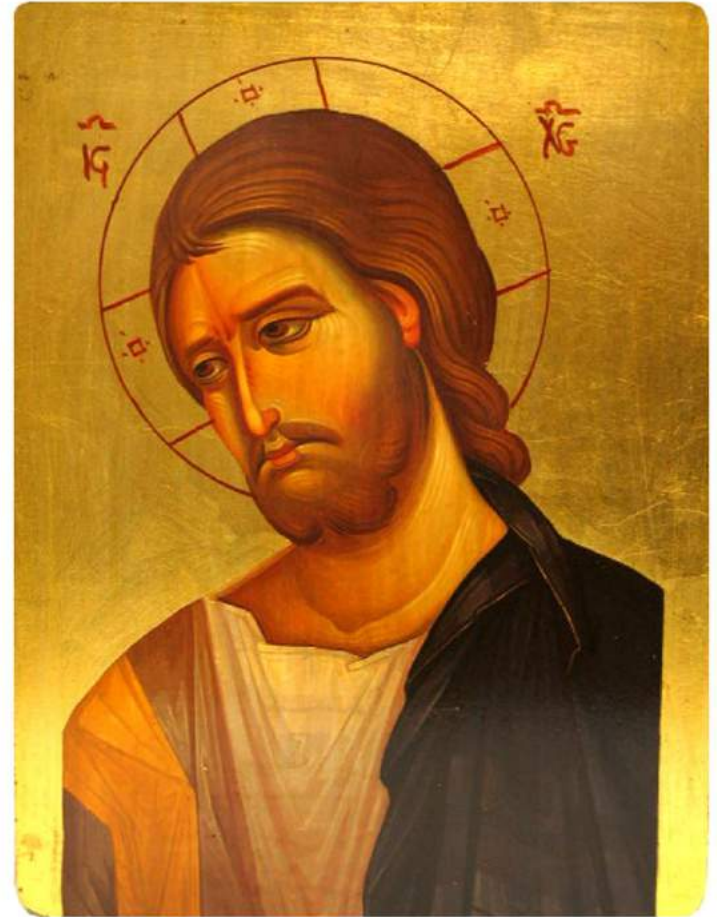
- At the bedside of a dying man for a general confession
- Revealing the spiritual deprivation of country people
- He was overcome, and decided to change his life He was 36 years old



1 THE FOUNDING EXPERIENCE OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

CHANGING HIS LIFE AND TAKING CHRIST AS HIS MODEL

Saint Vincent abandoned his previous life, and devoted himself to prayer for 3 hours every day



CONTEMPLATING AND IMITATING CHRIST, SERVANT AND EVANGELISER OF THE POOR

Christ, whom Saint Vincent contemplates and imitates, is:

- Poor
- Missionary, **“announcing the Good News to the poor”** (Lk 4, 18)
- Servant, **“come not to be served, but to serve”** (Mt 20, 27)
- Close to the poor and the little ones



THE VINCENTIAN VOCATION:
CONTINUING THE MISSION OF CHRIST,
SERVANT AND EVANGELISER OF THE POOR

- Serve the poor
- Relieve their sufferings
- Bring them the Good News



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THE POOR, SACRAMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

“Know that, when you leave your prayers and the Holy Mass to go to the service of the poor, you will lose nothing, since to serve the poor is to go to God; and you must see God in the poor”

Saint Vincent de Paul



ALLOW THE POOR PERSON TO EVANGELISE YOU

Great respect for the poor person, who is greater than we are, since he or she suffers what we could not tolerate

The poor person changes the way we look at life and encourages us to be converted

“Support is honourable when it treats the poor person with respect, not just as an equal, but as a superior, because he suffers what perhaps we will not suffer, since he is among us as a messenger from God to test our justice and our charity, and save us through our works” – which allow Jesus himself to live and love through us.

Blessed Frédéric OZANAM, 1848



HOW DO WE RECOGNISE CHRIST HIDDEN IN THE POOR PERSON?

“He had no beauty, no majesty to attract us,
nothing in his appearance to please us”

Isaiah 53, 2



THE POWER OF PRAYER

“It is through prayer that we gain strength to serve God and our neighbour” Saint Vincent de Paul

Pray to

- Change our “hearts of stone”
- Learn to love as God loves
- Pass on a spark of the Charity of God



PRAY AND ALSO WORK

“ORARE ET LABORARE”

“We must love God by the work of our hands and the sweat of our brow” Saint Vincent de Paul

Vincentine spirituality is an incarnate spirituality

- Beyond grand feelings and good intentions
- Attentive to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit
- Working from realities that we cannot escape



THE 5 VIRTUES PRACTISED BY SAINT VINCENT

Simplicity

Humility

Gentleness

Selflessness

Zeal



THE SPIRIT OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

- ❑ Making very different social groups work together
- ❑ Organising the Charity: the “Vincentian Family”
 - Congregation of the Mission (1625)
 - Daughters of Charity (1633)
 - Ladies of Charity, now AIC (1633)
- ❑ Restoration of the French clergy
 - creation of seminaries,
 - organisation of retreats
 - conferences for priests
- ❑ Meeting needs
 - rescued children
 - help in time of war, etc.

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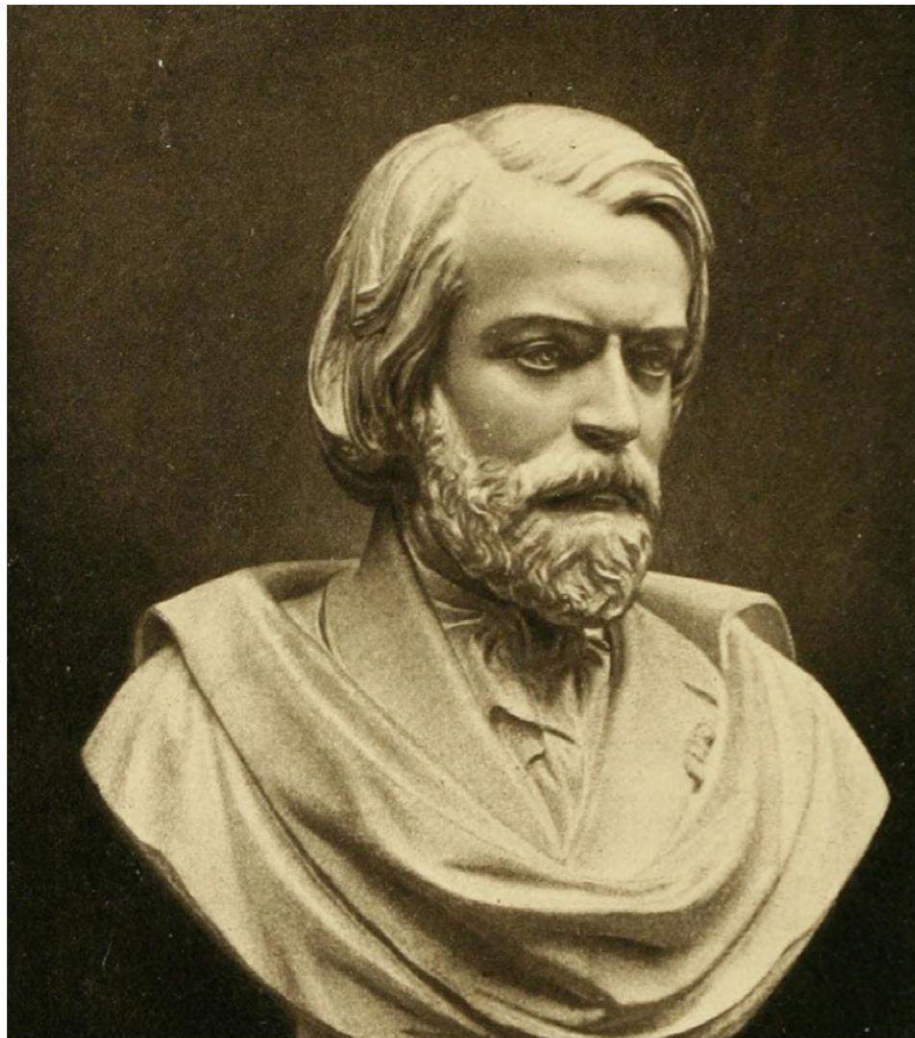
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THE CONTRIBUTION OF OZANAM AND OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL, IN THE VINCENIAN TRADITION

SPIRITUALITY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

Serve the poor

Relieve suffering

Bring the Good News
to the poor

RULE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Follow Christ by serving those in need
(Art. 1,2)

The Society's work, aims to relieve
suffering or poverty (Art 1.3)

Bear witness to the compassionate and
liberating love of Christ (Art 1.2)



THE INNOVATIVE ASPECTS OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

1. Forming communities of lay people to carry out works of Charity
2. Speaking out against structures of sin, causes of poverty and social injustice

FORMING COMMUNITIES OF LAY PEOPLE TO CARRY OUT WORKS OF CHARITY

- The Conference is a community of lay people committed to serving the poor, to:
 - Live the Gospel
 - in friendship, sharing and enthusiasm
 - Finding solutions to fight against the causes of poverty (now called systemic change)
- Present in public life like a yeast of charity
 - For Ozanam: in the student world, in the family, at university, in politics
 - For us: in school, in the fields and the factory...



SPEAK OUT AGAINST SOCIAL SIN, THE CAUSE OF POVERTY

“Structures of sin”

- Unjust laws
- Economic relationships based on power
- Inequalities

Work to change the system in which poor people live, and offer self-development.

“The causes of evils, and not merely their effects, should be eliminated. The aid contributed should be organised in such a way that the beneficiaries are gradually freed from their dependence on others and become self-supporting”
(Vatican II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 8)

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN, AN IMAGE OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

“Tending to injuries” (combating poverty)

But also:

Making the road from Jerusalem to Jericho safer for
travellers (acting on causes)

3

THE CONTRIBUTION OF OZANAM AND THE SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

