

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

MAY 17, 2021

**Mondays**

WITH THE

*Mystics*

## ST. VINCENT DE PAUL (1581 - 1660)

Born in Pouy, France, on April 24, 1581, son of Jean de Paul and Bertrande de Moras, the 3rd of 6 children. By personality, Vincent was short-tempered. Without God's grace, he said, he would have become "rigorous and repulsive, course and crabby."

His ambition was to have a comfortable life. He pursued priesthood; ordained in 1600. In 1605, he was captured by pirates and sold as a slave in Algeria; 1606, he escaped; 1609, he became chaplain to the Queen of France.

Confession of a dying servant made him aware of and sensitive to the spiritual and material needs of the poor. He began to work with the poor, and eventually with the galley slaves, becoming their chaplain.

Vincent was asked to organize a group to work among the poor. In 1625, he founded the Congregation of the Mission. He also organized parish groups to aid the poor, and he worked to reduce brutality to slaves. Louise de Marillac was a principal collaborator. As more women became involved, a group developed into the Sisters of Charity.

Vincent worked to develop hospitals, urban and rural relief programs, assistance to victims of war; he ransomed more than 1200 slaves.

Louise died on March 15, 1660. She was canonized in 1934.

Vincent died on September 27, 1660. He was canonized in 1737, proclaimed patron of all charitable groups in 1885. Vincent is the

patron of all charitable institutions and organizations, hospitals, those with leprosy, prisoners, those who ask for spiritual help, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, volunteers. He is symbolized in art with children. His feast is September 27. Vincent de Paul Society was founded in France in 1833 by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.



*Vincent de Paul*

## WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ST. VINCENT DE PAUL?

Vincent de Paul teaches us that charity always involves action. Vincent said: "Affective love flows from the person who loves into the one who is loved. Effective love consists in doing those things commanded or desired by the person one loves. It is this kind of effective love I am speaking about" (Lectures). The charity which Vincent teaches us is not in operation unless we take action.

The situations of our world are overwhelming. We can paralyze ourselves when we make the mistake of thinking that because we cannot do everything, we cannot do anything, so we do nothing. Vincent teaches us to make whatever efforts we can, God will bless those efforts.

Vincent's life and work are a testimony to concern for the poor; it is simply a matter of

justice. "All things are part of the goods of God and we are only dispensers of them. And so, from them, we should use only what is necessary" (Lectures). If we use more than we need, others will have less than they need. This is an intolerable injustice.

Vincent's life and work involved the laity. Even after founding the Vincentians and the Sisters of Charity, he organized groups of lay people. We are called to continue Jesus' mission of love.

The challenge for us from St. Vincent is to live and love by action, not only observation and conversation. Human life is not a spectator sport, nor is the Christian life.

Vincent's life calls us to identify what we can do to put charity into action, and then to do it.

## EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. VINCENT

### FROM VINCENT'S CORRESPONDENCE

"Strive to live with content in the midst of those things that cause your discontent."

"Free your mind from all that troubles you, God will take care of things. You will be unable to make haste without, so to speak, grieving the heart of God, because God sees that you would not be giving sufficient honor with holy trust. Trust in God, I beg you, and you will have the fulfillment of what your heart desires."

"Even though the poor may be, often, rough and unrefined, we must not judge them from

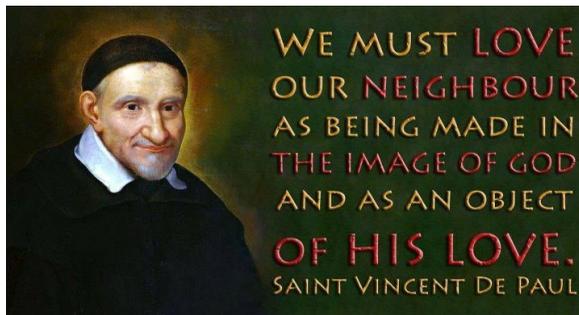
external appearances nor from the mental gifts they seemed to have received. On the contrary, if you consider the poor in the light of faith, then you will observe that they are taking the place of the Son of God who chose to be poor."

"Since Christ willed to be poor, he chose for himself disciples who were poor. He made himself the servant of the poor and shared in their poverty. He went so far as to say that he would consider every deed which either helps or harms the poor as done for or against himself. Since God surely loves the poor he also loves those who love the poor."

“We must try to be moved by our neighbors’ worries and distress. We must beg God to put into our hearts sentiments of pity and compassion and to fill them again and again with these dispositions.”

“It is our duty to prefer the service of the poor to everything else and to offer such service as quickly as possible. If a needy person requires medicine or other help during prayer time, do whatever has to be done with peace of mind. Offer the deed to God as your prayer. God is never neglected if you must leave prayer for such service. One of God’s works is merely interrupted so another can be carried out.”

“Charity is certainly greater than any rule. Moreover, all rules must lead to charity. Since she is a noble mistress, we must do whatever she commands. With renewed devotion, then, we must serve the poor, especially outcasts and beggars. They have been given to us as our masters and patrons.”



### PRAYER from the Rule of Life

“Your pleasure, O Savior of the World! Your delight, your joy, was to do the will of your Father.”

“We are your children, we put ourselves in your arms to imitate you in your practices. Grant us this grace.”

“Give us, O Lord, this spirit: that we might always be pleasing in your sight! You will fill us with a fervent desire to make ourselves like you. This will enable us to live by your life so we can say with St. Paul: ‘It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.’ Amen.”

Prepared by:  
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