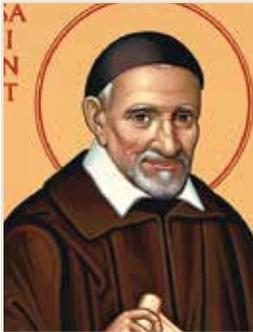


St. Vincent de Paul



c. 1580-1660

Feast Day:
September 27

Vincent de Paul was born to poor peasant farmers in France in 1581. Vincent's parents saw that he had a natural talent for academic study, and they sacrificed to be able to send him to school. Vincent attended university, was ordained a priest at age 24, and continued his studies.

While on a short sea voyage, Fr. De Paul was captured by pirates and sold as a slave in Africa. There, he was re-sold to different masters many times over the next two years. Eventually, he converted his Muslim master to Christianity and the two of them escaped back to France. Fr. De Paul was given his freedom, but his experiences of the poor and outcast never left him.

Fr. De Paul especially responded to Christ's command to visit the sick. Fr. De Paul founded many hospitals for the poor and worked to treat not only their physical needs, but their spiritual needs as well. He founded communities and organizations to go out to the poor and the sick to care for them. These include the Ladies of Charity and the Daughters of Charity. He founded the religious order of priests called the Congregation of the Mission, or later, the Vincentians.

His fame around France grew, despite his humility regarding his work. He was able to use his notoriety to raise money to keep the hospitals, communities of service, and Works of Mercy serving the poor effectively. Fr. De Paul was also concerned with serving the clergy. He worked to reform the corrupt practices of the clergy in France. He also helped to better prepare men who felt called to enter into the priesthood.

St. Vincent de Paul died near 80 years of age in 1660. He was canonized by Pope Clement XII in 1737 and is the patron saint of all charitable societies.