

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was founded by a young French attorney, Frederic Ozanam (1813-1853) in 1833. He entered the Sorbonne University in 1831. This period in France, following the Napoleonic Wars, was a time of rampant anti-Catholicism in France, especially at the University. Frederic and a number of his advocates responded to the attacks on the Church and disparaging remarks made by their professors in such a manner as to prompt the admiration of fellow students.

In May, 1833 he and his associates decided to put words into actions and formed a Conference of Charity. In 1835, rules and purposes of the association were formulated and the official title, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, was adopted.

Ozanam received his law degree and practiced in Lyon, France. He returned to the University in 1839 and pursued courses in literature and languages. He became proficient in the romance languages, and he also embraced English, German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

Throughout his life, he gave unqualified service to the church through total dedication to the growing Society of St. Vincent de Paul and edited the Annales of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

As a contributor to the leading Catholic journals of the day, he was relentless in espousing the mission of Christ's Church to the poor, the needy, the suffering, and the afflicted in a spirit of justice and charity.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, as it exists today, exemplifies the spirit of Frederic Ozanam.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul at St. Mary of the Pines Church is active in our midst and welcomes inquiries about membership. The members at St. Mary of the Pines are quite dedicated to the work they do for the poor and all who are in need.