



# Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

*An Introduction to the Society*

*St Michael Conference - Calgary, Alberta*

# THE SOCIETY

- *Mission and Values*
- *History*
- *Structure*

# MISSION

*The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization whose mission is:*

- *to live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy.*

# VALUES

*As Vincentians we:*

- *See Christ in anyone who suffers;*
- *Come together as a family;*
- *Have personal contact with the poor;*
- *Help in all possible ways.*

# WHO ARE THE POOR?

- *People are poor when they are excluded from the ordinary living patterns, customs, and activities of society and face a constant struggle to live with dignity*

# POVERTY CAN BE

- *Being unemployed / working poor*
- *Being lonely, bereaved, mentally ill*
- *Being disabled, depressed, unable to cope with day to day challenges*
- *Living with violence, drug addiction, alcoholism*
- *Being isolated (seniors, refugees)*
- *Having few options to choose*

# OUR LOGO

*The logo has the following meaning:*

- *The fish is the symbol of Christianity and, in this case, represents the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.*
- *The eye of the fish is the vigilant eye of God seeking to help the poor in our midst.*
- *The crossing at the tail or the tie-knot represents unity and oneness among members, as well as union with the poor.*
- *The circle bounding the logo signifies the global or worldwide stature of the SSVP, an international Society.*
- *The words "serviens in spe" mean to serve in hope, the hope that comes from Our Lord Jesus Christ.*

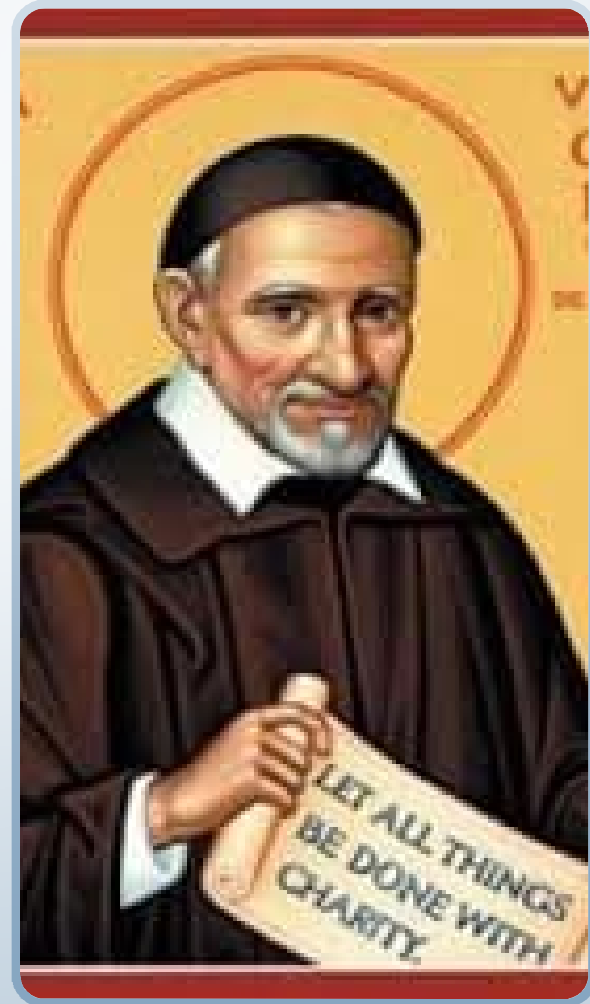




# OUR PATRON

## *Saint Vincent de Paul*

- *24 Apr 1581 - 27 Sept 1660*
- *French Catholic priest*
- *Dedicated to service of poor*
- *Renowned for compassion, humility, generosity*
- *Founder of Daughters of Charity*
- *Patron of all works of charity*
- *Canonized in 1737*





# HOW WE BEGAN

## *Blessed Rosalie Rendu*

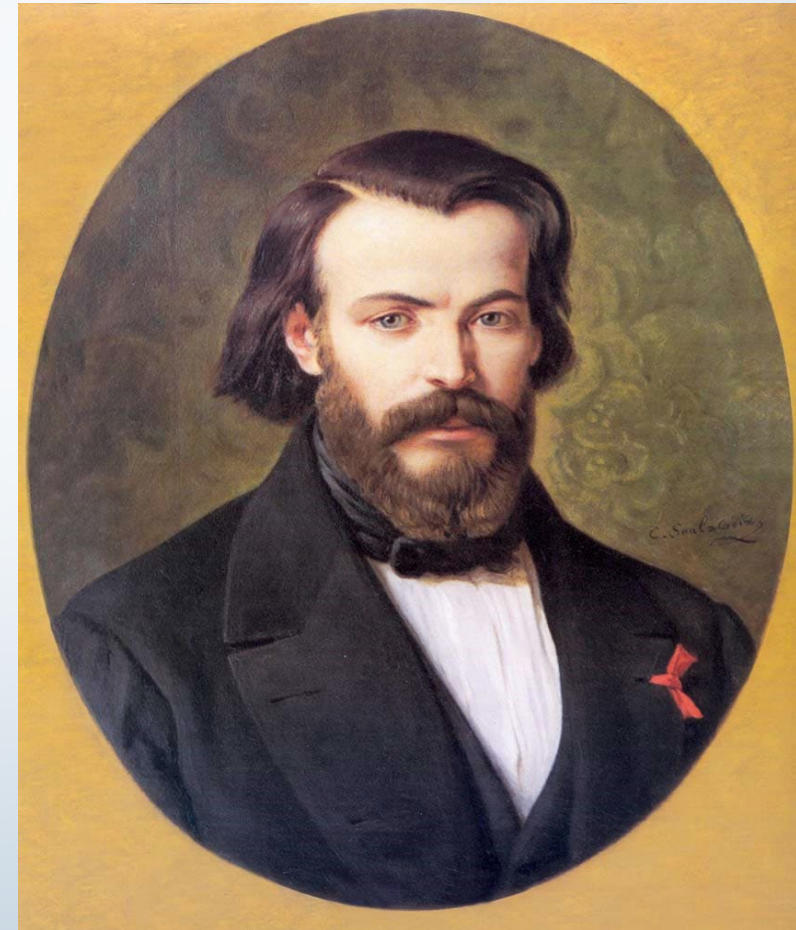
- *Sept 9 1786 - Feb 7 1856*
- *Beatified Nov 9 2003*
- *Joined the Daughters of Charity at age 17*
- *Leading worker and organizer of care for the poor in Paris slums*
- *Directed students & influential citizens to support families in need of care*
- *Mentored Frederic Ozanam beginning in 1833*
- *Saw the poor as "our lords and masters"*
  - *"One of the greatest ways of doing good to the poor is to show them respect and consideration"*



# OUR FOUNDER

## *Blessed Frederic Ozanam*

- *Born Apr 23 1813, died Sept 8, 1853*
- *Beatified August 22, 1997 by Pope John Paul II*
- *French literary scholar, lawyer, journalist, equal rights activist*
- *1833 co-founded Conference of Charity to help the poor*
- *1835 adopted title and rules of SSVP*
- *Insisted that charity be extended to non-Catholics & countries outside France*
- *Mentored by Sister Rosalie Rendu*



# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART: CANADA



# EXECUTIVE STRUCTURE – ALL LEVELS



*President*



*Vice-  
President(s)*



*Secretary*



*Treasurer*



*Spiritual  
Advisor*

# MEMBERSHIP

*People join the Society to develop their faith & improve their Christian life*

## *Classes of Membership:*

- *Full member: Any person willing to serve the poor & participate in meetings and activities of the Society. Executive must be Roman Catholic*
- *Auxiliary member: Any person, Catholic or not, who accepts the Society's principles. Auxiliary members may attend meetings, but do not vote and cannot run for executive office*
- *Benefactor: Persons recognized for their financial contributions or other support to the Society. Invited to attend general meetings.*
- *Youth Adult member: Full members b/w ages of 19 and 35*
- *Youth Member: Full members aged 12 to 19, working with an adult full member as a mentor*



# CONFERENCE

*Term originated with the Conference of Charity (1833)*

- *Provides environment in which members develop & nurture common spiritual life & encounter Christ in the poor*
- *Main role is to group together people pursuing the Society's mission*
  - *Create an environment that enables members to develop a sense of Vincentian spirituality, friendship, & solidarity*
  - *Most important responsibility is to comfort & aid the poor*
  - *Fundamental activity is the person-to-person encounter with the poor through home visits carried out in pairs*
    - *Vincentians are guests of persons being visited, they are the hosts*
  - *Conference members should become defenders of social justice*
  - *Conference members work with others - cannot do alone what needs to be done*

Background:  
St Michael  
Conference

*Established in 1994*

## *Membership*

- *Executive – 8 members*
  - *President, 1 Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Banking Director, Advisors (2)*
- *Auxiliary members – 2*
  - *Phone coordinator, Christmas Hamper Liaison*
- *Larder Manager & Food purchasers 2+*
- *Primary Home Visitors – ~10*
- *Home Visitors - ~ 10*



# KEY ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

## *Hamper delivery*

- *Food (including formula), household / hygiene supplies*

## *Assistance with rent, utilities, transportation, meeting medical needs*

- *Furniture moving on [rare] occasions*

## *Extended support (food/rent) in crisis situations*

## *Parish food collection (now monthly); Christmas Share Sunday*

## *Twinning*

- *Guatemala*

# KEY ACTIVITIES / PROJECTS

## *Christmas Hamper outreach*

- *Parish committee under auspices of SSVP*
- *A parish event!*
- *~170+ hampers (30 for St Bernard Parish)*

## *Networking*

- *Member of West Particular Council*
- *Member of Westside Interagency Committee*
- *Sonshine Home*

## *Youth group*

- *None at present*

## *Response to emerging issues/priorities*

- *RESP – (Canada Learning Bond)*

## EXPECTATIONS

### Meetings:

- *Monthly, except December, July and August*
- *Spiritual reflection (important aspect of meeting)*

### Home visitation:

- *Primary and Home visitors*
  - *Response target – 24 hours (except weekends)*

### Member Education:

- *Orientation for new members*
- *Ad Hoc workshops as needed*

## SSVP Member Responsibilities

- *Active participation in home visitations, Christmas Hamper program, and other activities as required (e.g., Our Lady Queen of Peace Christmas Party)*
- *Attendance at monthly meetings*
- *Adherence to the policies and procedures of the Society (knowing the Rule)*
- *Contributing to spirituality of members*
- *Responding to the need for involvement on committees when possible*
- *Successful completion of screening procedures*
  - *Security check*
  - *Volunteer information form, service/confidentiality agreement, Model Code of Conduct (Calgary Diocese)*

# Home Visitation

*The fundamental underpinning of the Society*

❖ *Our Personal Encounter with the Poor*

- *Prayer before visits*
- *Visit in pairs always*
- *Demonstrate reverence, empathy, and gratitude*
- *Offer friendship, establish relationship*
- *Do not judge*
- *Love like Jesus*
- *Promote self-sufficiency*
- *Maintain confidentiality*
- *Follow – up*
- *Prayer*

# SUMMARY

- *Vincentians offer gifts of charity to those in need*
- *We do home visits promptly*
- *We are characterized by a spirit of humility & cordiality*
- *Vincentian home visitors have certain abilities but are not visiting in a professional role*
- *Vincentians never judge .... Never!*
- *Know WHO we serve!*



# QUESTIONS?

*THANK YOU!*

