

Homily for September 27, 2019

The Collect introducing today's Mass had us pray:

***O God, who for the relief of the poor  
and the formation of the clergy  
endowed the Priest Saint Vincent de Paul  
with apostolic virtues,  
grant, we pray, that, afire with that same spirit,  
we may love what he loved  
and put into practice what he taught.<sup>1</sup>***

Although not a Bishop, St. Vincent had the profound sense of being called with a desire to both form priests and bring relief to the poor. We pray that aware of his purposeful mission we too would be set afire with that same spirit to love what he loved and put into practice what he taught.

So, what did St. Vincent practice and teach?

St. Vincent de Paul was born in April 1581. He began his studies for the priesthood in 1595 and received tonsure and minor orders in 1596. He next went to Toulouse for his theology and was ordained in 1600, at 20. In July 1605, while he was aboard a ship traveling from Marseilles to Narbonne, in Southern France, the ship was attacked by pirates, and he and the other passengers were taken prisoners. Vincent spent the next two years as a slave in Tunisia, North Africa, but eventually he escaped and made it back to France, where he took up residence in Paris and cared for a parish on the outskirts of the city. In about 1615, he decided to devote his entire life to the poor.

Two years later, in 1617 Vincent founded the first Confraternity of Charity, an association of women, known as Servants of the Poor, to help the sick and the indigent. He then spent the years 1618 to 1624 preaching missions in country parishes and establishing his Confraternity of Charity in those remote areas. Seeing the good that these missions were producing, he founded (1625) the Congregation of the Mission (more commonly known as Vincentians) to evangelize France's poor rural population. He also initiated retreats for the young men soon to be ordained and later founded seminaries to provide adequate training for priests. With St. Louise de Marillac (1591–1660), he founded (1633) the Daughters of Charity. He died on September 27, 1660, and was canonized by Pope Clement XII in 1737. In 1885, Pope Leo XIII named him patron of all works of charity. Few have ever accomplished as much for the poor as did St. Vincent de Paul. The St. Vincent de Paul Societies in our parishes not only bear his name but also continue his work among the poor.

May we be inspired by his example to further the work of our Society here at St. Peter's, where we have just undertaken a new initiative as we partner with the Calgary Food Bank. We can now purchase food through them, which we estimate will save us \$17,000 annually. This will allow the

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II.\*](#) (2011). (Third Typical Edition, p. 956). Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

saved revenue to support families in others ways, like rent, utilities and the like. However we need drivers who can assist in picking up the food from the South East Depot and bring it back to St. Peter's. If you would like to help carry on the vision of today's saint by participating in this or any other aspect of SVD go to the St Peter's website and click on the "Get involved" tab. In turn click on the service ministry page, that will direct to St. Vincent de Paul where you can send an email or make a phone call to enquire more about this.

SVD is integral to the life of St. Peter's and is a way for us to be set afire with the same Spirit that governed the life of St. Vincent de Paul. (<https://joygregor1.wixsite.com/stpetersssvp2017>)