



Holy Heroes

Saint Vincent de Paul

Feast Day: September 27

Patron Saint of Charity

Vincent de Paul was born in 1581 to French peasants. As a young boy he always gave to those that had less than he. While walking home from the mill with flour for his family, he would give handfuls of the flour to the poor he met on the way. He went to college and became a priest at the age of 19. He continued his study of theology for another four years. Upon starting his life as a priest, Vincent was captured by pirates and sold as a slave. For two years he had to work hard for the masters who bought him. He converted his last master and together they escaped back to France.

Vincent was sent to do parish work near Paris. He organized groups to look after the needy. The women nursed the sick and cooked meals for them. Men found jobs for the poor who were able to work, and gave food and clothes to those who could not work. Vincent also founded the Daughters of Charity. With the help of these Sisters, he gathered money to build homes for the poor, for the sick, for the aged and for abandoned children. Vincent de Paul was especially concerned for the welfare of children. Each night, he walked the streets of Paris rescuing infants and children left to die. Once, he was seized by robbers who thought he carried a treasure. When Vincent de Paul opened his cloak, they saw an abandoned baby. "This is my treasure!" said Vincent de Paul. Shamed, they fell at his feet and joined him in prayer.

Vincent de Paul also founded the Lazarists, a society of priests and missionaries.

Vincent de Paul was almost eighty years old when he died in Paris in 1660. His body was found to be incorrupt for fifty years after his death. To further Vincent de Paul's work in modern times, Frederic Ozanam began the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Paris in 1833. It has one million members worldwide in 130 countries and gives moral and material aid to the poor of all faiths.