

SEPTEMBER Card

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## *St. Vincent de Paul*

### **Priest**

† April 1580–September 27, 1660

† France

† Canonized 1737

† Patron of works of charity, hospitals, prisoners, Madagascar



Vincent de Paul was a man known for his love for the sick and the poor. As a boy, he helped with the chores on his father's farm, tending sheep and caring for the other animals. Later, his father sent him to school where he studied to become a priest. According to a story, soon after he was ordained at the age of nineteen, he went on a sea voyage to claim some money left

to him by an old woman. The ship was attacked by pirates, and Vincent was taken captive. He was sold as a slave in North Africa to a fisherman and later to a chemist. The chemist liked Vincent and taught him many things. He promised to make Vincent a rich young man if he would join the Mohammedan religion. Vincent politely, but firmly, refused! He prayed each day, asking God and

our Blessed Mother to protect him. Finally, his prayers were answered, and he escaped to Rome.

After studying for a year, he was sent to Paris, where he was made chaplain to the Queen. He was content with a life of wealth and comfort. There God led him to his life's work: caring for the sick and the poor. A holy man helped Vincent understand more deeply what it meant to be a Christian.

For a year Vincent worked in a poor parish. He organized groups of people to provide food and clothing for the poor. Vincent realized that people were also poor in faith. He took into his house several young men who were training for the priesthood. This was the beginning of the seminary for Vincentian priests. Vincent and his followers preached to the poor. They helped people suffering in jail and slaves on ships. They founded homes for abandoned babies. St. Vincent de Paul once said, "I belong to God and to the poor."

Vincent remained friends with many rich and powerful people and involved them in his work with the poor and needy. With the help of St. Louise de Marillac, he started a club for ladies who collected food and money for the poor. Later in Paris, the organization became known as the Ladies of Charity. In time they

formed a religious community called the Daughters of Charity.

The work of Vincent de Paul continues throughout the Church in the projects carried on by the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

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*St. Vincent de Paul, help us  
make today a giving day!*

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† It is said that Vincent wrote more than 3,000 letters. Write a letter to someone who needs encouragement and care.

† Find out when the St. Vincent de Paul Society was founded and what it does. Contact the Society in your city or town and plan a project to assist their work.

† St. Vincent loved the aged. Hold a Grandparents' Day. Invite elderly friends or relatives to school for games and activities you share.

† Find out about organizations in your diocese that support life. Invite someone to speak about them. Ask how you can get involved.

† Vincent's life was the Gospel alive! For each work of Vincent, find a matching quotation from Scripture. Make a banner of one of the verses.