



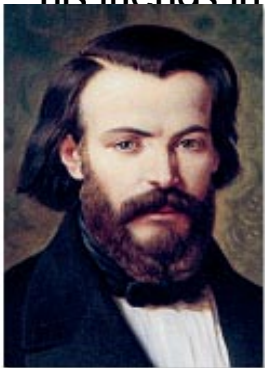
Patron: St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660)

Our Patron, St. Vincent de Paul, founded the Ladies of Charity in 1617, the Congregation of the Mission in 1625, and co-founded the Daughters of Charity in 1633 with St. Louise de Marillac.

Founder: Blessed Frederic Ozanam (1813-1853)  
Beatified: August 22, 1997



Members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul have been responding to the needs of the poor since 17<sup>th</sup> century France. In 2008 we celebrated the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Society by Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his friends in 1833. St. Vincent de Paul, the “Universal Patron of Charity”, was the patron for the founders. The Society spread and 12 years later, the first conference was formed in St. Louis, MO. Today the Society is in 141 countries with over 1,000 conferences. The first conference in the Trenton Diocese was formed in 1859 and today there are 47 conferences with over 900 volunteers.



### SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL

In addition to helping those in need through the individual Conferences, the National Society has other programs which reach out to people in parts of the country suffering from natural disasters. Because there were already conferences of the Society in Louisiana, Vincentians were there to immediately help the victims of Katrina. More recently, the mobile feeding vehicle HOPE is in Houston where refugees of the hurricanes Gustav and Ike are struggling after their lives were turned upside down by these storms.

During the celebration of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Charity, the first annual Friends of the Poor® Walk took place across the country, with some 10,000 walkers raising money to help the people the Society serves.

The Voice of the Poor Committee is a program with the mission of upholding Catholic social teaching by researching, validating, documenting and advocating issues related to the condition of the poor and disenfranchised. They provide assistance to help Councils of the Society to speak out for the poor in one clear and unified voice that is based on Gospel values.



## HISTORY OF ST. MARY OF THE LAKES CONFERENCE

In 1980, there was a family in need in Medford, NJ. Some people heard the cry of a mother with eight children; they bought a house for them, and raised funds by having garage or yard sales at which they sold the items which many parishioners dropped off at the Church parking lot. It was suggested that they start a thrift shop. A man who had leased a store at 10 North Main Street in downtown Medford needed to close his shop because his wife was sick, so the group sublet the store from him. The store next to the gazebo became the St. Vincent's Thrift Store for about nine months before it was outgrown, when they moved to a part of Bende's Florist shop on Jones Road.

The volunteers—some of whom are still volunteering today—came in each day to sort through the donations received, be it used clothing, household items like pots and pans, linens, or toys. On any given day in the store you could find an eclectic assortment of merchandise from antique brass candlesticks to designer clothing; used toasters and vacuums, picture frames and children's toys. There have been auctions, fashion shows and yard sales—many good buys!

Churches in the surrounding area helped out also—St. Joan of Arc, Holy Eucharist, Sacred Heart in Mt. Holly and St. Ann's in Brown's Mills. Congregations of the Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Evangelical and Presbyterian Churches joined the effort, with donations of food for the pantry, used clothing and household items, monetary donations and also volunteer hours. And so began the St. Mary of the Lakes Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The project evolved from helping one family in Medford, and grew to serve others in the area needing assistance. In 2004 when some in the Medford area were ravished by the so-called "1000 year" flood, our Pastor Msgr. Dubell called on the generosity of his parishioners who contributed over \$32,000 to help with the cleanup and reconstruction. St. Vincent's matched that amount with income from the Thrift Shop and began the work of meeting with the families who suffered such great losses to determine how best we could help them.

Today the need is still great, and the parishioners of St. Mary of the Lakes Parish very generously join hands with us to help. As we celebrate 175 years of serving those in need, we recommit ourselves to our mission of serving Christ in the person of the poor. The same Vincentian spirit of the founders in 1833 characterizes the Society today, responding with compassion to each person in need.



As a Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the volunteers are sometimes called "Vincentians". We reach out in friendship and with helping hands to those that are poor or suffering. Like our founder, Frederic Ozanam, we pray for the grace to balance our commitments to marriage and family, with the call to serve the poor. Vincentians are men and women from every ethnic and cultural background, age group and economic level, putting their faith into action by serving people in the local parish community, praying together and reflecting on the Gospel message of Christ. We see our mission carried out through the efforts of our members and benefactors as we live out the Gospel message by feeding the hungry, clothing those who have none, sheltering the homeless, and advocating for those who cannot do so for themselves. These acts of kindness can change the world and can change us as we see the face of Christ in those we serve. We are grateful for the blessings of our members and benefactors, their time and talents, working together for a network of charity to care for God's poor. These efforts and those of everyone who partners with us in this mission of charity, make a better world possible!

ST. MARY OF THE LAKES CONFERENCE  
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