

WHAT MEMBERSHIP INVOLVES

A regular meeting of perhaps an hour's duration. At the meeting, the "helping" contacts of each member are reported and discussed, necessary action is taken, and plans for any follow-up are agreed upon.

The business of the meeting is strictly confidential.

The meeting has always been considered essential to the spirit of the Society. It ensures efficiency and perseverance in our work and binds the members together in a bond of friendship.

Weekly visiting

This is usually done in the company of another Vincentian.

Short prayers

are said before and after the meeting to remind members that the motive for their work is the love of God.

AN INVITATION

The SVDP is easy to join.

There is no initiation procedure. No special qualifications are required, other than the desire to join with others to help those in need for the love of God.

Christians have an obligation to serve others.

This service can be done as an individual, but is often better accomplished by being a member of a Society which provides a wide range of opportunities.

If the Society of St. Vincent de Paul appeals to you and you want to learn more about it,

Contact:

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Archdiocesan Council of
Milwaukee
9601 W Silver Spring Dr.
Milwaukee WI 53225-3301
(414) 462-7837
council@svdpmilw.org**

I wish I could help...

If you have said these words to yourself—you can, whatever your age, whatever your skill. All we ask is a few hours of your time.

**AN
INTRODUCTION
AND AN
INVITATION**

**Society of
St. Vincent De Paul**



THE PAST

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was founded in 1833 by **Frederic Ozanam**, a 20-year-old student of the Sorbonne University in Paris.

In answer to a challenge for Christians to “Practice what they preach,” Frederic Ozanam and a group of fellow students started to seek out and visit the poor of Paris in their homes, taking them bread and clothes, their friendship and their concern. This small group took as their patron the great French priest, who alerted the world to social problems: **St. Vincent de Paul**.

Similar groups began in Paris, then the rest of France, and eventually spread throughout the Christian world with the object of visiting, for the love of God, those in need.



THE PRESENT

Today, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (known as the **SVDP**) is a worldwide lay organization of Catholic men and women, young and old of every race, numbering 880,000 of whom some 60,000 are in the United States.

The members meet in parish and county groups in order to help in a personal way those in need.

There is no need which is outside the concern of the Society,
be it sickness or disability,
mental or physical,
family problems,
social or economic,
the loneliness of old age,
the alcoholic, the drug addict,
the grieving, the alienated.

The Society supports and operates rehabilitation workshops for the handicapped, free dining services and children’s camps, and organizes its own overseas aid—known as twinning.

The aim of the SVDP is to bring social justice and the friendship of true charity to all those in need.

THE FUTURE

No matter how good the welfare services provided by the State may be, the work to which the **SVDP** is called will always be necessary. For it is fundamentally the giving of oneself in friendship to another which can only be a personal encounter.

All people search for peace—because of the horrors of street and domestic violence as well as war and ethnic hatred worldwide.

People are also looking for peace within themselves, needing assurance of their worth.

The Gospels tell us again and again that true peace is possible only if we live as Christ showed us by His own life.

The work of SVDP is the Gospel message in action:

I was hungry
I was thirsty
I was a stranger
I was naked
I was sick
I was in prison

And you cared.