

*The Society of  
St. Vincent de Paul  
invites you to join it  
in spiritual growth, fellowship  
and silent works of charity:  
quietly and discreetly aiding  
needy families;  
personal visits to homes,  
hospitals, institutions;  
seeking and serving  
the distressed;  
advocating for social justice;  
and growing spiritually  
through the gift of self  
to others.*

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is easy to join. There is no initiation fee. There are no special qualifications 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:*



**(314) 576-3993**  
**[www.svdpusa.org](http://www.svdpusa.org)**

*You,*  
**a Vincentian?**

**The Two Great Commandments:** The purpose of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is to fulfill the two great commandments—**love of God and love of neighbor**. We seek to grow spiritually in our meetings and through prayer and sharing of our faith. We develop a bond or community of faith with our fellow Vincentians. We participate in other forms of spiritual activity. We seek out God's needy, both materially and spiritually, and help where we can. Sometimes great resources are needed—sometimes we can do no more than listen and comfort—we are very good at it. We respond to the opportunities God presents to us. In coming closer to those in need, you are coming closer to God.

**We're people just like you.** Vincentians are doctors, office workers, lawyers, factory workers, housewives, students, retirees—people just like you. Your next door neighbor could very well be a Vincentian and you might never know it.

**Vincentians are not professionally trained social workers.** The important thing is the desire to serve as Jesus served—with unconditional love.

**Those we serve have need of your talents, your know-how, your concern, your love.** All of us have a great deal of expertise in various areas and by working together we can move mountains. Many Vincentians have raised families, run a household, built buildings, repaired autos or done just what you do so very well.

**You say how much time you can give.** Anyone who is willing to lend a hand is welcome to join the Society. Even a few hours of your time are very precious to the needy and distressed. In fact, all we ask is that you devote some time for works of charity and for a regular meeting. You can be an apostle right in your own parish.

**We meet regularly.** The Society is typically formed into Conferences in a parish setting consisting of 5 to 10 persons. They meet weekly or twice a month. They pray together and discuss current cases being handled.

**We go in pairs as Jesus taught us.** All calls are made in pairs to avoid scandal and to help recipients feel more at ease. Wherever there is need, Vincentians go two by two and do what they can to ease the suffering of their neighbors.

**We contribute to the life of the parish.** Conferences work with the pastor and their parish council. Every parish has some people in need either spiritually or materially. Lay people, in many instances, are better able to reach these people than a priest.

**We help get problems solved.** The Society is not just an "emergency food giver." Vincentians are also concerned with the needs of the aged, lonely, handicapped, permanently sick or homebound, and of persons in convalescent nursing homes and hospitals.

When making calls, Vincentians determine first the immediate need, which frequently are food, clothing, shelter, or medical care. Material assistance is given on the basis of the need indicated and by the needs determined by the visiting Vincentians.

In subsequent follow-up calls, Vincentians attempt to eliminate the underlying causes of the distress. In this area, they are able to call on a vast number of people who are able to open doors in the medical, legal and business fields. Follow-up visits continue as long as needs are present.

**We promote dignity and respect.** Persons to be aided are to be met "on an equal basis," at their level, never looked down on, and always with the thought that they are our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

*Confidentiality  
is honored.*

**We've been helping people worldwide since 1833.** The Society was born in 1833 in Paris, France—its founder was a young layman and student, Frederic Ozanam. By 1845, the first Conference in the United States was formed in St. Louis.

**Where do our resources come from?** Financing of a Conference is seldom a problem. Proceeds from parish special collections, poor boxes, and donations from contributing members are the usual methods of support. In cases where no other funds are available, the Diocesan and District Councils and other Conferences can provide help.

**No dues required.** There are no dues charged to members although Conferences are encouraged to take up a secret collection at each meeting so members can give their own resources as well as their time.

*In conclusion,  
may we say  
that Christ has  
just knocked  
at your door!*