



St. Vincent de Paul
September 27

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1581–1660 • France

A young priest, Vincent de Paul, was sailing home to his parish from Marseilles. Suddenly, one of the sailors cried out—pirates were attacking the ship! Vincent de Paul fell, wounded by an arrow. The pirates captured the young priest and sold him into slavery in North Africa.

Over the next two years, Vincent de Paul served three different masters. His final master was a Catholic who had left the Faith. When Vincent was working in his master's fields, his master's wife came out to watch him work.

She asked Vincent de Paul to sing her a song. In a clear voice, Vincent sang the "Hail, Holy Queen," a beautiful hymn in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The woman was enchanted.

She returned to her husband and asked how he could have given up a Faith that was so beautiful. In time, Vincent de Paul brought his master back to the Catholic Faith, and both escaped back to France. Now Vincent de Paul could return to serving the people of France as a priest.

He founded a congregation of priests and helped found an order of nuns, the Daughters of Charity, who looked after the poor and the sick. One snowy night, he discovered a little child abandoned in the streets. Sadly, this practice was common for poor, unwanted babies. He brought the child to a home to look after him. His heart went out to the babies of Paris, and he and a group of kind ladies started a home for abandoned children.

The king assigned Vincent de Paul to look after the galley slaves, prisoners who did the backbreaking rowing of the king's ships. The prisoners in the galley ships must have reminded Vincent de Paul of his time as a slave. He visited the galley slaves every day, reminding them that Christ still loved them and preparing them for the sacraments.

St. Vincent de Paul did many such good works, caring for the poor, the sick, and the abandoned. He served God and others with love until he died a holy death in his old age.

St. Vincent de Paul, help me to care for the poor, the sick, and the abandoned!