

September 27

Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) priest

On September 27, 1660 Vincent de Paul, who established the Mission Congregation and a myriad of charitable organizations on behalf of the poor and marginalized, died peacefully in Paris.

Vincent was born in 1581 in the rural town of Pouy in southwest France. His parents were peasants, and although at a certain point in his life Vincent seemed to rebel against his upbringing, the poverty he experienced as a child did much to shape his spirituality.

His parents had him study for the priesthood, hoping that this would give him a step up in society. Vincent was ordained at the young age of nineteen, and his life took a number of twists and turns before he arrived in Paris in 1608. In the French capital he met the Cardinal of Bérulle, who changed the course of Vincent's ministry by helping him rediscover the deep joy that can spring from material and spiritual poverty.

Vincent found a deeper peace than he had known before. He was named general chaplain of France's prisons, and in his encounters with the rural poor he discovered their desperate need for mercy. From then on he turned his attention to them, working to bring them the good news of God's boundless love revealed by Jesus Christ.

In his desire to evangelize the countryside more quickly, Vincent founded "confraternities of charity" and many missionary initiatives in which laypeople participated. He also helped found seminaries to meet the need for well-trained, mature priests.

In 1625, Vincent's acquaintance with François de Sales led to the founding of the Mission Congregation, whose members were called Vincentines or Lazarists because their first meeting place was the Paris priory of Saint-Lazare. By the end of Vincent's life, the Lazarists, who by charter remained diocesan priests, numbered more than 130 and lived in twenty-five houses throughout Europe.

BIBLICAL READINGS

1 Cor 1:26-31; Mic 25:31-46

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:

Vincent de Paul, founder of the Mission Congregation (Lazarists)

WESTERN CATHOLICS:

Vincent de Paul, priest (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)

Adolph and John of Cordova (d. ca. 824), martyrs (Spanish-Mozarabic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (17 tut/maskaram):

The glorious Cross

LUTHERANS:

Vincent de Paul, benefactor in South France

MARONITES:

Linus I (1st cent.), pope; *Cleopas* (1st cent.), apostle

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS*:

Callistratus and his 49 companions (d. 304), martyrs

Antim Ivireanul (d. 1716), bishop and martyr (Romanian Church)

*The churches belonging to the patriarchates of Jerusalem, Moscow, Serbia and Georgia, and the monasteries of Mount Athos, which follow the Julian calendar also for the feasts with fixed dates, commemorate today the Universal exaltation of the precious and life-giving Cross.