

Vincent blesses his works in
this Spanish painting.

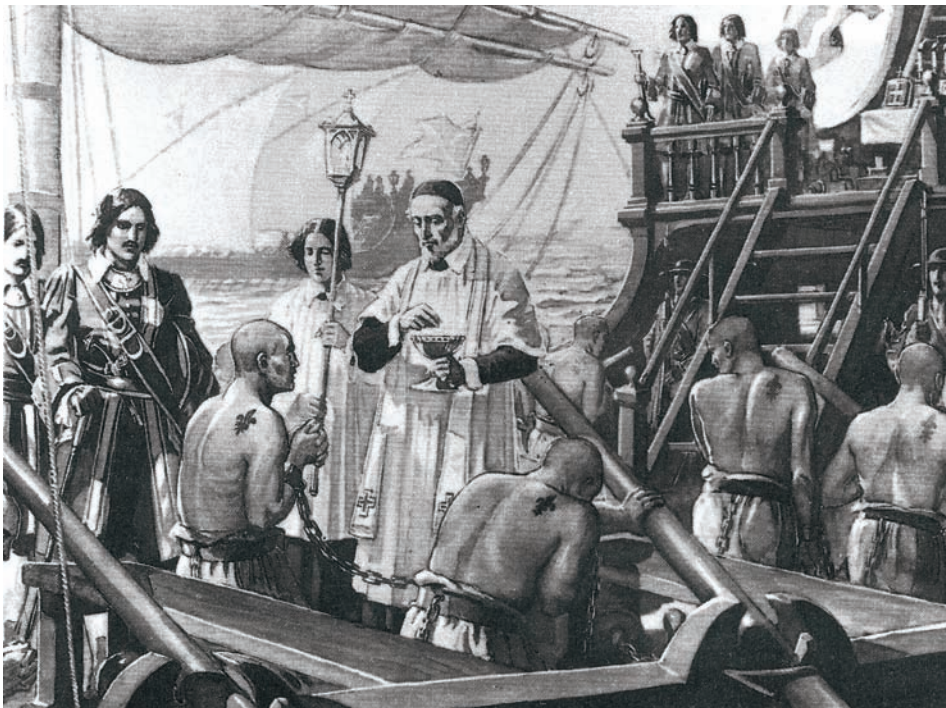
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DEPAUL UNIVERSITY NAMESAKE

St. Vincent de Paul

400 YEARS OF SOCIAL SERVICE





>> Vincent de Paul distributes Communion to galley prisoners Book illustration by Jean-Loup Chamet

By Suzanne Hanney
StreetWise Editor-in-Chief

Service and staying power are goals for nonprofits. In 17th century France, Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac created a response to the most destitute and disadvantaged of their society that 350 years after their deaths is still present in the form of major Chicago institutions, and that still inspires Chicagoans to give service.

Vincent and Louise lived in times as challenging as today. It was the Counter Reformation and France was at war Vincent's entire life: foreign wars, religious wars, civil war, many fought on French soil. As a result, farmers who could have been self-sustaining were reduced to poverty because their farms had become battlefields, their crops were pillaged, or their fields were unplanted.

Inability to pay taxes caused many farmers to abandon their farms for the city. Early urbanization, however, put them at the bottom of a new class structure, along with prostitutes and pimps, demobilized soldiers, ex-prisoners and war refugees. At the top of this society were artisans in building and clothing trades that catered to the nobility. Next came painters, musicians, civil servants, law and business professionals, then lesser service industries such as cooks, stable keepers and messengers.

"The modern state created modern poverty," said the Rev. Ed Udovic, C.M. PhD, senior executive for university mission at DePaul Univer-

sity and associate professor of history. "Society and the Church didn't quite understand what was happening. But Vincent did and could come up with effective means for addressing it."

Reaching out to those most in need

Vincent developed parish-based missions throughout France that ministered to the poor and the sick in small hospitals. Funding came from free will offerings but also small flocks of sheep or goats that provided wool, meat and milk, managed according to Vincent's regular reporting guidelines. The inspiration came after he preached about a family whose members were all sick – and watched his congregation rush to help them.

When the priest Vincent started the religious order known as the Congregation of the Mission, he was equally adamant that its outposts be adequately capitalized to provide members' food, clothing and travel expenses. "We, who do not take anything from the poor, need revenue."

Simultaneously, he eschewed upholstered furniture and gilded books.

An effective community organizer

The Catholic Church conferred sainthood on Vincent dePaul and Louise de Marillac, but William Hay says Vincent deserves another title: management guru.

"Stephen Covey, who wrote the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *Principle-Centered Leadership*, could have been writing about Vincent,"

Hay said, calling him values-driven, community-centered, pragmatic.

Hay is the founder of William E. Hay & Co., which consults with leaders in manufacturing, service and not-for-profit sectors on senior executive selection, organization design, strategy and structure. He also is former board president of the Boys and Girls Club of Chicago Eisenberg unit, active with Mercy Home for Boys and Girls and a board member of the Hope Institute for Children & Families in Springfield.

Vincent's life changed when he heard the confession of a dying man and realized the need for better outreach by clergy. Then, he traveled France and saw the struggles of marginalized people.

Either Louise or the wife of his nobleman benefactor accompanied him on many of these trips. Their question was always, "What must be done?"

As they took action, Vincent added the response, "It is not enough to do good in our society, it must be done well."

"I use that quote all the time now, too," said Hay, who obtained his master's in business administration at DePaul, teaches in its business school and serves on its board of trustees.

Preserving Vincent's ideals

It was over dinner one evening with his wife, Mary Pat Gannon Hay, as well as former DePaul University President John P. Minogue, C.M. and the Rev. J Patrick Murphy, C.M., dean of the DePaul school for public service administration, that the idea for *Vincent on Leadership: The Hay Project* was born. Sustainability – but also succession planning – were the concern.

"There just aren't enough Vincentian priests anymore," Hay said of the Congregation of the Mission. "As a result, our leadership succession pool at DePaul is shrinking."

Hay reviewed a proposal from Minogue and the couple gave \$1 million to fund the Hay Project, which seeks to codify and transmit Vincent's values. The Project works toward this goal through research and publications, networks and collaboration, education and training, both in person and for online students as far away as Kenya and the Philippines.

Mike Frigo has worked for two of the world's largest accounting firms and teaches graduate level non-profit finance at DePaul's School of Public Service. He refers to a non-profit as a 'business' that has a different goal than a for-profit business.

"The non-profit needs to adhere to their mission and have some money left over at the end of the year to use for the future. So I would say that St. Vincent was very talented in running his non-profit businesses," added Frigo. He is also vice president of Cedarlake Village, a moderate-income senior housing development and v.p. of Mayslake Village, 600 units of Catholic-spon-

sored housing for low-income seniors.

Frigo's students are amazed that Vincent managed without modern conveniences such as the telephone, internet, Fed Ex or airplanes, instead corresponding by letters that took weeks or months to get between parties.

"It makes me realize how much things haven't changed in terms of borrowing money, balancing budgets, obtaining donations, keeping constituents happy and dealing with various stakeholders," Frigo said.

"Many of the good things he did and things he struggled with, we struggle with too. There's very little change in the fundamentals of the struggles and triumphs of nonprofit organizations or how difficult money was to come by—when there was a poor crop how hard to ask for donations because the donors had suffered difficult times."

Vincent received income from government bonds and from coach lines that carried passengers and freight. However, King Louis XIV sometimes reduced the rate of return or simply defaulted to meet his own debts—a situation familiar to Illinois nonprofits today.

New documentary marks 350 year milestone

Udovic has also achieved a lifetime goal in time for the 350th anniversary milestone. He was scriptwriter and executive producer for *Vincent de Paul: Charity's Saint*, which has been screened at three international film festivals.

One highlight in the documentary is the role of Ladies of Charity, (noblewomen who raised alms) and Louise, who founded the Daughters of Charity. This religious community differed from cloistered nuns of the period in that it brought average single women out to work among the poor.

Leading through a life of service

"Vincent was able to press the role of women and demonstrate that women's service and leadership was needed and could be provided without disrupting the social and leadership fabric," Udovic added. Although Vincent and Louise faced initial opposition, "nothing succeeds like success."

Vincent was a realist, but also pragmatic, Udovic said.

As an example, Udovic cited Vincent's work with slaves on French galley ships, a punishment for various crimes. "Vincent could have been a crusader, but he acted within the limits of what he could do and demanded [the slaves'] right to be fed, to medical treatment and to religious care. Whatever their offense, the state's punishment can never violate their humanity."

Vincent also knew that service was most effective when it was personal—people served not as strangers but as brothers and sisters. They were never labeled as poor, Udovic said.

Thomas Drexler relates to Vincent's directive to "love our neighbor as being made in the image of God and as an object of His love."

Drexler was at DePaul for 10 years, in community service and the Office of Mission and Values. He is now executive director of the Ignatian Spirituality Project, which provides overnight spiritual enrichment to men and women who are homeless and in recovery. Ignatian retreats allow homeless people to express painful aspects of their lives to another person, so the issues no longer have power over them, Drexler said.

"In the sharing of their story we find the commonalities, both the highs and the lows," Drexler added. "Eventually we come to recognize God in both." Just as in a human friendship, the homeless person learns to talk to God, to vent anger and to make up.

Vincent's question, "what must be done?" amounted to triage, Udovic said. "Feed them if they are hungry, heal them if they are sick." The bigger question then became, "why are there so many and what can you do to reduce it?"

After 30 years doing international development work, Michael Diamond says Vincent had the right answer—ahead of his time. "He believed from the very beginning that restoring people's health led to increased economic activity. The usual paradigm [of the World Bank] is that by creating a better economic climate, people's health will improve."

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Vincent de Paul with foundlings, woman, acolyte Daughters of Charity



Michael A. Frigo



Karl Nass



Michael Diamond



Rev. Edward R. Udovic



William Hay



Thomas Drexler



Interior of the chapel in Folleville, France where Vincent de Paul gave his first sermon

Image still courtesy of Vincent de Paul: Charity's Saint

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Vincent's health-first approach works better, "because it makes people physically strong to become more productive participants in society," added Diamond, who is president and founder of World Resources Chicago, which helps businesses and organizations respond to global challenges and opportunities. He was previously executive director of The Global Chicago Center of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.

Diamond, an adjunct instructor at DePaul's School of Public Service, said that he teaches that no one sector—public, private, or civil society such as religious groups and other non-profits—can handle society's problems alone.

"I like to see [Vincent] as a catalyst who forged relations between politicians, philanthropists, benefactors, government officials, religious leaders and the poor themselves," he added.

Diamond had a similar experience as division manager of humanitarian programs of the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International. He managed Polio Plus, which mobilized several hundred thousand volunteers and raised \$1 billion for worldwide immunizations through 30,000 Rotary Clubs in 200 countries. Foreign governments were involved, along with the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. Business—the manufacturers of the vaccine—cooperated by keeping the price low.

Living through de Paul's example

Karl Nass is project manager for faith and civic engagement at DePaul, in support of the community program Vincentians in Action, or VIA. Last year, 500 students engaged in VIA service learning and some came up with the saying, "Service without reflection is just work."

"What gives meaning is the reflection," Nass said. "What Vincent and Louise taught us is that transformation of the heart happens in relation with the marginalized. There is an openness and solidarity and compassion that opens one to deeper, richer meaning and purpose in life."

Nass said the invitation to become Vincentian "has inspired my life as a dad, as a husband and as a citizen of the world." He and his wife adopted two children from Ethiopia and have found support from Vincentians there and around the world.

His favorite Vincent quote is, "Simplicity is my gospel," which he said illustrates the saint's transparency and directness.

"In this day of things being spun we often find ourselves wearing so many masks we don't know if what we say is what we mean. I find great inspiration and challenge with 'simplicity is my gospel.' I say what I mean and mean what I say and promote that kind of honesty and transparency as a way of liberation for myself and society, to be more truthful and honest."

Vincent's impact on Chicago

By Suzanne Hanney
Editor-in-Chief

Having ministered to the poor of 17th century France, the immigrants of 19th century Illinois were a natural mission for Vincent de Paul's successors, the Vincentian order of priests.

"The Vincentians came to the United States because it was new territory and one thing that was needed was education—higher education especially," said Rev. Edward Udovic, C.M. PhD., DePaul University's senior executive for University Mission and associate professor of history.

The area that is now DePaul University's Lincoln Park campus was farmland in 1875 when the Vincentians were invited to start St. Vincent's parish at Webster and Kenmore. By 1898 the order had also opened St. Vincent's College—chartered as DePaul University in 1909.

"For me the important point of DePaul's identity is that in the beginning American education defined itself by who it excluded: women, racial minorities, first generation college students," Udovic said. "DePaul has always defined itself by how it can include rather than exclude."

Udovic continued, "The problem with American higher education today is that in many aspects it still defines itself by how to exclude students while DePaul is always trying to define itself by how it can include students, especially students who come from underprepared, underrepresented educational populations such as first generation college students or immigrants. At the same time we offer an education which appeals to the best and the brightest and the wealthiest."

The U.S. Dept. of Education ranked DePaul among the top 100 universities for granting degrees to minority students. It has formed a School of New Learning for adult education, and with Mundelein College and Loyola University, an "Hispanic Alliance" to improve their educational opportunities.

DePaul was once known as "the seminary under the El," said Bill Hay, but it grew to become the largest Catholic university in the U.S. and the nation's 9th largest private university by cultivating Vincent's values of risk taking and innovation. Hay is a member of the DePaul board of trustees who also funded *Vincent on Leadership: The Hay Project*, centered on preserving those values.

"He didn't always take the conservative route," Hay said. "We knew if we were going to accomplish something, we would have to take risks. We took risks on real estate and bought property in the Lincoln Park area and suburban Naperville, O'Hare and elsewhere in the last 10 to 15 years."

Dorms, a quadrangle, a \$25 million library, \$25 million student center and \$40 million science building were all built on the Lincoln Park



Above: A statue of de Paul marks the north entrance of the downtown campus



At left: a bronze statue of de Paul talking with students at Lincoln Park Campus

campus. Downtown, the university acquired the Goldblatts' department store building and constructed a dorm with Roosevelt University and Columbia College.

Hay termed the university innovative for its approach to distance learning and its top-ranked school of entrepreneurship, according to *U.S. News & World Report*.

"We're the No. 3 school of music in the U.S. and one of the top theatre schools, second only to Yale," Hay continued. "I think that's pretty innovative. If a student applies to DePaul he is probably applying to Yale as well." In 1978 DePaul acquired the Goodman School of Drama, which had been part of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Vincentian activities in Chicago also include two agencies started by the Daughters of Charity in the second decade of the 20th century: St. Vincent de Paul Center at 2145 N. Halsted and Marillac Social Center on the West Side.

St. Vincent Center originated to provide childcare for neighborhood working mothers and is now one of the state's largest single site nonprofit day care centers. It provided resources during the Depression to keep families together and more recently, outreach to homeless people and low-income homebound seniors.

Marillac Social Center offers childcare and early childhood education, teen mentoring, help to pregnant and parenting teens, family support, and assistance to seniors. It belongs to the United Way West Side Collaborative, which is helping uninsured people determine health goals, medical homes and primary care physicians.

Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac: Pioneers in Social Services

By Patricia M. Bombard, BVM, D. Min.
StreetWise Contributor

The year 2010 marks the 350th anniversary of the deaths of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, two extraordinary individuals who formed a remarkable partnership in 17th Century France to assist abandoned children, prisoners, victims of war and plague, the elderly, and housebound. The institutions they established spread throughout the world, becoming precursors of today's social services.

History captures the significance of Vincent de Paul's leadership and vision in this work. During the French Revolution, more than 120 years after Vincent's death, rioting mobs broke into the Pantheon, an enormous church atop Sainte-Genevieve hill in Paris. They smashed all the religious statues but one. They could not bring themselves to deface the image of "Monsieur Vincent," knowing well the stories of how much good he had done to uphold the dignity of the poor.

Born in 1581 into a farming family in Pouy, France, Vincent had relatives among the local nobility. His rural origins helped him transcend traditional class boundaries, for he moved among peasants and royalty alike with warmth and ease. Through family connections, Vincent was ordained a Catholic priest at 19, a path he originally chose for social advancement and monetary gain. His transformation to an advocate for the poor came gradually. Assigned as a tutor to a wealthy family, he began to visit the poor tenants on their estate. In 1617, after hearing the confession of a dying man, Vincent decided to address the lack of trained priests to serve the needs of the country people. It was nearly a decade before his desire to meet this need would result in establishment of the Congregation of the Mission, or Vincentian priests, founders of DePaul University in Chicago.

During the intervening years, Vincent organized women from affluent families into the Confraternities of Charity—now known as AIC—to provide spiritual and material aid to the poor in several villages.

About 1623, he met Louise de Marillac, whom he eventually asked to supervise

the Confraternities of Charity. Eventually, Vincent and Louise recruited young peasant women to provide direct services to the poor. Louise trained these women to care for abandoned children, the sick in local hospitals, and imprisoned galley slaves. Together, she and Vincent organized a home where unemployed elderly could help support themselves through craft work. Soon, Louise was sending women to establish schools in rural villages. Under Louise's direction, and with Vincent's help, these women formally organized as the Daughters of Charity, who, over the centuries, established hospitals, schools and other social service agencies on five continents.

In 1833, a young Parisian college student named Frederic Ozanam was inspired by the legacy of Vincent de Paul that he witnessed in Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity. Ozanam founded the St. Vincent de Paul Society, through which he and his friends offered aid to the poor. It became the largest Catholic charity in the world, with a million members serving worldwide.

>> At right: St. Louise De Marillac statue at DePaul University Lincoln Park campus
Below: St. Louise De Marillac stained glass at St. Joseph Hospital, Chicago

