

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

In giving, we receive.

Overview of St. Vincent de Paul and His Mission

- St. Vincent de Paul lived in France in the 1500s. When he became a priest, he saw that the French kings were building fancy palaces while many of the poor farmers could barely survive.
- It became clear to Vincent that God wanted him to follow a path of active charity. But he realized it would be impossible for one person to accomplish much. So, he began to organize parishioners in groups to visit the poor families.
- When Vincent died in 1622, he had founded several congregations to carry on his work. About 200 years later, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, a student in Paris, founded the St. Vincent de Paul Society, based on Vincent's ideas. Frederic and his colleagues began visiting the poor and outcasts in the streets of Paris, following the example of St. Vincent. Today, the Society is the largest Catholic lay organization in the world and is active in 132 countries. The national organization is based in St. Louis, and the international organization is based in Paris.

The Society at Saint Pius X

- The Society is made up of groups of people called Conferences. The Saint Pius X Conference is one of 17 Conferences at parishes in St. Joseph and Elkhart counties.
- The biggest difference between St. Vincent DePaul and other agencies such as Salvation Army or Hope Mission is that our volunteers aid those in need on a person-to-person basis. Vincentians believe that an encounter with a client is an encounter with Jesus. We meet clients in their homes, a visit that often involves providing food from the Saint Pius pantry.
- We make 40-45 home visits each month. Besides helping our own parishioners, the Saint Pius X Conference also helps people throughout the 46530 zip code as well as some Northern parts of St. Joseph County.
- Spirituality is also a component of our Conference. We create an environment that is conducive to the growth of personal faith and discipleship. By praying and reflecting together, we encourage each other to draw closer to Jesus by serving Him.
- When Saint Pius Vincentians go on a home visit, they get the items they need from our pantry. Because of our pastor's commitment and parishioner support, we're able to keep our food pantry stocked with food and personal hygiene items. Every family gets the same selection of food, depending on how large the family is. For instance, a family of 1 or 2 people will get 1 box of cereal and 2 boxes of mac and cheese, but a family with 4 or 5 people will get 2 boxes of cereal and 4 boxes of mac and cheese.
- In keeping with the stewardship goals of the parish, the monthly green envelope collection goes to the Saint Pius SVDP Conference. We use these funds in a variety of ways, but one of the most important is helping in-need Saint Pius parishioners with rent, car repairs, small medical bills and utilities. Some of the funding also goes to supplement food for our pantry, and we frequently make donations to the Saint Adalbert SVDP Conference and the SVDP District office in South Bend to help support their programs.