

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Serving Our Neighbors in Need

St. Mary Conference ♥ Basilica of St. Mary, Alexandria, Virginia



Stained-glass image of St. Vincent in the Basilica of St. Mary.

My Heartfelt Appreciation

Yesterday evening I was made aware that a check from Saint Vincent de Paul was applied towards my rent. I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for the incredible generosity and kindness shown by you and the church. This gesture has not only provided me and my siblings with a safe and secure home during these challenging times but has also given me renewed hope and faith in the power of community. I am truly grateful for your willingness to extend a helping hand when I needed it the most. Please convey my heartfelt appreciation to all who contributed. May you all be blessed abundantly for your unwavering commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those in need. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your incredible support.

– Kathryn

“Charity is the cement which binds communities to God and persons to one another.” –St. Vincent de Paul

Why I Serve

As my children grew and needed me less, I found myself wanting to spend my spare time being useful and productive. My work at SVDP has more than satisfied that desire. It is truly fulfilling to know I’ve helped someone sleep better at night and look forward to their future. And I sleep well, knowing God smiles down on my work. In addition, I’ve made friends, both among my fellow volunteers and with the individuals I’ve helped. I am thankful to have found this special ministry.

– A volunteer, a “Vincentian”



SVdP Annual

**OPEN HOUSE
Wednesday
November 8**

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
316 Duke Street
Please join us!



Please use this QR Code to donate to SVdP at the Basilica of St. Mary.

To Volunteer:
Marietta or Jim
svdp@stmaryoldtown.org

General SVdP information:
svdp@stmaryoldtown.org

If you need help:
703-836-1724

The Basilica of Saint Mary

Oktoberfest

Free-will offerings at the Basilica “Oktoberfest” on October 8 produced a \$6,000 donation for use in the work of the Society. Thank you to each and all for the generous support!



HELPING OUR
NEIGHBORS IN NEED



The St. Vincent de Paul Sustainment Fund An Opportunity to Change Someone's Life for the Better

There are times when we meet individuals who have great potential to succeed but are held back for financial reasons. Paying for rent, food, and childcare often leaves nothing for tuition or job training that could mean more income. Others have these financial constraints and have also experienced great trauma in their lives and are struggling to get back on their feet. When our volunteers encounter such individuals, they can nominate them for our Sustainment Fund which helps with expenses such as rent support, professional training, and school tuition over a longer period of time than our emergency financial assistance.

One such case is Nigerian-born Miriam who is the mother of 2 young children, one of whom is non-verbal autistic. She was attacked in her home by someone to whom she rented a room because she could not otherwise afford the rent. She called us for help with rent as she tried to get the man removed. SVdP paid her rent over many months, supported her emotionally, helped her get a job with Fairfax County Public Schools and eventually moved her to Fairfax County so that her autistic child would have access to special programs. In the midst of all this she was diagnosed with breast cancer. SVdP continued to support her and members took her to chemotherapy and cared for her after surgery. Today she is working full time and able to care for her family.

We maintain a separate fund for such cases and donations can be made specifically for the Sustainment Fund.

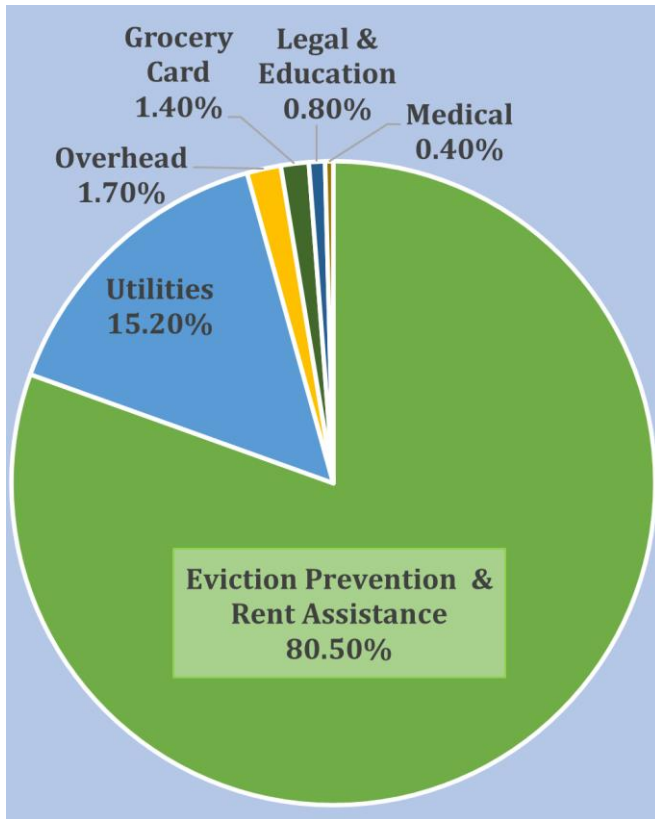


Relic of Saint Vincent de Paul venerated at the Basilica of St. Mary on his feast day, September 27.

If You Are a Vincentian

If you are a Vincentian, it is because God called you here. You may not have recognized His voice at the time; His words may have come to you from another Vincentian. But it was God who called you here, the same God who calls, again and again, asking for your help, asking for a rent payment, an electric bill, a listening ear, and an open heart. You may not recognize His voice every time, but when He calls you, you answer, and you in turn pass along His call to the neighbor by your wordless witness in living your faith and loving your neighbor as yourself.

How Your Monetary Donations Help Our Neighbors



Donations of time are also much needed and very much appreciated. Please see the President's letter (right).

From the President of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Mary Conference

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul provides a wonderful opportunity to have the hands-on experience of helping a neighbor in need and bringing God's love to those who might feel He has abandoned them. How often do you have the chance to be directly responsible for preventing a family from being evicted from their home or keeping the heat on in the homes of the elderly or families with children.

Perhaps you read the stories about our work in the Sunday bulletin and think "I could never do that." But what you don't see from the outside is the peace we feel knowing that we are absolutely living our Catholic faith as Jesus asked us: "In so far as you did it for one of these least of my brothers you did it for me." From the outside you cannot experience the joy we feel when we have lifted a burden from a neighbor's shoulders or walked beside them to make sure they receive the financial help they need.

We have 25 members now and need more to respond to the needs in our community. Some of our members are retired, some work full time, but there is always flexibility to adapt to the time you have to give. We provide training for new members and make sure they are paired with a veteran member when on duty which is usually 3 days once every 6 weeks.

I invite you to share in the peace and joy that our work brings. Yes, it takes effort and yes, there are disappointments, but at the end of the day we are doing God's work, and He always provides. If you are interested, you can email me at svdp@stmaryoldtown.org. –Marietta

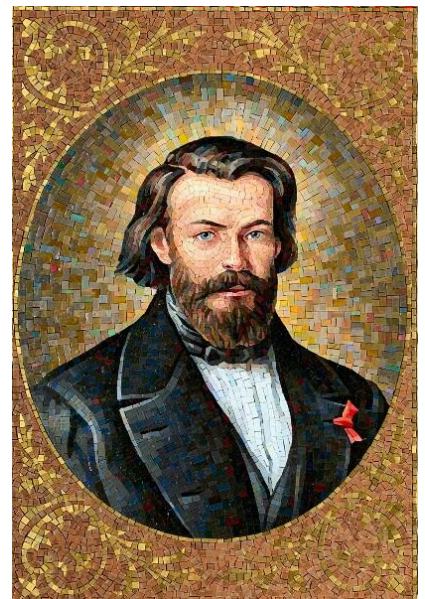
Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

The young man often shown with St. Vincent (see facing page) is Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He was born in 1813.

As a young man, he was stung by the question, "What do you do besides talk to prove the faith you claim is in you?" He and friends began offering assistance to the poor of Paris. A group dedicated to helping individuals in need under the patronage of Saint Vincent de Paul formed around Frédéric.

Frédéric died in 1853, but The Society lives on; today there are 4,500 SVdP conferences in the United States alone.

A mosaic portrait of Blessed Frédéric was unveiled in the Vincentian chapel of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception January 26, 2020. The Basilica of St. Mary Conference was honored to participate in this event, which marked the 175th anniversary of the society's establishment in the United States.



Mosaic of Ozanam at the National Shrine.

Sharing the Joy of Christmas with Our Neighbors in Need



Father Hathaway and Basilica School of St. Mary students loading up the donated Christmas gifts for our families in need.

Each year the Society of St. Vincent de Paul - St. Mary Conference partners with the Basilica School to provide Christmas presents for 12 families with whom we have worked over the past year and who otherwise could not afford to give their families a Christmas. The Society provides the names, ages, sizes, and the families' Christmas "wish lists" to the school. Then the students and their parents purchase and wrap the gifts. Just before Christmas Vincentians pick up the wrapped and tagged gifts and deliver them to the needy families. This opportunity to collaborate with the school is one of the most beautiful and satisfying parts of our work and puts everyone - young and not-so-young alike - in the Christmas spirit. The holiness of the season and the sheer joy on the faces of the parents and children receiving the gifts are God's gifts to us.

This document certifies the establishment of the St. Mary's Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the year 1868 as the first branch of the Society in the Commonwealth of Virginia.



Confédération Internationale de la
Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul
Conseil Général

LETTRE D'AGRÉGATION

Cher Président(e),

Nous avons la joie de vous annoncer que, à la suite de la demande présentée par votre Conseil Supérieur, et selon les dispositions de la Règle et des Statuts, le Conseil Général a prononcé

lors de la séance du **October 5, 1868**

l'agrégation de **Saint Mary's Conference – ALEXANDRIA
Diocese of Richmond, Virginia – United States of America**

Cette lettre atteste officiellement la création de cette Conférence et son affiliation à la Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul.

Nous vous assurons de nos prières pour le succès de votre importante tâche au service des pauvres et vous prions d'agréer, cher Président(e), l'expression de notre affectueux dévouement en Notre-Seigneur.

enregistrée sous le n°
4393

sur le Secrétaire Général

Président du Conseil Supérieur

XIV^e Président Général

SVdP Annual

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Refreshments offered. If you are interested in hearing about our work, or finding ways to help, please join us!