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St Vincent de Paul Society

NATIONAL COUNCIL of AUSTRALIA Inc.

good works

MEDIA RELEASE

Vincentians mark major Feast Days in September

The St Vincent de Paul Society will celebrate two significant Feast Days in September that reflect the Society's enduring commitment to faith in action and compassion for those of us facing hardship.

September marks the Society's most significant Feast Days: those of our founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, on Wednesday 9 September, and of our Patron Saint Vincent de Paul on Sunday 27 September.

"As Vincentians around Australia and the world gather to celebrate these Feast Days, we honour two extraordinary lives whose faith, charity and courage continue to guide the Society's mission in 2026," said Mark Gaetani, National President, St Vincent de Paul Society of Australia. "Their commitment to provide practical assistance and to advocate for people experiencing poverty and hardship is our inspiration as we strive, every day, to bring hope and dignity to our neighbours in need."

On 9 September, the Society honours Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, who founded the charity in Paris in 1833, driven by the spirit of social justice in a city grappling with poverty and upheaval. Just two decades later, the first local Conference was founded in Victoria in 1854, amid the turbulence of the gold rush. The Society quickly grew, extending its Good Works across the country. It is a vital legacy that continues today.

Patron Saint Vincent de Paul is celebrated on 27 September, this year falling on a Sunday, giving parish communities across Australia an opportunity to mark the occasion together. Born in 1581 in the French village of Pouy, later renamed in his honour, Vincent de Paul's journey began as a priest and led him to dedicate his life to serving the poor and marginalised. His teachings guided the Society's founders two centuries later and continue to guide Vincentians today: "Deal with the most urgent needs. Organise charity so that it is more efficient... educate with the aim of giving each the means of self-support. Intervene with authorities to obtain reforms in structure... there is no charity without justice," he said.

"Saint Vincent de Paul's compassionate leadership and advocacy transformed the care for those in need, inspiring generations of Vincentians," Mr Gaetani said. "Canonised in 1737 and designated as patron of charitable associations in 1883, his Feast Day is a moment to reaffirm the Society's mission of bringing Christ's justice and love to people doing it tough so that everyone has an opportunity to live a decent life."

He said these Feast Days in September inspire the Society's Conferences across the country to celebrate the Good Works of our Members and volunteers and to invite others to consider joining us.

"This September, the Society invites Australians to join in prayer, reflection and community service, renewing the legacies of our Patron Saint and founder whose visions of love and justice continue to change lives for the better," Mr Gaetani said.

Frédéric Ozanam himself captured this link between compassion and justice when he wrote, "Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveller who has been attacked. It is justice's role to prevent the attack."

"That is the spirit we ask Australians to carry when they think of the Society," Mr Gaetani said. "Whether it's volunteering with a local Conference, donating to our support efforts, or checking in on a neighbour doing it tough – every action matters. Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and Saint Vincent de Paul didn't just reflect on poverty, they acted on it, and that is the legacy we invite every Australian to be part of."

To find out how you can get involved this September, call 13 18 12 or visit vinnies.org.au/get-involved

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia has more than 40,000 Members and volunteers, who work hard to assist people in need and combat social injustice across Australia. Internationally, the Society operates in 153 countries and has over 800,000 Members.

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