

MEDIA RELEASE**27 September 2016****Celebrating the Feast Day of Saint Vincent de Paul**

“Love the poor. Honour them, my children, as you would honour Christ himself.” – Saint Vincent de Paul

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria (the Society) will be welcoming the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Denis Hart, and the Society’s spiritual advisor, Monsignor Tony Ireland, to a special Mass at the Rosalie Rendu Chapel at Box Hill today to celebrate the Feast Day of the Society’s international patron, Saint Vincent de Paul (St Vincent).

St Vincent was chosen by the Society’s founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, as the patron of the Society due to his extraordinary personal example of tender and practical love of the poor and for inspiring others to do works of mercy.

The St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria State President, Mr Michael Liddy, said it is a great honour to welcome special guests to the Society’s private chapel on this important day.

“We are delighted and honoured to welcome the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Denis Hart, and the Society’s spiritual advisor, Monsignor Tony Ireland, to join our members to celebrate Mass today,” said Mr Liddy.

“A Feast Day in the Catholic Church is primarily celebrated on the anniversary of a saint’s death which, for St Vincent, was the 27th September 1660. This is an important annual celebration in the liturgical year and a chance for all our volunteers and employees to reflect on how his legacy lives on today through our good works.”

St Vincent was born in the small southern French town of Pouy, later renamed St Vincent de Paul in his honour, on 24 April 1581 and ordained as a priest in 1600 at the age of 19. As a young man he ministered to the wealthy and powerful; however an appointment as chaplain to a poor parish, inspired him to dedicate his life to working with those most marginalised and powerless.

St Vincent was founder of the Congregation of the Mission (known as the Vincentians) and co-founded the Daughters of Charity with St Louise de Marillac.

St Vincent de Paul died in Paris on 27 September 1660 at the age of 79. He was canonised on 16 June 1737 and in 1883, the Church designated him as the special patron of all charitable associations.

“St Vincent urged his followers to bring God’s justice and love to people who were most vulnerable and unable to live a full life. He walked the streets to seek out and help people experiencing extreme hardship. This is the spirit within which our good works at the Society are still undertaken today,” said Mr Liddy.

Over 12,000 Victorians volunteer their time in the Society’s Vinnies shops and grassroots community groups, known as conferences, to ensure people in need receive food, friendship and access to a range of tailored assistance programs. This includes home visits to assist people in their place of need.

“The Society was named after Saint Vincent de Paul and we will continue to follow his teachings. On this, his Feast Day, we pause to give thanks.”

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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ABOUT THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY:

The St Vincent de Paul Society and its wide network of members and volunteers provide practical frontline support, advocacy and friendship for the most vulnerable members of our community. Key services include home visitation; youth programs; soup vans; assistance for asylum seekers and refugees; compeer programs for people experiencing mental illness; education and tutoring; and professional accommodation and health services through VincentCare. The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia has more than 40,000 members and volunteers. Internationally, the Society operates in 149 countries and has over 950,000 members. To find out more visit www.vinnies.org.au.