

St Vincent renews the Priesthood



1617 was a decisive year in the life of a young priest named Vincent de Paul. It was then, while acting as chaplain to the de Gondi family that he came to realise how ignorant the poor people of the French countryside were about their faith. And not just the poor, many priests were ignorant about the basics of their faith and responsibilities of their vocation. If they did not know the basics how would they teach their parishioners? Not only this, but a lot of priests led scandalous lives.

Even if they could teach the poor about their faith, who would listen when the example they set was so contradictory? The people did not want to go to these men to confess their sins. Vincent worked hard to remedy this. He founded a little group of trained priests for two main reasons: to bring God to the poor and to minister to the clergy. They are called The Congregation of the Mission and their work has revolved around these core values ever since.

St Vincent looked at the priests who were out in the countryside with many poor people around them. He realised they weren't very good at being priests – probably because in those days there were no training seminaries for priests, like we have today. Vincent did not blame the priests, but he helped them to learn more about their faith, the correct prayers for Mass and Confession and taught them ways to live so they would be an example to the people. He made their priesthood new again. He refreshed them and gave them hope.

Discussion

What can we renew in our lives: our attitude, our energy, our promises?

Activity

Find something that is destined to be thrown out. It could be an old sock, a kitchen roll tube, a newspaper or an empty food container.

In the spirit of St Vincent's attitude of renewal, we're going to turn this item into something new. This activity can be done at home or with help from your teacher in class.

For ideas go to **Pinterest, SSVP Scotland** where you will find lots of recycling craft projects.

