



9 September 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

Feast Day of Blessed Frederic Ozanam

Every year, on 9 September, members of the St Vincent de Paul Society from all around the world celebrate the Feast of Blessed Frederic Ozanam, our founder.

With support and guidance from Rosalie Rendu he and a group of other young men (he was 20 at the time) founded what later became known as the St Vincent de Paul Society. He was a scholar, journalist, lawyer and social justice advocate. He worked as a professional but was also dedicated to the work of the Society for the next 20 years, when he died at the age of 40.

'This year as we reflect on his extraordinary work and legacy, we are especially mindful of the call to walk even more closely with companions in the face of the COVID pandemic,' said Claire Victory, National President of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia.

'Here in Australia, lockdown is demanding. It is isolating and it is very challenging for many.

'We have seen emerging mental health issues not evident before the pandemic and we have seen existing conditions aggravated by the challenging conditions.

'One in four young people in 2020 said they were experiencing mental health challenges;

'Undoubtedly, COVID-19 has had a detrimental impact on many young people's mental health.

'Youth mental health is an important national challenge that must be addressed.

'This week I attended the National Women's Safety Summit, where attention was drawn to women and children fleeing domestic violence.

'Extended lockdowns have seen vulnerable women and their children in deeper crisis as there is no available safety valve such as the daily work routine and other opportunities to leave the house.

'Compounding these circumstances, some of our services and the way they are delivered have been necessarily limited this year.

'But the example of Frederic Ozanam inspires us to assist people with their material and personal needs in whatever way we can, to travel with them, and to demand justice on their behalf.

'He showed us that simple acts of kindness could lead to lasting change.

'His mission drives us today as we seek to ensure all people have the dignity of money for basics and a place to call home.,' Ms Victory said.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.

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