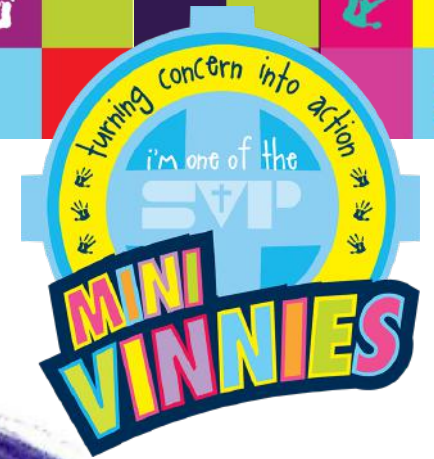
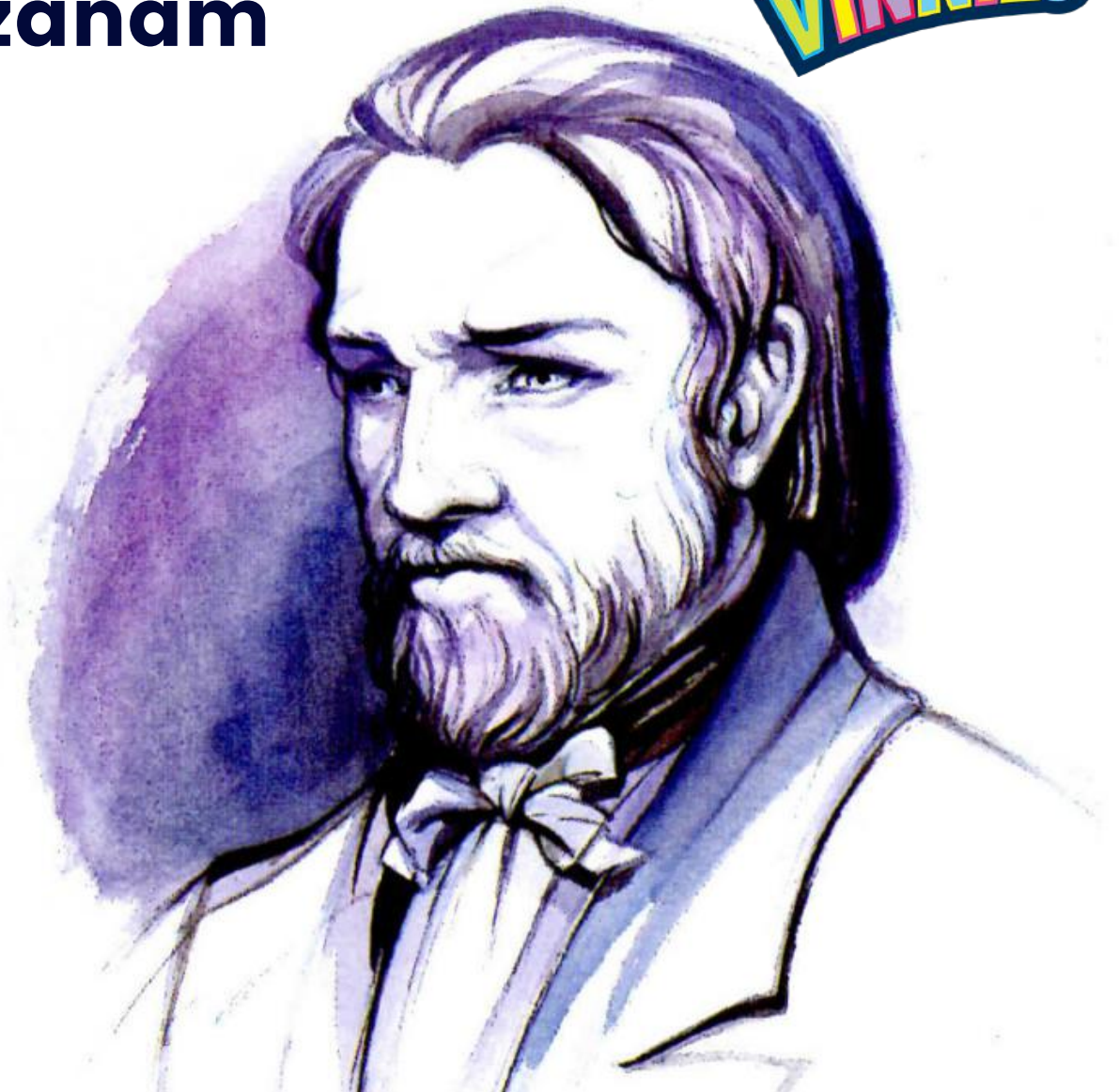


The man behind the Society: Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

"I would like to
embrace the whole
world in a network of
charity."

— Frédéric Ozanam



1813



Frédéric was born in Milan, Italy, into an affluent Catholic family on 23rd April 1813. His father was a doctor and his mother was an heiress.

1831



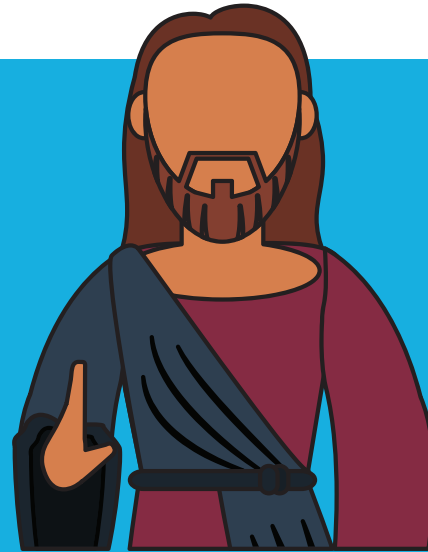
Frédéric was a highly intelligent young man and studied Law at the Sorbonne University in Paris.

At university



During debates at his university, a number of people challenged Frédéric about what the Catholic Church was doing to help the many poor and suffering people of France. They didn't think the Church was helping very much.

1833: The Society was started.



Frédéric, who was seen as a natural leader of his fellow Catholic students, decided to take action, to show that more could be done. He started a Conference of Charity.

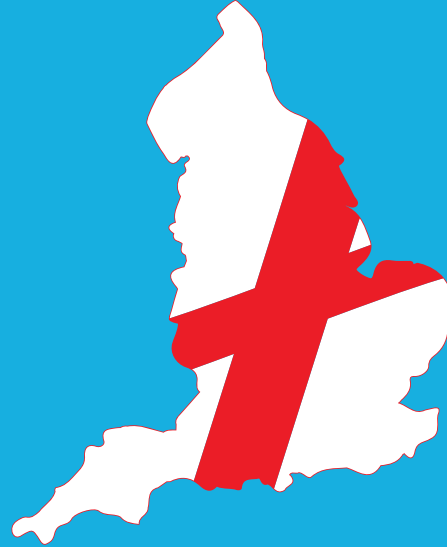
Guided by journalist Emmanuel Bailey, the Conference members decided to live out their faith and go out and become servants of the poor, just as Jesus Christ had done.

The group followed the example of St Vincent de Paul, the French saint who had done so much work to help the poor 200 years earlier, naming their Conference 'the Society of St Vincent de Paul'.

1833 onwards



1844



The group was also inspired by a young Daughter of Charity, Rosalie Rendu, and the young men worked closely with her to help the poor people of Paris.

A friend of Frédéric Ozanam, who was studying in Paris, was George Wigley. He was born near Manchester but grew up in France. With the help of Frédéric, he started the first SVP group in England .

1853



Frédéric, who was a sick man his whole life, died on 8th September 1853, at the age of 40. He was beatified on 22nd August 1997, which means he is on the path to sainthood. We celebrate his feast day on 9th September.