



Vox Populi

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In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus Christ instructs his Apostles to care for those who are hungry, thirsty, sick, in prison and poor.

In those who are oppressed or struggling, Jesus identifies himself. “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me,” he says. (Matthew 25:45 NRSVCE).

Saint Vincent de Paul took this instruction to heart throughout his life, so much so, he is the patron of all works of charity.

As a young priest, he was kidnapped and auctioned off as a slave, spending two years in bondage. This, along with other experiences with the poor, led to a change of heart in Saint Vincent, who had originally envisioned a life of leisure as a priest.

Instead, he dedicated his priestly ministry to serving the neglected and the poor, those in small villages and other areas which were largely abandoned by the rest of society.

He helped to found the Congregation of the Mission, known as the Vincentians, to bring the Good News to the poor and minister to them. He also founded the Company of the Daughters of Charity, a group of women who served the poorest of the poor.

So strong was his influence and example, that the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul was named after him two centuries after his death. Known in Australia as “Vinnies”, this society continues the great work of Saint Vincent in more than 150 countries across the globe, serving the poor and witnessing to the intrinsic dignity of every single person.

Saint Vincent’s desire to serve the poor was first and foremost driven by an encounter with Jesus Christ.

In contemporary society, many people have not had this encounter, particularly many of our young people.

Next weekend, the Diocese of Broken Bay will host the Ignite Conference, a conference aiming to see a Church transformed by an influx of young people who are truly on fire for Jesus because of their undeniable encounter with Him.

This is an incredible opportunity for people of all ages to grow in their faith and experience Jesus Christ in a way they may not have experienced before.