

## *The story behind the top hats*



In 1833, Frédéric Ozanam met with six friends in Paris to talk about religion and other things. One friend who was not Catholic asked Frédéric what he and his Catholic friends were doing to help the poor.

This question changed Frédéric's life. He realized that God was calling him not just to believe in Christ, but to act like Christ. Frédéric and his friends chose to act.

The men wore top hats to their meetings. After each meeting, they would pass a top hat and each would put money in for the poor. They decided that it was not enough just to collect money. They spent time with the poor, visited their homes, and assisted them with food, clothing, money, and kindness.

Frédéric and his friends named their organization the St. Vincent de Paul Society, after their patron saint, St. Vincent de Paul. St. Vincent de Paul always worked with the poor and forgotten.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society now has conferences in over 130 countries around the world. Vincentians still help the poor. They still spend time with those in need, visit their homes, and assist them with food, clothing, money, and kindness.

Each week after Mass, look for the St. Vincent de Paul Society members holding the top hats, just as Frédéric Ozanam and his friends did 175 years ago. When you put money in the top hats at St. Thomas a' Becket, you are helping to provide food, shelter, and more! The SVDP Society assists those in need in our parish, as well as helping the poor of three parishes in Detroit— St. Dominic, St. Patrick and St. Benedict.



**CHOOSE TO ACT:**  
**Help the St. Vincent de Paul Society by  
putting money in the top hats at church**

