

Ozanam and the Society

April 24

Why we even remember this man Frederic Ozanam, is because of the Society that he founded in honor of the great Apostle of Charity, Vincent de Paul. The birth of this Society of Charity came during a debate between Christian students and those who demanded that they show how real was their faith by the actions of their lives; about this debate, Ozanam wrote, "You are right to speak about the past, Christianity did marvels in the past; but today, Christianity is dead." Indeed, what are you doing, you who boast of being Catholics? Where are the works that show your faith, and which can move us to accept and respect it?

This challenge became the spur that moved Ozanam and his friends to consider the manner in which to live their lives. Again, he wrote of their time and their plan. "May our acts agree with our faith. What should we do? What should we be doing to be truly Catholic, other than what pleases God the most? Let us then care for the neighbor, as Jesus did, and place our faith under the aegis of charity."

Ozanam would see to the exportation of this Society throughout Europe and even in his lifetime to see its development in places like Palestine, the United States, and Mexico.

Questions

1. Is my faith limited to my private life of prayer and meditation? Apart from works of financial generosity, what do I do, or what can I start doing, to be of service to those most in need of love, friendship or other kinds of help?
2. If age or health or handicaps keep me from an active outreach in charity, how can I still be of service? What specific acts of kindness and support can I do now? Is my natural timidity holding me back?

Tomorrow, Service of the Poor

Fr. Marty