

# **The Fredric Ozanam Story**

**By**

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## **FOREWORD**

The “Frederic Ozanam Story” was put together originally as an introductory talk, to be delivered to the meeting of Presidents of Councils and Conferences Comprising the South/Eastern Region, on the occasion of their meeting in Waterford City in October 1975. It was not intended that the paper should be printed.

However, the talk caused so much interest amongst members that the Editor of the “Bulletin” published it in three different instalments in the January/June issues 1976. This led to further enquiries about life of our founder and the Council of Ireland decided to publish the paper with the view to making Frederic Ozanam and his work better known amongst the members of the members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of which he was the principal founder.

The Ozanams were a well-educated French family that had prospered for some three centuries in the very progressive industrial city of Lyons, contributing to a number of noteworthy citizens, including the distinguished 17<sup>th</sup> century mathematician, Jacques Ozanam, a great uncle of Frederic. Indeed they liked to trace the origin of the family back much further, to the emigration of the Jewish tribe of Hozannam in the time of Julius Caesar, to a district North of Lyons where the family was converted to Christianity by St. Didier in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. It was Frederic’s grandfather, Benedict, who decided to drop the ‘H’ and the second ‘N’ to give the usual name its present shape.

It has been an interesting matter for speculation amongst writers whether family loyalty, his prodigious power of intellectual work, and his acute sensibility—did not come down to him from his remote Jewish origin.

### **HIS FAMILY BACKGROUND**

Frederic’s father, Jean, Antoine (or Anthony), was conscripted into the Republican Army in the time of the Napoleon's Italian campaign. He served with such distinction in the field as to attract the attention of the great General who offered him many favours. Antoine gracefully declined, preferring to remain independent. He retired from the Army at the age of 25, badly wounded with the rank of captain. He went into business in Paris and made a competent living, only to lose it again through signing a Bill for a Bankrupt relative which brought him ruin. He retired to Milan, supporting himself by giving private lessons as a tutor.

He decided on a career in medicine and used to relate in after years how he trudged on foot from Milan to Paris every three months to sit his examinations, which he passed with distinction.

He had such rapid progress that in a few years he had acquired a practice and prospered so well that he was able to bring his wife and family from Lyons. So it came about that Frederic Ozanam, although a patriotic Frenchman was born in the Italian city of Milan on 23rd April 1813, the fifth child of a family of 14. When in 1815 the City of Milan fell once again to the Austrians, Dr. Ozanam too good a patriot and Republican, was not willing to live and bring up his family under Austrian rule. So, once again uprooting himself and his family, he returned to his native city of Lyons and set about acquiring a fresh practice. In a very short time he established himself.

He was particularly kind to his poorer patients and Madame Ozanam helped her husband, visiting the old and infirm patients regularly. It is related of them that in their old age, and in failing health, the doctor and his wife pledged each other that in their benevolent visitation neither would venture higher than the fourth floor. Yet more than once unexpectedly they came face to face with each other far higher up on the dark steep staircases of these old Lyons houses.

### **THE EARLY YEARS**

From his earliest years Frederic was brought into close contact with human misery and suffering, and a realisation of the claims of Christian charity. In one of the 'lives' of Ozanam, it is recorded that in later years he thanked God that he had been born into a middle-class family, neither rich nor poor, so he was spared the moral dangers that lie both in luxury of wealth, and in the discouragement of poverty.

I mentioned earlier that Frederic was the fifth child in a family of 14 and, as happened so often in those days (of limited medical science), only four survived, the eldest daughter Elsie and three sons, Alphonse (later to become a priest), Frederic and Charles, who became a Doctor. The death of Elsie at 19 years was a great grief to Frederic for it was she who helped him with early lessons and later in life he often referred to her as a kind and patient teacher from whom he had learned much. Not long after entering the Royal Collage of Lyons, Frederic earned a reputation as a diligent and exceptionally intelligent pupil.

At the age of 13 he could write Latin verse and a few years later we find him editing a Collage journal 'The Bee' and he looked destined for a career in literature. At the age of 16 (1829) he was greatly disturbed by religious doubts, which can be distressing to any person but to one so serious and sensitive were particularly acute and exhausting. He had just started his course in Philosophy and was fortunate to have a Professor the revered Abbe Noirot, who was known as the 'first philosopher in France'. This man exercised great influence over his pupils. He realised Frederic's great problem, took him in hand and with great gentleness and kindness steered him through his storm into calmer waters. This dreadful experience lasted for about 12 months.

At the height of these temptations Frederic made a promise to God that, should he be enabled to see the truth, he would devote his whole life to its defence. Like other men Ozanam emerged from this trial through his life he retained a deep

sympathy towards unbelievers, remembering the anguish he himself endured during his own period of semi-unbelief.

## **INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT**

In spite of the natural tendency towards literature, Dr. Ozanam selected law as a career for Frederic. The good doctor was anxious to see his son a Barrister—or better still—a Judge of the Royal Courts of Justice. About this time Dr. Ozanam wrote in his Diary concerning Frederic: 'He has refined, pure and noble sentiments and will make an upright and enlightened Judge'. So, the die was cast, and Frederic like other French boys, and Irish boys too, followed obediently the career selected for him by his parents.

As a preliminary he was apprenticed for two years to one of the leading attorneys of Lyons, M. Coulet. He found the occupation wearisome as he spent most of his time copying legal documents. In order to relieve the monotony he took up the study of German, English and Hebrew. He exercised his pen by contributing historical and philosophical articles to a collage magazine. In spring of 1831 he published a work in two parts of 100 pages under the title of 'Reflections on the Doctrine of St. Simon'. This work was so well executed that when it appeared into the Irish newspapers it drew much praise from men of the calibre of Larmartins, Chateaubriand, and Ampere Junior. Indeed it was a sign of great things to come.

Outside office hours, he helped organise the work of the Propagation of the Faith and contributed articles for its Journal. It would appear that the rapid strides in intellectual development made by Frederic during these two years apprenticeship did not escape the notice of Dr. Ozanam. He suddenly relented in his original intention of keeping him home and, in the autumn of 1831 he decided that Frederic must go up to the University of Paris (the Sorbonne).

## **Paris**

Frederic, delighted to shake the dust of the dreary office off his feet, set out for Paris with great expectations, but Paris at first was to prove a great disappointment. He had never been away from home before and arriving in this great city, without friends, he felt very lonely. Added to this, the lodgings to which he was selected from a family friend were entirely unsuitable. His fellow boarders were rowdy, vulgar and wordy, 'neither Christians or Turks'. This fit of homesickness or despondency did not last for long.

Before leaving home, Frederic's father had suggested a number of acquaintances in Paris in whom he should call. Within a few weeks of arriving in Paris we find him writing to his father that he had been to pay a courtesy call on M. Andre Ampere, the great mathematician who he had met in Lyons. This was a most fortunate meeting. M. Ampere being a native of Lyons received his fellow townsman with great joy. He enquired about his studies, etc. On hearing the discomfort of the boarding house, M. Ampere immediately offered the bedroom to his son (Jean Jacques), then studying in Germany, and suggested that Frederic should board with him as a member of the family.

He gratefully accepted M. Ampere's offer, and a fortnight later he was installed into a bedroom over-looking a garden, cheerful and bright, and with a house full of books. What more could he wish for! Most of all his distinguished host, then at the height of scientific career, was a most ardent catholic. M. Ampere was prepared to adopt his young boarder almost as a son, giving him many useful introductions to such people as the leaders of the different faculties at the University. Frederic lived here for about two years and M. Ampere delighted in the conversations and discussions with him, for Frederic's intellectual powers had developed far beyond his years.

It was at this period that Ozanam, always attracted to history, wrote: 'I propose to write the literary history of the middle ages –from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. But the history of literature I study principally the work of Christianity. All my argument is then directed on to the ruins of the Roman Empire, and on the tribes encamped on to these ruins, Christianity constructed a new society capable of knowing truth, doing good and realising the beautiful'.

Briefly his aim was to aid in restoring Catholicism to France in all its integrity, in opposition to the materialism and disorder prevailing around him. He says: 'If I want a book at the age of 25 I must start my preliminary studies at 18. I must know a dozen languages to consult original sources and documents. I must study universal history in all its breadth and the history of religious creeds in all their depth'.

Frederic, in the course of his studies, was surprised to find that Rationalism was deeply implanted in the intellectual life of the Capital. One must remember that at this time (1830s) the whole tone of the Sorbonne was frankly materialist and often anti-Christian, while the audience was either acquiescent or indifferent. However discreet enquiries showed that the religious position was not so black as at first appeared. As early as February 1832 he was able to write to his cousin (Falconnet) in a more hopeful tone. In the course of this letter he said: 'Our ranks are more numerous than we had dread to hope. I have come across several serious young men filled with generous sentiments who are devoting their thoughts and researches to the same high mission as ourselves. Every time a rationalist lifts up his voice against revelation, catholic voices are raised in protest. Several of us are banded together with this object and twice already I myself have addressed written protests to the defenders'.

In defending the truth Ozanam was merely fulfilling the promise he had made four years before in Lyons. One day about this time Ozanam made the acquaintance of a fellow student, Francois Lallier, and his friendship was to last until his death. In the years ahead we shall find Lallier at Ozanam's side in times of great need.

### **'A MORE SERIOUS ENCOUNTER'**

Some weeks later Ozanam was able to write to his cousin about what he calls 'a more serious encounter'. This time the antagonist was M. Jouffry, the Professor of Philosophy, 'one of the most illustrious rationalists of the day'. Several written protests failed to produce any result. Eventually the catholic group held a

meeting, drew a document expressive of their real feelings, and collected 15 signatures, and sent the document to M. Jouffry. This time he could not avoid reading it aloud to an audience of some 200 students who listened intently to the expression of faith. The professor tried in vain to answer the questions put to him, confounded himself in excuses, assured his audience that he never intended to attack Christianity and concluded: 'Gentlemen', he said, 'five years ago I received only protests dictated by materialists and spiritual doctrines met with lively opposition. Today public opinion has gratefully changed, and the protests come from the Catholics'.

### **MEETING PLACE**

About this time, Ozanam and his friends made the acquaintance of a remarkable man M.J. Emmanuel Bailly, an elderly ex-Professor of Philosophy. He was a man of great kindness who was ever ready to devote himself to any work for the benefit of University students. He had been President of a successful society des Bonnes Etudes (Society of Good Studies) which had fallen to pieces after the July 1830 revolution.

A friend of Bailly suggested that young Ozanam was the one man capable of reviving it, and this he proceeded to do. At the outset there were only some 15 members meeting at M. Bailly's flat, carrying on somewhat disjointed and casual discussion. After some weeks of careful recruiting and re-organising the membership had risen to over 60. The conferences on Literature, History and Philosophy, when thrown open to the public, attracted large audiences. Very wisely, though originally strictly Catholic, membership was made available to serious young men drawn from the ranks of the University and of all shades of opinion. The discussion turned chiefly on the social teaching of the gospels, politics as such were excluded. In this atmosphere, Ozanam was able to meet- indeed he helped to create- that elite of ardent young Catholics that he had sought in Paris from the outset.

### **BIRTH OF THE SOCIETY**

It was here, in the spring of 1883, during a heated debate, that Ozanam and his friends endeavoured to prove that, from historical evidence alone, that the Catholic Church was the one true Church founded by Christ. The opponents replied: 'We agree that at one time your Church was a great Church and was a great source of good'. And then the chance remark: 'What is your Church doing now? What is she doing for the poor of Paris? Show us your works and we will believe you'. Perhaps a good debating point would have passed into oblivion had not the hand of Providence intervened.

As they made their way home Ozanam and his friends discussed the events of the evening and agreed that perhaps their opponents had a point. Then one of them, La Tallandier, suggested, and Ozanam said "Yes, let us visit the poor". At that moment the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was born. These young men from now onwards were finished with useless debates but would devote themselves to practical work of charity.

Some weeks later, having submitted their plan to Mons. Bailly, it was agreed to form the Conference of Charity (to which was added later to Society of St. Vincent de Paul) and on bright May evening in 1833, M. Bailly presided over the first meeting, at which were present Frederic Ozanam, Francois Lallier, Paul Lamanche, Felix Clave, Augusta La Tallandier, Jules DeVaux. A few simple rules were laid down and this was the beginning of what in time was to become the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. I will not dwell on the development of Conferences. I would mention two points in the relation of Conferences of Charity.

The poor of Paris were very poor and nobody cared for them, where, unlike England and Ireland, there was no Poor Law, so the conference must have filled a real want. To Ozanam the Conference, and later the Conferences, represented something far beyond the more kindly distribution of food and fuel –their ultimate aim was no less than the regeneration of society which, to his mind, was fast approaching a terrible crisis. Amid all this activity, Frederic pursued his studies relentlessly.

He attended lectures outside the strictly legal course. He met such men as de Montalembert and other literary figures. He attended a series of Conferences at Stanislaus College given by Pere Lacordaire, the celebrated Pulpit orator. These lectures made a deep impression on him and his friends. Back in Lyons on vacation he was fortunate to find that the family had planned a holiday in Italy. So Dr. and Madame Ozanam, with the two elder sons (Alphonse and Frederic) started on a tour of Italy that was to include Milan, Loreto, Assisi, Rome and Naples. Thus, over and apart from the religious interests, Frederic was able to gain his first impression of medieval art.

### **NOTRE DAME LECTURES**

The holiday over, he went back to Paris to prepare for his final examination. But he maintained his many other interests at the same time. Earlier in the following year (1834) we find Ozanam, Lallier and Lamanche approaching the Archbishop of Paris (Mons. De Quelan) to lay before His Grace a scheme whereby a series of Lectures on Christianity and the Church would be preached in the cathedral Notre Dame during the coming Lenten season. The Archbishop received them kindly: he was well aware of the work being done by the young men of the Conference of Charity. The Archbishop did not find it possible to accede to their request to invite Pere Lacordaire to occupy the Pulpit at Notre Dame but promised something would be done. Eventually His Grace did invite Pere Lacordaire to occupy the pulpit at Notre Dame when he delivered a series of eight Lectures to an audience of 6,000 men and women.

These Conferences on the Church, its necessity, its infallibility, its constitution, its history were very impressive and were the beginning of what became the famous Lenten Conferences at Notre Dame which have continued down to this day. In the summer of 1834 Frederic passed his law examination and this enabled him to practice at the Bar. He rejoined the family at Lyons and then returned to Paris for two further years of intensive study, eventually taking his Degree of Doctor of Law. In those days, very few students proceeded so far as the

degree of Doctor, but those who did so had the privilege of lecturing to advanced classes in a faculty.

### **DIFFICULT TIMES**

About this time, Mons. Ampere, Frederic's original benefactor, died. In July 1836, Ozanam returned to Lyons after five pleasant years at the University. He immediately set about organising a Conference of the Society in Lyons. While his body was in Lyons, his heart was in Paris with his 'little Society' and he constantly was in correspondence with M. Bailly, and of course, with his close friend, Francois Lallier, who was now Secretary-General of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Having done what his parents wished -he had become a Lawyer- he now turned his attention more and more to literature. In the following year (1837) his father died, as a result of a fall sustained while visiting an old patient. The death of Dr. Ozanam left the family in poor circumstances, for it was revealed after his death that, in spite of his large practice, almost a third of his work had been done 'free of charge'. So Frederic was now the sole support of his ageing and ailing mother. In the months that followed, Ozanam must have known real poverty, and, what was worse, seen his mother suffering from it. He did not complain but struggled on through these difficult times with the same calmness that he had shown in better days.

### **APPOINTED PROFESSOR**

In 1838 he devoted himself to preparing a thesis on 'Dante', which he despatched, to the Sorbonne and early in 1839 (January 7<sup>th</sup>) defended his thesis before the Board of Examiners (as brilliant a group of men as had ever assembled to examine any young men). The result was a triumph far beyond his expectations. 'It was not alone a success', said Pere Lacordaire, 'It was a revelation'.

Ozanam was awarded the coveted honour of Doctor of Literature. It was in this year (1839) that the City of Lyons, at the request of the local Chamber of Commerce, established a Chair of Commercial Law and his townsmen, wishing to do him honour, had him appointed Professor. As a Lecturer, he was an immediate success and the notes of the 47 lectures delivered during his first year as a Professor are still extant. M. Cousin, the very learned Minister for Public Instruction for Education, still remembering the eloquence with which Ozanam spoke and unwilling to let such a brilliant intellect go, ordered him the Chair of Philosophy at Orleans. The authorities at Lyons, not wishing to lose him, suggested that he should lecture on Foreign Literature there in addition to Law and gave him a handsome increase in salary. He had to stay in Lyons, for his mother was now in poor health.

### **DECIDING ON HIS FUTURE**

But early in 1840 his mother died, her three sons being with her at the end. Frederic was overwhelmed with grief and once again became very unsettled and undecided about his future. Among her papers, Frederic found her notes on religious instruction, which she had put together for the use of a Ladies Association of Charity, of which she was the President. Some time later Pere Lacordaire on his way to Rome to join the Dominican Order stopped at Lyons for a few days. The two friends had several conversations. Ozanam explained his position, and, at Frederic's request, Lacordaire promised to send him a copy of the Dominican Rule.

When the Rule arrived Ozanam gave the matter serious consideration, but, before finally deciding on his future, he decided to see his old friend and teacher - Pere Noiroi. The Abbe's advice was that he (Frederic) had not a vocation for the religious life, that his place was in the world, that his pen should be his sword. This decided the issue. Later that spring, Ozanam when in Paris, called to see M. Cousin (the Minister for Education) and explained his position at Lyons. The Minister promised Frederic the Chair of Foreign Literature at Lyons when the then Professor (M. Quinet) retired the following year. But he imposed one condition - that he would present himself for a competition he had just established for the chair Foreign Literature at the Sorbonne.

His examination was to take place in September, just six months away. The Minister was anxious that the first competition should attract the flower of young men of genius. Would Ozanam agree to be one of the competitors? He agreed, and he worked 18 hours a day, he did without a holiday and, as his strength weakened, he felt he should withdraw from the fray. His friends persuaded him to persevere. In the examination he easily came first. When the result of the competition was announced one of the examiners - M. Fauriel, Professor of Foreign Literature in the Sorbonne, requested that Ozanam should supply for him the opening of the course.

He was now 28 years of age and he was fully launched on a career that was to make a high reputation-that of Professor of the Sorbonne. For the first three years as suppliant or assistant to M. Fauriel, but when the latter died suddenly, Ozanam, who by then had truly established himself, became Professor. It is perhaps difficult for us to realise how outstanding a position this gave him in the intellectual world of Paris-of France, for we have nothing corresponding precisely to the Sorbonne as a national centre of learning and authority.

His opening courses on lectures was on German Literature in the Middle Ages' and in order to refresh his memories he made a short tour of Germany which took him from Cologne to Heidelberg, from Mainz to Munich, absorbing knowledge all the time. The lectures were immensely successful, the lecture hall was packed to overflowing and those who could not obtain admission through the main entrance climbed in through the windows - such was his reputation as an orator. What will be of interest to us is that, anti-Christian atmosphere, the fundamental importance accorded by Ozanam to Christianity as the primary element in the growth of European civilisation, a teaching in direct opposition to that of his predecessors.

## **IN CONSTANT DEMAND**

In the following year on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1841, Frederic Ozanam was married in Lyons to Mlle Emelie Soulacroix, daughter of the Rector or President of the Lyons Academy. The honeymoon was spent in Italy. It was an extended holiday, as Ozanam took advantage of his stay to do some further research. For the next 12 years, the young professor was to lead a very full life, one of constant work. Due to his official position, together with his attractive personality, he was in constant demand for speeches, for lectures to workingmen, for presiding at gatherings of every sort.

Apparently, no Catholic demonstration of any kind could take place without his participation and no forward social movement could be initiated without gaining his view first. Still, with all this activity, he found time to deliver three consecutive lectures: 'The Pope', 'The Religious Orders' and 'Monistic Vows', a course requiring no little courage, seeing that the Sorbonne Professor was still only an assistant with no right to succession. In 1845, after four years of matrimony, Madame Ozanam gave birth to a daughter, Marie. She was the only child of the marriage. Needless to say the event gave great joy to Frederic. Again we meet Francois Lallier, who summoned from Sens to be Godfather.

The constant pressure of work, his literary output 'Dante and Catholic Philosophy of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century', 'Two English Franciscan Poets', 'German Literature in the middle ages', preparation of lectures, consultations with his students (two hours of each day devoted to this work alone), the growing Society of St. Vincent de Paul, was bound to undermine his health, which was never robust. A complete breakdown of health in 1846 necessitated one year's rest in Italy, but Frederic could never rest and during this year in Italy he carried out certain literary researches at the request of the Minister of Education.

In 1851 we find him in Dieppe for a holiday with J.J. Ampere (son of his elderly benefactor). While there they crossed to England to see the great London Exhibition at the Crystal Palace. While Ampere continually went to the West End to see the Exhibition and the marvellous exhibits there, Ozanam made his way to the East End of London where he had gone with members of the local Society of St. Vincent de Paul to see for himself the wretched slums that the Irish emigrants were forced to live in and which he had heard of many times.

## **A FINAL SUCCESS**

He managed to get through the academic year 1851/52 with difficulty and the account of his last visit to Sorbonne is very sad indeed. A complete breakdown followed and again he was ordered to rest. Once more he went to Italy, hoping against hope for a cure. He spent winter in Pisa and came to Leghorn in the spring. He spent summer in San Jacopo. At first he appeared to be gaining strength and, as usual used his newfound energy to founding new Conferences or visiting those already established.

He was present in Florence, on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 1853, when the Conference was established there (and in one of his best speeches revealed for the first time the events leading up to the founding of the Conference of Charity just 20 years earlier).

The early history of the Conferences was obscure and Ozanam and the other founder members rarely spoke about it. Some said there were seven present others eight, but it did not really matter. He had long wished to see a Conference established in Sienna, but had been repeatedly repelled. He made one last effort and literally dragged himself there only to be disappointed once more (after four days pleading with the authorities). When he felt he had failed, a letter sent by hand from his friend Pere Pendola stated that, on the eve of St. Vincent de Paul, two Conferences had been founded in Sienna, one in town and one in the Collage of Tolonnei. It was his last foundation.

### **THE LAST DAYS**

As August came to an end it was obvious, even to the patient that his life was slowly drawing towards its close. He did not fear death. Still he was human and he had one last wish: **to die on French soil**. His friends were alarmed, but, when the Doctor agreed, they (brothers of the Conference in Leghorn) carried him down to a small ship about to sail for Marseilles. When the party arrived there Frederic wanted to press on to Paris, the scene of his greatest achievements, or even to Lyons. But it was not to be and on the evening of 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1853 his death came peacefully in the presence of his family, while the brothers of the Society from the local Conference prayed quietly in the adjoining room. His body was conveyed to Paris where a Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated in the Church of San Sulpice in the presence of an immense number of priests, friends, professors and members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. His mortal remains now lie in the crypt of the great Carmelite Church in Paris. His tomb is a place of pilgrimage for Vincentians from all over the world.

### **SERVANT OF GOD**

Such is the life and work of our founder, and it is impossible to sum up his many qualities. Certainly he was a man of great faith who, even in his lifetime, had earned a reputation for holiness. He was a dynamic personality, courageous, immensely learned, a superb orator, never hesitant in proclaiming the truth; and the truth to Ozanam was Catholic truth.

From the pictures we have of Frederic he appears to have been reserved and aloof. But this was not so. He was warm- hearted, generous, with great respect for the feelings of other people-even his opponents in debate. Perhaps he was seen at his best within the family circle. One example of his thoughtfulness was that every month, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> a bunch of flowers was sent to his wife, even if he happened to be away from home.

This was continued right to the end of his life. On 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1853, as he lay dying at San Jacopo the flowers arrived as usual. He was dead a fortnight later.

We have good reason to remember him. It was mainly through his efforts that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul came into being. To the end of his life he continued to visit and encourage the Conference whether in Burgos (in Spain), in London, in Dieppe, in Leghorn. Indeed one might say he gave his last breath for the Society.

The cause for his beatification was opened in Paris on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1925 at which His Eminence; the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris presided. The examination of witnesses went on for many years and an exhaustive examination of his writings was then undertaken prior to the apostolic process at Rome. The cause advanced a step when the Holy Father Pope Pius XII signed the decree of the introduction of the cause on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1954. This forward step meant the Holy See assumed responsibility for the cause. It judged that the fame of Frederic's holiness deserved the more searching examination of the second or Apostolic process. By a singular favour, Pope Pius XII authorised the examination at Paris, under oath, of component historians and of those witnesses who could report of their own knowledge the testimonies of Ozanam's contemporaries.

This stage was completed by 1956 and its documentation was officially consigned to the Roman authorities. The latest information is encouraging, but more time is needed. However, the official title of the Frederic Ozanam is now 'Servant of God'. If the cause is to succeed, miracles are needed and miracles call for prayer. One would expect those prayers to come from members of our Society who, after all, should know more about Frederic Ozanam than any other people.

Eventually on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1997, Frederic Ozanam was Beatified by Pope John Paul II in Paris.