

St. Vincent de Paul



BERCEAU

Pouy, France – Birthplace of St. Vincent de Paul



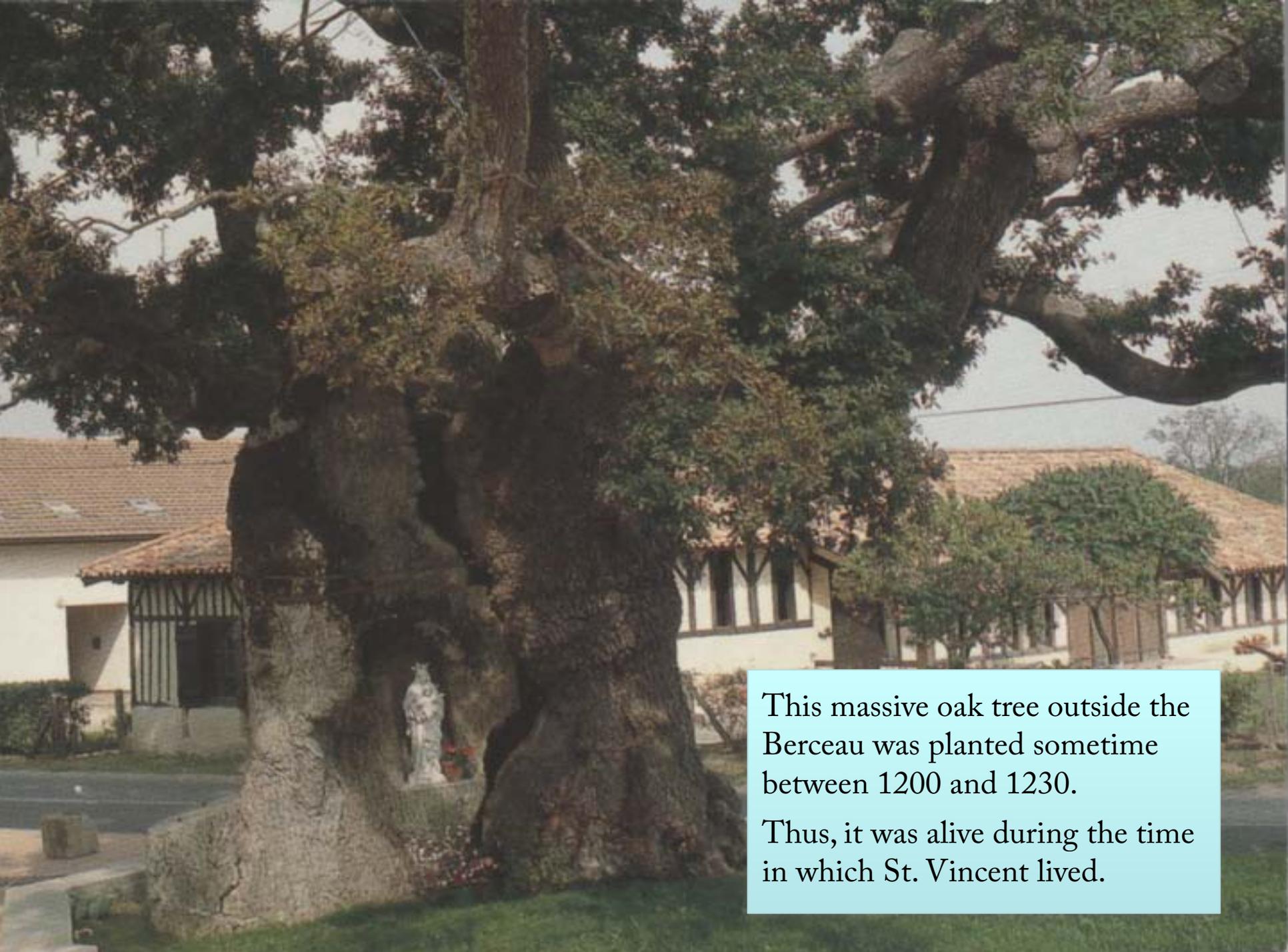
1581



**BERCEAU DE
S^T VINCENT DE PAUL**



This is the interior of the De Paul Family's home.



This massive oak tree outside the Berceau was planted sometime between 1200 and 1230.

Thus, it was alive during the time in which St. Vincent lived.

These stilts were used by Vincent when as a boy he shepherded cows, sheep, and pigs, depending upon the time of year.

The low plains of the Dax region were subject to flooding from the Ardour River. The stilts were necessary to get around.



This is the home of Monsieur de Comet, an attorney in Dax and judge of Pouy, who invited young Vincent to live in his home while attending school. Vincent tutored Monsieur Comet's children and continued his studies for four years.

It is doubtful that Vincent would have been able to study in Dax without the aid of this influential person, who recognized Vincent's intelligence and potential.

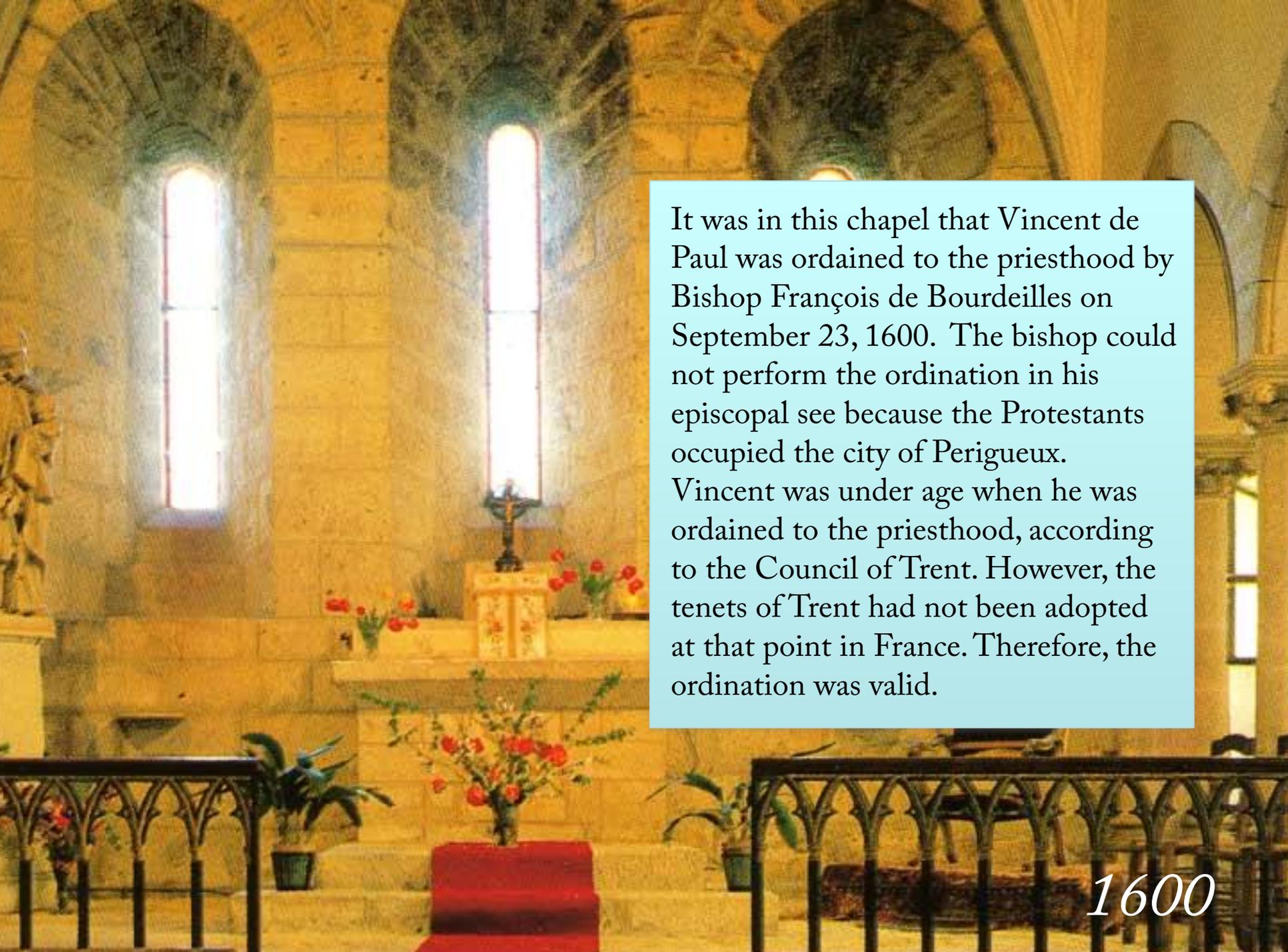




This is Chateau l'Evêque, where St. Vincent was ordained. It was the residence of the bishops of Perigueux from the 14th century till the time of the French Revolution in 1789.

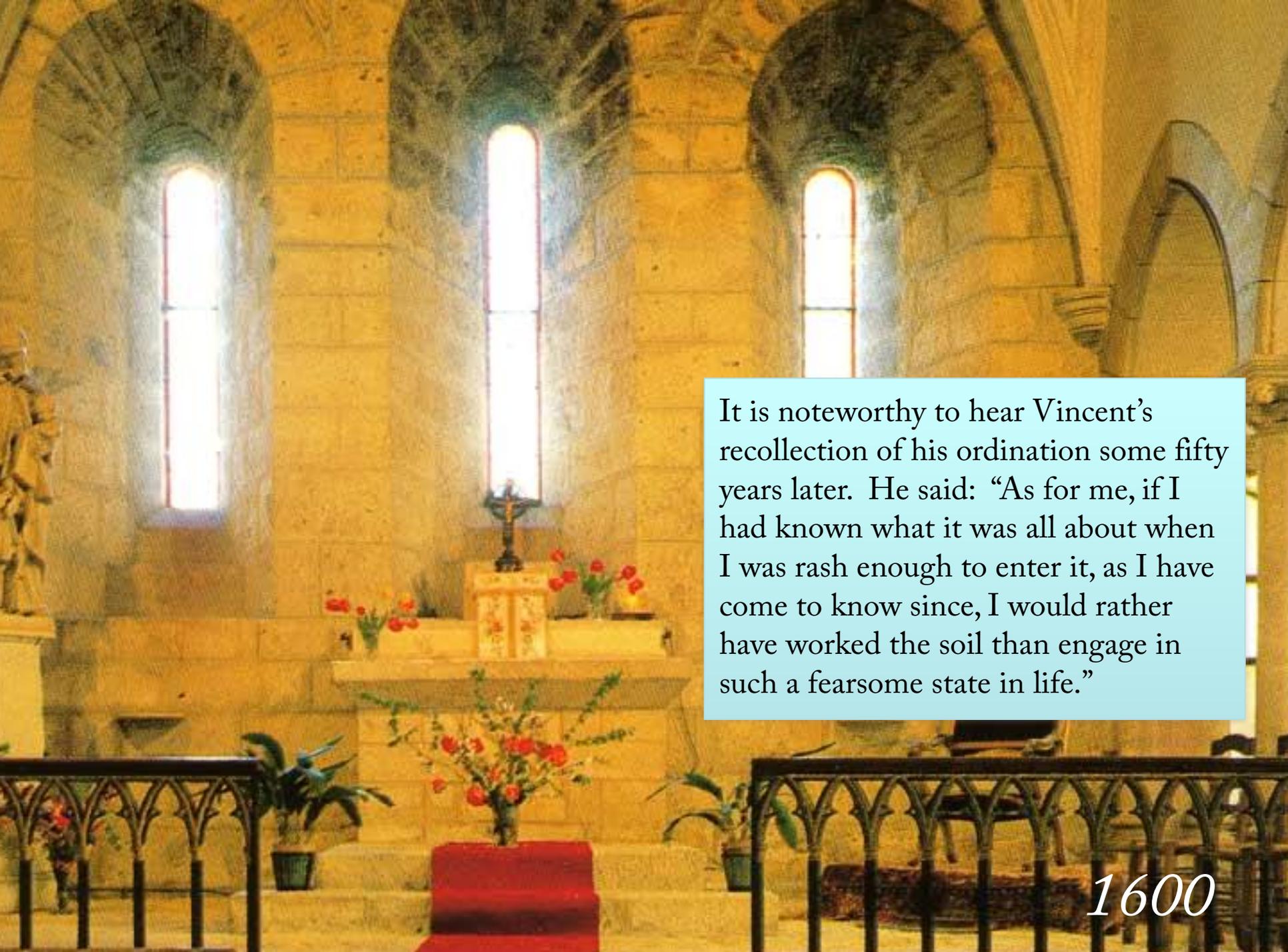


Chateau l'Evêque, aerial view

The image shows the interior of a Gothic chapel. The walls are made of light-colored stone with large, pointed arches. Two tall, narrow windows with red frames are visible. In the center, there is an altar with a crucifix on top. The altar is decorated with red flowers. In the foreground, there is a red cushioned chair and a black metal railing with a Gothic design. The overall atmosphere is solemn and historical.

It was in this chapel that Vincent de Paul was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop François de Bourdeilles on September 23, 1600. The bishop could not perform the ordination in his episcopal see because the Protestants occupied the city of Perigueux. Vincent was under age when he was ordained to the priesthood, according to the Council of Trent. However, the tenets of Trent had not been adopted at that point in France. Therefore, the ordination was valid.

1600



It is noteworthy to hear Vincent's recollection of his ordination some fifty years later. He said: "As for me, if I had known what it was all about when I was rash enough to enter it, as I have come to know since, I would rather have worked the soil than engage in such a fearsome state in life."

Vincent was assigned as pastor of this parish, Clichy, which at the time was outside of Paris, by Cardinal de Bérulle on May 2, 1612.

He said this about the parishioners in Clichy: “I was a parish priest out in the fields. My people were so good and so obedient to my requests that when I told them they ought to come to confession on the first Sunday of the month, that is what they did. They came and they made their confession, and I saw these souls prosper, day by day. I found this so comforting that I said to myself: ‘My God, you are fortunate to have such good people! And I added, ‘I think that not even the pope is as fortunate as a priest in the midst of a congregation of such good heart.’”



Clichy

1612



Folleville

1617

It was in this church at Folleville on January 25, 1617, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, that Vincent gave a homily which would mark the inspiration for the Congregation of the Mission.





Madame de Gondi, upon whose estate Vincent had been tutoring her sons, urged him to preach on the importance of a general confession after an elderly dying man had found the need to make a general confession.

Vincent and a few other priests subsequently gave a mission that was received very well.

This is the Church of St. Andrew. Vincent was assigned here in 1617 by Cardinal de Bérulle. The parish was in terrible disarray when Vincent arrived. He soon, however, won the support of the people through his pastoral care.

Châtillon is now called Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne. St. Andrew's Church still exists. The church dates back to 1272, though it was not completed until the fifteenth century. There are a number of nineteenth-century stained glass windows depicting the life and work of Vincent de Paul.



Châtillon

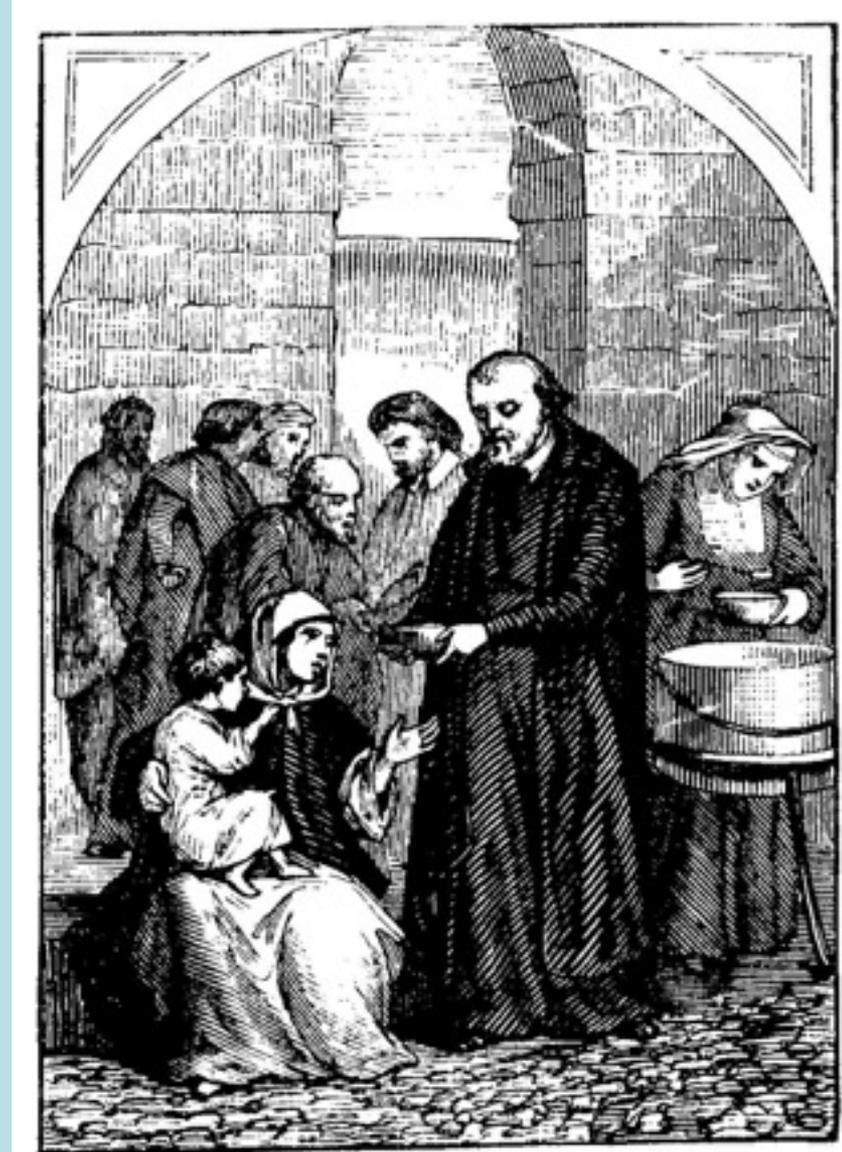
1617

It was in Châtillon that a woman informed Vincent before Mass about the dire need of a family, with children, who were without food. Vincent spoke of this need in his homily. As a result the people spontaneously and generously gave ample food, probably too much in Vincent's estimation. It was this experience that taught Vincent of the need to organize the charity. This led to the establishment of the first Confraternity of Charity, what would later be known as the Ladies of Charity (the AIC, the International Association of Charities).



Châtillon

In 1632, St. Vincent was given St. Lazare, a very large priory on the outskirts of Paris and a *leprosarium*. St. Lazare became a veritable center of Vincentian activity, including extraordinary relief to the poor (shelter, food, etc.), place of retreats for those about to be ordained to the priesthood, and where the renowned Tuesday Conferences were held for the clergy. The priests and brothers of the Congregation of the Mission, who conducted numerous works during St. Vincent's time and up to the French Revolution, are still often known as "Lazarists".



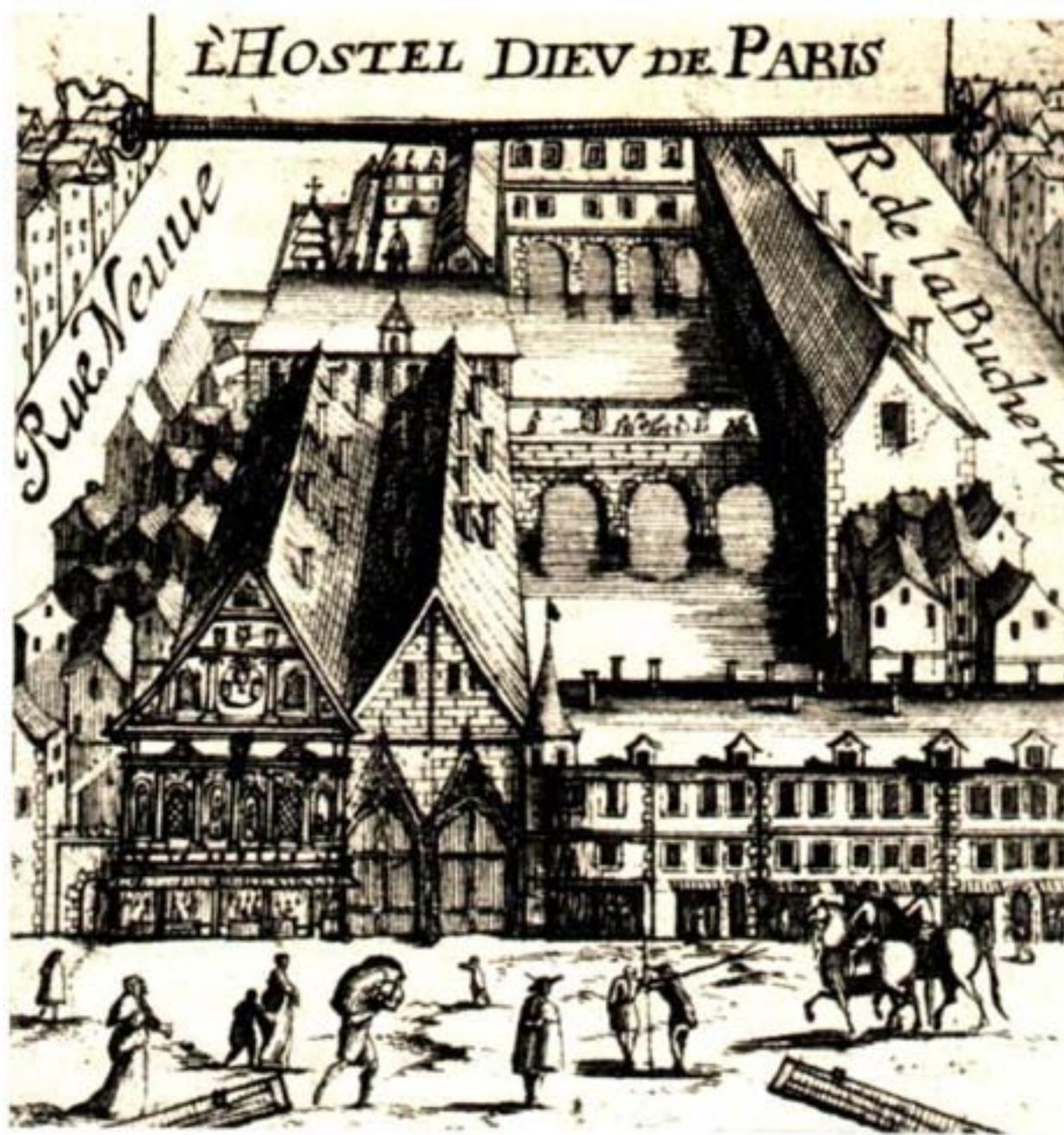
It was during the French Revolution many years later that St. Lazare was destroyed because the rumor had circulated that there were guns, ammunition, and plenty of food. None of this, of course, was true, but that made little difference to the insurgents.



Hôtel-Dieu

The Hôtel-Dieu was an ancient hospital located next to the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris.





Plan à vue d'oiseau de l'Hôtel-Dieu.

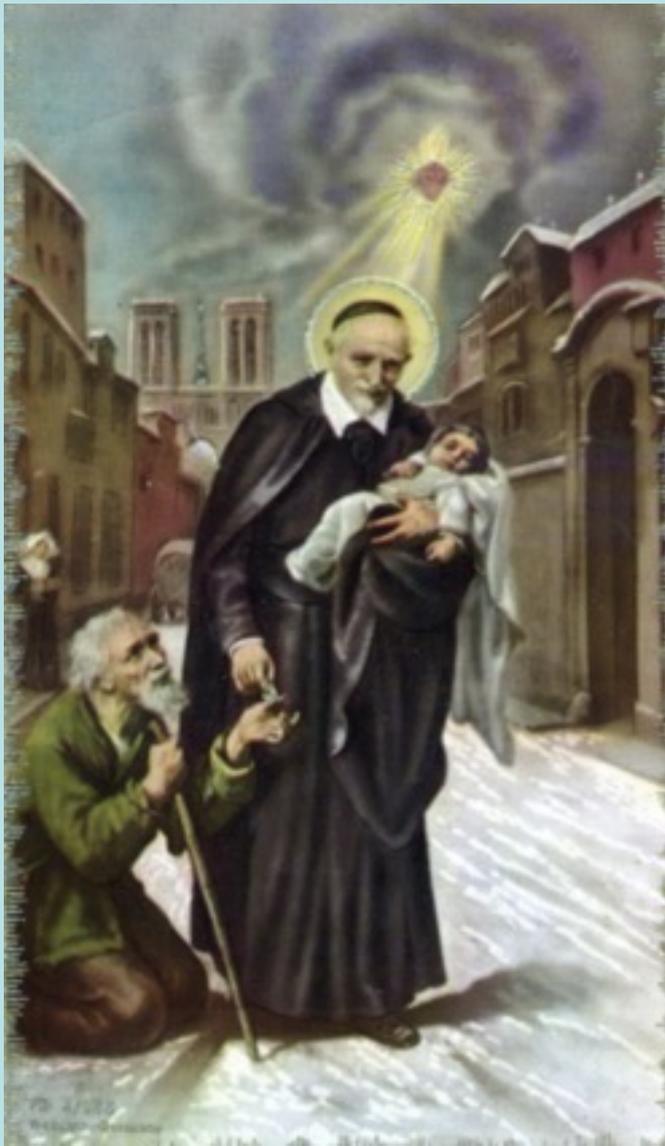
At first Vincent had first asked the Ladies of Charity, many of whom were women of nobility, to care for the sick poor at the Hôtel-Dieu.

But because of the wretched conditions in the hospital and the demand to carry very heavy pots of soup, Vincent soon turned to the Daughters of Charity to undertake this work.





CONDUIT LES FILLES DE CHARITÉ AUX HÔPITAUX



Infants were often left at the doors of churches, and would have died from exposure to the cold and malnutrition. St. Vincent, St. Louise, and the Daughters of Charity undertook this work.

Vincent and his confreres brought aid to the people of Lorraine and elsewhere in France so devastated by the Thirty Years War.



At one point, St. Vincent pleaded with Cardinal Richelieu, Secretary of State, to call an end to the civil war wreaking havoc on the poor, especially in rural areas.





St. Vincent's body is preserved in wax and rests in a special glass casket above the main altar in the Maison-Mère in Paris. St. Vincent de Paul, Apostle of the Poor, pray for us!

What struck you about St. Vincent's life?

How do I wish to be remembered as
a Vincentian?

From a presentation by Fr. Bruce Krause, C.M.

