



Vincentian Solidarity Office

December 2014 Bulletin



Update on the Patrimony Fund Project: A Prayer for Nigeria

The news coming out of Nigeria this year has been troubling. In November, a suicide bomber walked into an assembly at a boy's secondary school in Potiskum, in the northern part of the country. His self-detonation took 47 young lives and wounded many more. In April, the Boko Haram--a jihadists group that has been waging a violent insurgency in northern Nigeria--abducted more than 200 girls from a secondary school in Chibok. The Boko Haram targets schools because it opposes western influences in education. The girls are still missing.

Nigeria has long been a place of tension, almost from the time of its founding as an independent country, which was soon followed by civil war, famine, and a military coup. But there is another side to Nigeria, represented by physician Stella Ameyo Adadevoh. Last July, Dr. Adadevoh ordered Patrick Sawyer into quarantine when he walked into her hospital in Lagos, Nigeria's largest city. Mr. Sawyer was an influential consultant for the Liberian Finance Ministry. He exhibited symptoms of Ebola, which had not yet been reported in Nigeria. Mr. Sawyer demanded to be released and had the backing of the Liberian ambassador who pressured the Nigerian government. But Dr. Adadevoh held her ground, and stood between Mr. Sawyer and the hospital door leading out to a crowded metropolis of 21 million residents, many of whom lacked access to adequate health care.

What followed is a remarkable story of how Nigeria contained the spread of Ebola to only 20 cases and 8 deaths, which, sadly, included Dr. Adadevoh. Nigeria's response to the Ebola crisis serves as a model for the United States and other nations which have far greater resources. So Nigeria is also a place of hope and resolve.

I have seen this hope and resolve in our Nigerian confreres. For example, while forces work to undermine education in some parts of Nigeria, our confreres work to build it up and operate several schools. Currently, the Vincentian Solidarity Office is working with the Nigerian Province to raise funding to construct a multi-story hostel (dormitory) for its St. Joseph's Inclusive Primary and De Paul Secondary Schools in Oraifite. These schools educate hearing impaired and deaf children alongside children with full hearing in regular classrooms. The new hostel will enable more deaf children and secondary school aged girls to obtain an education.



Some of the girls at St. Joseph's school

It is apropos to think of a place like Nigeria—a beneficiary of the Patrimony Fund Project--and the undeterred work of our confreres there, during the season of Advent. Advent is a time of tension and contrast. Its message is that the Kingdom of God—with its justice and fulfillment--*is at hand, but not fully arrived*. Advent is a time to reflect on what should be, but still is not; on what has been promised, but still must be ambitiously pursued.

And speaking of a promise to be ambitiously pursued, I am happy to report that, counting money pledged for year's end by donors, we have reached the \$4 million (USD) mark in the Patrimony Fund Project. This means we have secured a total of \$8 million counting the matching funds from the private foundation that has offered us the challenge grant. We still have another million to raise to meet our goal of \$5 million (\$10 million counting the matching funds): a goal that *is at hand, but not fully arrived*....

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Cattle and a ranch in Chibito

A few years ago, our Vice-Province of Mozambique began to raise a small herd of cattle to generate revenue to support its members, seminarians, and works. Finding its initial outcomes promising, the Vice-Province planned to scale up the project to raise more revenue and move toward economic self-sufficiency. To do this, the Vice-Province obtained the free use of 1,000 hectares of land in the Chibito District in southern Mozambique. But it still needed to purchase 60 more head of cattle and construct an infrastructure for an expanded ranch, and sought the assistance of the VSO with the project.



The growing herd of cattle

The VSO obtained grants from the Archdiocese of Cologne and the Diocese of Rottenberg-Stuttgart, to purchase the additional cattle for the Vice-Province. The VSO then matched these grants with monies from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund, to finance the construction of fencing, corrals, watering and bathing facilities for the cattle, and housing for the ranch workers.

A farewell to Teresa

Teresa Niedda has worked at the VSO for the last five years. She has been an important asset to our office and the worldwide Congregation, as many confreres in our provinces in developing regions will attest. We are sad to report that Teresa has left the VSO to work closer to her home, and accepted an invitation to serve as the Executive Director of the Center for Environmental Transformation (CFET).

The CFET is a charitable organization sponsored by the Sacred Heart Parish of Camden, New Jersey. Camden is one of the poorest cities in the United

States. The CFET is a retreat center with an urban farm located in the city. Rooted in the Catholic tradition of social and environmental justice, the CFET promotes sustainable gardening, and environmentally friendly practices. Besides overseeing the urban farm, Teresa will be coordinating education programs, retreats, and immersion experiences for youth and other groups.



Teresa Niedda

While Teresa's departure is painful, we find solace in knowing her Vincentian work continues, and offer her and Sacred Heart Parish our prayers and blessings.

Vincentian Solidarity Office
500 East Cheltenham Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19144
United States of America

Our goal: To assist the Congregation of the Mission with obtaining funds for its evangelization and service of the poor.

How to contact us:

Fr. Miles Heinen, C.M., Executive Director:

Telephone: +1 215-713-2432

Email: cmvso@yahoo.com

Scott Fina, Ph.D., Associate Director:

Telephone: +1 215-713-2433

Email: scottfina@gmail.com

Fax: +1 215-843-9361

Our websites: www.cmglobal.org/vso
www.cmglobal.org/patrimony-en/