



Vincentian Solidarity Office

June 2009 Bulletin

Comments from the Director

Dear Confreres,

May the Spirit set our hearts afire!

I hope this season of Pentecost finds you inspired and energized in your love and service for the poor. I am happy to report on two more VSF Micro-Project grants recently distributed by the VSO. These include micro-project grants for (1) the Province of Fortaleza in Brazil to purchase air conditioners for infirm and aged confreres at the provincial house, and (2) support for the Province of St. Justin de Jacobis to meet urgent pastoral needs of several apostolates in Eritrea. The micro-project grants awarded by the VSO are immensely helpful to our confreres working and living in developing regions. So are the donations from confreres to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF) that make these micro-project grants possible.

My first few months at the VSO have been quite busy! Requests are growing for VSO service for worthy projects from around the world. Preliminary work has also begun on the Patrimony Fund Project (PFP). The PFP entails a multi-million-dollar, matching grant challenge from an anonymous donor. The grant and matching monies will establish or augment patrimony funds for several CM provinces and vice-provinces in developing regions.

With the exception of contributions designated by confreres in their wills (legacies), the matching funds for the PFP are to be raised from sources outside of the Congregation. Scott Fina (Associate Director at the VSO) and I have begun to visit benefiting provinces to involve them in the process of raising these matching monies and to identify potential sources of funding. Please pray that these initial efforts of the Congregation to meet the challenge of the Patrimony Fund Project are effective.

Fraternally in St. Vincent,

Father Miles Heinen, C.M.

A New Apostolic School in Fianarantsoa

For many years the Province of Madagascar lacked a residence for seminarians completing the second stage of their religious formation: the three-year apostolic school. This situation impeded candidates from rural places in Madagascar from successfully participating in the formation program of the Province. Candidates from these places have inadequate access to effective secondary schooling. As a consequence, they often lack the academic skills needed to complete the rigorous requirements of the major seminary. For this reason the Province of Madagascar obtained a temporary residence in 2004 to enable seminarians to take pre-university courses at a Catholic preparatory school in Fianarantsoa. The students conduct studies in liberal arts and sciences at the school to prepare for their coursework in philosophy and theology.



The new apostolic school in Fianarantsoa

The temporary residence for the students, however, was too small and lacked appropriate facilities to serve as a house of formation. In 2007 the Province of Madagascar began to construct a new apostolic school in Fianarantsoa for its seminarians taking pre-university courses. The Province recently completed the new formation house, which can accommodate 40 students and includes 6 dormitories with toilet-shower blocks, a study room, chapel, recreation room, office, kitchen, dining room, and quarters for 2 seminary directors. The VSO assisted the Province of

Madagascar in obtaining a grant from the World Church-World Mission Office of the Archdiocese of Cologne in Germany (that was matched with funds from the VSF) and the Pontificium Opus a Propagatione Fidei in Italy to complete the construction of the new apostolic school.

Renovations for a Retreat Center in Alegría

The modern history of El Salvador is marked with violence and economic instability. Challenging socio-political conditions continue in the country. The civil war that ended in 1992 in El Salvador forced our confreres to abandon their mission house in the City of Alegría. The house had been established in 1906 and fell into ruin during the years it remained empty. A few years ago confreres of the Province of Central America began to renovate the house in Alegría to convert it into a retreat and formation center for evangelization, social action, and training in agriculture and literacy. The Province of Central America applied to the VSO for a VSF Micro-Project grant to finance further improvements at the house. The VSO awarded a micro-project grant which enabled the Province to fully restore the house, now called the Father Antonio Comte Retreat House.

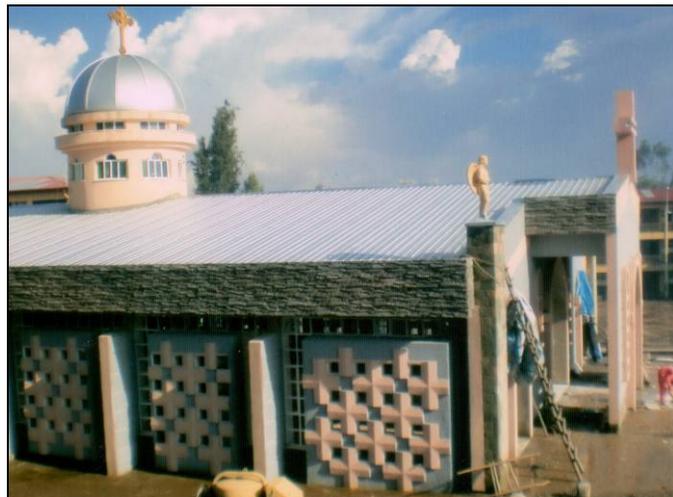


The restored Father Antonio Comte Retreat House

A Roof for a New Church in Addis Ababa

The Province of Ethiopia administrates and staffs Our Lady of Mt. Zion Parish in the City of Addis Ababa. The parish bustles with many pastoral and social ministries, and has been blessed with substantial growth in the number of its parishioners. Until recently the church of Our Lady of Mt. Zion Parish was located on the upper floor of the parish community building. For sometime the church had

been too small to accommodate its membership, and also inaccessible to elderly and infirm parishioners who could not climb the stairs to reach the worship space.



The new church at Our Lady of Mt. Zion Parish

With contributions from other CM provinces, the Province of Ethiopia began to construct a new and larger church for Our Lady of Mt. Zion Parish at ground level in 2005. The project, however, met with funding shortages. The VSO assisted the Province of Ethiopia by matching a grant from the Brothers of St. Joseph of The Netherlands with monies from the VSF to construct the roof and ceiling of the new church. The Province completed the new church in late 2008.

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

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