



Vincentian Solidarity Office

November 2017 Bulletin



The Solomon Islands: A special place to see the Vincentian charism at work



The Vincentian charism calls us to connect our internal, spiritual growth with service to those at the margins of society. Our international mission on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands embodies that practice: metaphorically as an island whose center is never far from its edges on the Pacific Ocean, and as a place that challenges and transforms our missionaries.



The modern history of Guadalcanal is a troubled one. The mountainous island remains physically scarred from one of the

most brutal battles of the Second World War. More recently, the nation of the Solomon Islands has known ethnic violence, political instability, and devastating cyclones. Currently 46% of the country's residents live on less than 2 US dollars per day; the mean number of years of schooling for adults is only five. But ask our confreres on Guadalcanal about their mission, and they will speak of a beautiful people and a compelling, but at times, demanding ministry.



Parishioners in their new church



The new parish truck

The VSO has witnessed some of the challenges confronting our confreres. A key work of our International Mission of the Solomon Islands is Good Shepherd Parish, established in 2003 in Red Beach on the northern side of Guadalcanal. For several years the parish used a small temporary shelter for liturgies and other gatherings. Then the VSO

assisted the mission in financing the construction of a permanent church and pastoral center for the parish, obtaining grants from the Archdiocese of Cologne, Missio Aachen, Kirche in Not, and the Pontificium Opus a Propagatione Fidei, and also using monies from individual donors and the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF). The construction, however, was hampered by storms and chronic shortages of skilled labor and building materials, and required over five years to complete! But the outcome is a beautiful and well-constructed worship space reflecting the local culture in style, and an adjoining building with a parish office, meeting room, classroom and handcraft room.



Celebrating a local custom

Our confreres at Good Shepherd Parish have also lacked a reliable vehicle to visit the parish's 13 dispersed communities, reachable only over rough and often muddy roads. With monies from the VSF, the VSO co-financed the purchase of a Toyota Hilux, double-cab pickup truck for the parish with the Province of Oceania.

Support VSO projects: [Donate](#)

A School in Bairabi

In 2007, our North Indian Province started a mission in a remote region in Mizoram State in far northeastern India. The mission is centered in Bairabi village and serves 14 other communities. As one of their first works, our confreres in the mission started a school to provide a quality education, which was unavailable to many of the children in the villages.



The newly constructed school in Bairabi

For several years the school was housed in a temporary shed, which became inadequate for its rapidly growing student population. With assistance from the VSO, the Province obtained a grant from a private European foundation, which coupled with monies from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund, paid for the construction of a permanent, two-floor school, with 12 classrooms, a science lab, library-computer room, staff room, school office, and toilet blocks.



Students in class at the new St. Vincent's School

The new St. Vincent's school currently has 380 students but is expected to quickly grow to 600 and include grades lower-Kindergarten through Grade 10.

VSO Micro-Project Grants

With generous contributions from several provinces of our Congregation, the VSO has resumed its micro-project grant program. Provinces, vice-provinces, and missions in developing regions submit applications for funding (up to \$5,000 USD) for small projects. The projects can involve pastoral, socioeconomic, and religious formation activities, and request funding to purchase equipment and supplies, and pay for programs, construction work, and other items.

So far in 2017, the VSO has issued micro-project grants to the: Apostolic Vicariate of Nekemte (to install a rainwater storage system at the bishop's residence); Province of North India (to replace a roof on the presbytery at the Gunpur Mission); Rwanda-Burundi Region (to purchase furnishings for a church in Mugogo in Burundi); Province of South India (to enhance the capacity of its OASIS social service agency); Panama Region (to support its planning and coordination of the World Indigenous Youth Gathering in Soloy); Central American Province (to purchase equipment and food for formation workshops for parish leaders in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua), and Vice-Province of Mozambique (to renovate its community house at the Missão São Jerónimo de Magude).

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. Gregory Semeniuk, C.M., Executive Director:

Telephone: +1 215-713-2432

Email: gjsemeniuk@gmail.com

Scott Fina, Ph.D., Associate Director:

Telephone: +1 215-713-2433

Email: scottfina@gmail.com

María José Pacheco del Río, Project Manager:

Telephone: +1 215-713-3983

Email: MPacheco@cmphlsvs.org

Our website: www.emglobal.org/vso