

THE VINCENTIAN SOLIDARITY OFFICE

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Eastern Province, USA

WHAT IS THE VSO?

AN IDEA

Solidarity — that the Congregation of the Mission will be a community of goods such that, according to the location, there is equality in the capacity to evangelize the poor.

43 Provinces, vice-provinces, missions, international missions and (*NEW!*) 2 Vicariates Apostolic under the care of the CM are eligible to send applications to the VSO.

A CHALLENGE

An anonymous donor challenged some provinces to match a yearly donation. These monies form part of the Vincentian Solidarity Fund and allow the CM to make an offer to supply half of the cost of a project if a funding agency will supply the other half of the cost.

AN OFFICE THAT REPORTS TO THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

The Superior General officially opened the office on June 15, 2002 (8th anniversary!). The VSO reports to the Curia quarterly, with the director traveling to Rome twice per year.

A “FACE” FOR THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

The VSO offers an optional service to the Provinces, Vice-Provinces and International Missions of the CM. However, the VSO is also creating relationships and a history with funding agencies that, over time, will enhance the trust that these agencies have in the CM. The office is gaining valuable experience in project design, grant-writing and solicitation of funds that serves the CM in effectively engaging in its mission.

WHO IS THE VSO?

FOUNDING DIRECTOR BRO. PETER CAMPBELL, C.M.

Although he is no longer on staff with the VSO, his hard work and organizational skills allowed the VSO to progress rapidly in its mission. Thank you, Bro. Peter!

FR. MILES HEINEN, C.M.

Executive Director since January 1, 2009. I am a member of the newly established Western Province of the USA, with 28 years of ordination, speak English and Spanish, was in Petén, Guatemala '85-'92, was Econome in the former provinces of the South and West USA and served '05-'08 as associate director of Pastoral Formation in St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, California.

MR. SCOTT FINA

Associate Director since July 12, 2004. He holds a doctorate in political science. His previous Vincentian service includes serving as administrator of the Ghebre Michael Inn (for homeless men) in Philadelphia and administrator of the Vincentian Renewal Center in Princeton, New Jersey for the Eastern USA Province. Scott and his wife Barbara have three (triplet) sons: Sean, Matthew and Luke.

MS. TERESA NIEDDA

Associate Director since November 1, 2009. While new to the office, Teresa is no stranger to the Vincentian family. Teresa is a 1984 graduate of Niagara University (Eastern Province USA) and is an active alumna. She previously worked as Director of a non-profit organization that works with migrant farm workers in the USA. She brings to the VSO her experience in grant writing, international relations, and a love for the Vincentian charism.

GOAL OF VSO

**TO ASSIST THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION
WITH OBTAINING FUNDS FOR ITS EVANGELIZATION
AND SERVICE OF THE POOR**

WRITING GRANTS AND SOLICITATION OF FUNDS

The work is:

- writing grant requests to solicit funds for projects
- distributing micro-project grants from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund

- solicit funds to fulfill the obligations of the Patrimony Fund Project (*NEW!*)
- to obtain money for other needs of the CM as directed by the Superior General and his Council (*NEW!*)

RESULTS OF VSO

PROJECT NUMBERS (MARCH 30, 2010)

VSO PROJECTS – 142 projects funded in 8 years of service (total \$ 5,031,355 USD). These projects require a more robust application process because VSO seeks a partner to fund at least half of the project and must gain the trust of this partner so that they will invest in the proposed project.

VSF MICRO-PROJECTS – 72 micro-projects funded in 5 years (\$ 353,455 USD). These projects require a less detailed application, can be obtained only once per year per eligible entity, have a maximum value of \$ 5,000 USD and are funded by donations received from individual CM's.

TOTAL: 214 projects totaling \$ 5,384,810 USD.

PROJECT ANALYSIS BY TYPE – the who (see chart at end of report)

ADMINISTRATION = serves the Confreres

Remodel the provincial offices; buy office equipment for province, buy furniture for CM house, etc.

4.61% of total

CANDIDATES = serves formation of CM

Build seminary, build formation house, computers for students, etc.

26.99% of total

PASTORAL = serves evangelization outreach

Build Church, build pastoral center, formation program for laity, vehicle for pastoral work

22.32% of total

SOCIO-ECONOMIC = serves human needs of people

Program to feed street children; care for the elderly, literacy program, health outreach, etc.

46.08% of total

PROJECT ANALYSIS BY ACTIVITY – the what

Construction	=	65.70%
Equipment	= tools, computers	7.41%
Materials	= books, food, furnishings	4.52%
Program	= delivery of service	12.39%
Scholarship	=	0.57%
Vehicle	= car, van, tractor, boat	9.41%

OBSERVATIONS and NOTES

There is currently a heavy focus on construction. It is to be noted that the Curia uses the mission fund distribution to address operational concerns, particularly around formation, and directs building requests to the VSO. However, buildings are tools. I emphasize with you the need to choose this tool wisely.

Micro-projects represent 6.56% of the total of all grants received. Though representing a small percentage of the total, the micro-project grants have a large impact because their ease of use encourages confreres to take a first step in searching out resources to help meet the needs. The micro-project funds on hand, which now depend on the donations from individual CM's, represent about 1.5 years of funding if the current rate of use continues. Let me encourage you to keep our confreres informed of the opportunity to donate funds to the Curia for the purpose of these Micro-Project grants.

The major portion of the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF) is positioned, due to a surplus built up over its 8 years of existence, to have available the normal level of funding for 2010 and 2011. In 2012 it is possible that the level of funds available to the VSF could drop by as much as 30% due to shifting priorities in the donor provinces. In 2013 the funding, compared to current levels, will drop another 20% as the surplus is used up. This challenges VSO to find other sources of funding to continue its current successful methodology of matching grants. Failing that, the method will change to a less robust contribution on the part of the CM.

REFLECTIONS ON EXPERIENCE OF VSO*OVERSIGHT BY VISITORS/VICE-VISITORS*

The unity of the mission depends on the Visitor/Vice-Visitor. It is best that projects correspond to the long range goals of your province or vice-province. This is particularly important in your commitments to foreign missions where change in personnel can radically affect

the success of the project. Your signature on a project represents your judgment that the project is promoting, as best it can, the long term mission of the province. Nothing is more disheartening to a funding agency than seeing a building, which they funded, that has now fallen into disrepair and disuse.

The grant money, once received by the Curia, is quickly moved by the Treasurer General into your province/vice-province curial account. You alone, as visitor or vice-visitor, can authorize the Treasurer General to release the funds. It is easier for him if the details necessary for the transfer are accurately communicated in a timely manner.

People who help us with donations expect a report. Every application includes a commitment to do this reporting using the forms VSO supplies. Please be vigilant with the confreres about their fulfilling competently this task.

PARTICIPATION

There have been 43 entities that can send project or micro-project applications to the VSO. 37 have actually applied one or more times. Of the grants received, the 17 entities receiving the lowest number of grants have received 13.08% of the total grants received. The 17 entities receiving the highest number of grants have received 86.92% of the total grants received. Remember that the participation is optional and there is certainly a varied level of participation. The work of designing a project and writing a grant application can seem very difficult to complete, but obviously many are completing it and the poor are served. The VSO will help you get through the grant process. Please use our service!

A VISION

Reporting is, in general, a hated task. My dream is that all the provinces/vice-provinces will develop a province "culture" ("this is the way we do things") such that transparent and well organized reporting of finances is the expected norm. You cannot imagine how important competent reporting is to establishing a good relationship with funding agencies! Please support the workshops for effective money management organized by our Treasurer General as a valuable step in this direction!

The Systemic Change Initiative has put at our disposal the experience gained from well designed projects. Well designed projects are collaborative efforts involving the people who benefit from the projects. The project has the personnel and resources to be sustained. My dream is that this process of designing and adjusting

projects in collaboration with the people who benefit from them will become the “culture” of the CM. I am quite certain that in this way the CM will strengthen its credibility and become a magnet attracting collaborators who want to support our work.

NEW and EXCITING PROJECTS FOR VSO – solicitation of funds

ZAFÉN

The project links, via a website, prescreened projects in Haiti to the international Vincentian Family and the Haiti Diaspora in order to facilitate loans or donations. On island, Zafén is connected to the “alternate bank of the poor,” Fonkoze, which manages the paperwork and reporting.

The major branches of the Vincentian Family (CM, DC, SVDP, AIC, Brothers of Our Lady of Mercy) and an anonymous foundation have pledged 91,700 USD per year over the next 5 years (458,500) to establish a “seed money” fund to support the salary and expenses of an on-island Program Developer and the expenses of the Vincentian Family Board.

The goal is to have 1,000,000 USD. Counting the pledges and other donations that have already been voluntarily made, there will be some 777,045 USD available and some 222,954 USD left to be solicited, as of March 31, 2010.

The VSO will collaborate with the International Project Services Office of the Daughters of Charity to assist in soliciting these funds.

Please alert the Vincentian Family in your area to this opportunity. Please keep this project in mind when people express to you a desire to “help the poor.”

PATRIMONY FUND PROJECT

(Constitutions # 148 § 1 “use goods as patrimony of the poor”)

VISION

The dream of a relative equality throughout the international CM in regard to financing the mission is the motivation of this project.

The hoped for outcome is creative fidelity to the charism of St. Vincent expressed in missionary projects and in assisting the materially poor.

I would like to invite Fr. Mathew Kallammakal, visitor of the North Indian Province, to tell us what a Patrimony fund has meant to his province.

METHOD

An anonymous donor, over 10 years, will contribute a total of 5,000,000 USD. The CM is challenged to solicit an equal amount of donations, 5,000,000 USD. The ten years ends on December 31, 2015.

9 Provinces and vice-provinces have been selected based on need and lack of access to funds from other sources. A 10th fund will be established for the Superior General to benefit the members of the Vincentian Family of which he is director.

The funds established will be of various sizes and will remain under the administration of the Curia until such time as the province or vice-province has proven competency in managing the fund.

The distribution will be based on a spending rule. Each year the province or vice-province is allowed to receive 5% of the average calculated by adding together the year end value of the fund for each of the previous 5 years and dividing by 5. The “corpus” (total of donations and contributions received) of the fund must always remain. Only the earnings or increase in value may be distributed. In this way the fund helps the province or vice-province have the financial stability to be able to creatively respond to the needs of the mission and, at the same time, challenges the province or vice-province to humbly accept its limitations as the corpus is protected for future generations of confreres.

If we are successful in this first phase, a second 10 year period will begin, using the same strategy to build another fund of 10,000,000 USD. The beneficiaries of this fund’s distributions, using the same strategy of distribution as the first fund, will be determined by the Superior General and his Council. A major focus can be the creative fidelity to the Mission with an eye to huge projects, something like project “Dream,” that are beyond the scope of any particular province or vice-province.

NEED

About 2,000,000 USD has been donated or is pledged by the Curia, certain CM provinces, individual confreres or was received as legacies sent to the Curia in Rome.

The Curia, realizing that the international CM has already dedicated about 33.8 million USD to this type of solidarity in other “patrimony funds,” has directed the VSO to solicit funds outside of the CM in order to raise the remaining 3,000,000 USD.

Foundations and Funding Agencies fund concrete projects that have a specific time line of implementation. This Patrimony Fund Project is an endowment, not a specific, concrete project.

Individuals are attracted to endowments since their gift will continue after they are gone.

The VSO needs your permission and your help to establish contact with individuals whose heart has been touched by the charism of St. Vincent and who might want to help a province or vice-province become more financially capable of creative fidelity to the mission.

Can you direct VSO to confreres who are good at soliciting funds?

Can you direct VSO to people who have interest in supporting the Vincentian Charism?

Could VSO talk with you to discuss some possible strategies of soliciting funds for this project?

Could you partner with VSO in encouraging the members of your province or vice-province to consider the Patrimony Fund Project in their legacies?

THANK YOU!

Your attention has been greatly appreciated. May VSO be of service to you in the evangelization of the poor!

ADDENDA

VSO – Total Grants since inception by Type and Activity.

PROJECT ACTIVITY	PROJECT TYPE				GRAND TOTAL	%
	Administration	Candidates	Pastoral	Socio-Economic		
Construction	145,588.24	949,861.20	844,271.82	1,598,104.82	3,537,826.08	65.70
Equipment	35,000.00	207,661.00	35,550.00	120,518.66	398,729.66	7.41
Materials	8,750.00	96,613.69	39,180.00	98,981.62	243,525.31	4.52
Program	10,000.00	23,707.71	45,436.00	587,846.76	666,990.47	12.39
Scholarship	18,310.00	1,000.00		11,490.00	30,800.00	0.57
Vehicle	30,234.00	174,831.96	237,718.25	64,154.00	506,938.21	9.41
GRAND TOTAL	247,882.24	1,453,675.56	1,202,156.07	2,481,095.86	5,384,809.73	100.00
%	4.60	27.00	22.32	46.08	100.00	%