



# Vincentian Solidarity Office

## June 2013 Bulletin



### The Province of Nigeria: A Beneficiary of the Patrimony Fund Project

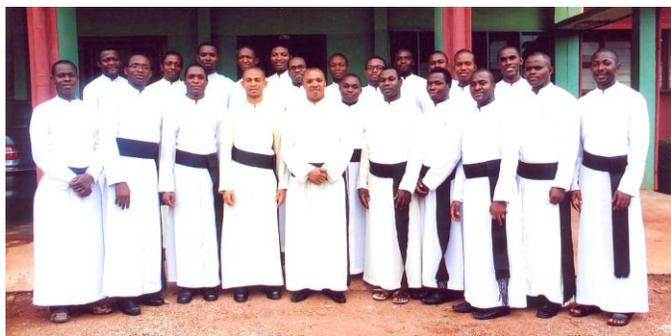


Nigeria is Africa's most populous country --and one of the world's poorest. Life expectancy at birth in Nigeria is only 52 years; 54% of the nation's people live on less than \$1.25 U.S. dollars per day. Poverty in Nigeria has been compounded by turbulent events since it gained independence as a nation in 1960, including a civil war, famine, and military coup. Social unrest is a constant threat arising from tensions among the nation's 250 different ethnic groups, and the often violent rift between its Muslims and Christians.

Nigeria is a land where St. Vincent would be very pleased to see his confreres laboring--and a place of great promise for our Congregation. Our missionaries first came to Nigeria in 1960 from Ireland. Today, the Province of Nigeria has 76 priests, 6 transitional deacons, and over 70 seminarians, and sends out missionaries to work in other countries. The pastoral contribution of the Province of Nigeria is expansive. Its members administrate 17 parishes and 21 (nursery through secondary)



schools; serve as chaplains in two prisons and at a university; help staff three diocesan seminaries; and operate a regional lay formation center and a spiritual retreat center. Our confreres work in 16 dioceses and 12 states in Nigeria, and bring the Gospel to deeply impoverished people across the country. St. Joseph's primary school in Oraifite serves as a good example.



*Vincentian seminarians and their director in Enugu*

St. Joseph's serves 55 hearing-impaired children among its 175 students. Fr. Callistus Ajaero, C.M. (seen teaching students in the picture) directs the school and its 12 teachers and 3 support staff. Because of this "inclusive" education, many disadvantaged Nigerians who might otherwise be destitute, are able to live independent lives.



The Province of Nigeria is growing rapidly. This is good news because the people of Nigeria and other places so need the service of our Nigerian confreres. But this is also a challenge. Because it serves the very poor, the Province of Nigeria struggles financially to support its works and members. For these reasons, the Province has been made a beneficiary of the Patrimony Fund Project, and we ask for your help in meeting its challenge grant!

Contribute: [Donate](#)

Learn more about the Patrimony Fund Project: [VEC](#)

Contact us: [VSO](#)

([www.cmglobal.org/patrimony-en](http://www.cmglobal.org/patrimony-en))

## Equipping a Multipurpose Center in Kassai

Our confreres working in the Mission of the Central African Republic (C.A.R.)—under the Regional Mission of Cameroon—similarly confront challenging socioeconomic conditions in their work. Life expectancy at birth in C.A.R. is only 49 years; the mean years of schooling for adults is 3.5. Gender inequality is profound in C.A.R.: women and children often fall victim to forced labor and trafficking.



*New beds and sewing machines for the center*

Our confreres in C.A.R. have responded to this situation by constructing the St. Vincent de Paul Spiritual Center in Kassai. The center is a three-building complex with multiple purposes: hosting spiritual retreats and catechetical programs; housing orphans and unwed mothers; and providing vocational training for women in sewing, hairdressing and other trades to help them start their own businesses.

The Mission of C.A.R. constructed the St. Vincent de Paul Spiritual Center with funding from parishes and the Associations of the Miraculous Medal in C.A.R. and France. The Mission then requested the assistance of the VSO in equipping and furnishing the center. The VSO obtained grants from the Raskob Foundation, Kirche in Not, and the Archdiocese of Cologne, which it matched with monies from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund, to purchase beds and linens, sewing machines, kitchen equipment, a generator, and furnishings for the dining room, meeting rooms, chapel and offices in the center.

### Basic Needs for the New Mission in Biro

Recently our Congregation established a new international mission in Benin, in western Sub-Saharan Africa. The Mission is centered in the town of Biro, where two confreres from the Province of Poland have assumed responsibility for St. John the Baptist Parish. The parish serves 18 Christian communities dispersed across an area with a radius of 25 kilometers.

Many basic needs confronted our confreres when they arrived at the parish. Most pressing were a means of transportation so they could make pastoral visits to the 18 communities, and urgent repairs to their dilapidated, and nearly uninhabitable residence.



*Renovations underway at the mission residence*

The Mission obtained a micro-project grant from the VSO to meet these needs which were essential for the work of its confreres. The grant covered the cost of purchasing a motorcycle and the building materials to repair the walls, toilet blocks, roof, and electrical facilities of the Mission residence.

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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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