



Vincentian Solidarity Office

June 2014 Bulletin



The Province of Hungary: A Beneficiary of the Patrimony Fund Project



Hungary faces many lingering challenges after enduring 40 years of rule by a Soviet backed, communist regime. A troubled transition from a centrally-planned, to a market-based economy hampers its efforts to build a just, democratic, and civil society. Hungary had adopted austerity measures *before* the 2008

global recession, compounding its poverty and economic inequality.



The experience of the Catholic Church in Hungary has mirrored the nation's socioeconomic struggle. The Church was severely oppressed under communist rule from 1950 to 1989. International religious congregations—like our own—suffered tremendously. Some Hungarian confreres were imprisoned. Others joined dioceses to be able to continue to work as clergy, or became manual laborers. Although officially disbanded by the government, and monitored by police, many confreres continued to associate and support each other in faith.



Confreres of the Hungarian Province

When the province was re-established in 1990, only a few of the original Hungarian confreres were still alive. The pressing need to rebuild the “apostolic society” paralleled the need to rebuild the broader Hungarian society. Confreres from other provinces volunteered as missionaries in Hungary. The province worked to regain its properties that had been confiscated by the government.

The product of these efforts is a small, but remarkably spirited and dedicated group of confreres who constitute the Hungarian Province

today. These ten, mostly young priests, vigorously embrace the call to rebuild Catholicism in Hungary, and promulgate Gospel justice and concern for the poor among its populace. In doing so, they focus their work on the youth, looking toward the future, such as administrating the Szent László Secondary School in Szob (the first Catholic school in Hungary to include students with disabilities in regular classrooms), operating hostels for university students in Piliscsaba where they also serve as university chaplains, and hosting youth retreats in Budapest. Other ministries include parish work, pastoral guidance to organizations of the Vincentian Family, and serving as chaplains for the ill and destitute. Because of the promise of its works and future growth, the Province of Hungary will benefit greatly from its participation in the Patrimony Fund Project.



An assembly at Szent László School

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A School in Kimbanseke

Good schooling is a privilege, rather than a basic human right, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Impoverished families have few education options. These families are numerous in the Kimbanseke district of Kinshasa. Many are refugees from famine. Because of the lack of schooling, many of their children roam the streets and are recruited into military factions and criminal activities.

In response to this situation, our Province of the Congo began to construct a kindergarten through secondary school in Kimbanseke, with monies contributed by the Belgium Region. These funds financed the construction of the foundation and superstructure of the building's three wings, and its toilet block. The province then turned to the VSO for funding assistance to complete the school's construction (including plastering, installation of doors and windows, installation of the electrical utilities, ceilings and flooring, and painting), and to purchase its furnishings.



The newly completed Saint Vincent de Paul School

The VSO obtained a grant from a private foundation in Europe, and applied matching funds from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund, to finance the completion of the school and furnish it. St. Vincent de Paul School currently provides over 1,000 mostly impoverished children with a high quality education.

Renovations in Antananarivo

The Maison Saint Vincent in Antananarivo serves as a residence and apostolic center for missionaries of the Province of Madagascar. Confreres in the house oversee a number of works, including the Akamasoa

Association development project, a mission chapel, and a nearby vocational training center. Recently the province decided to also use the house to accommodate elderly and infirm confreres. Toward this end, the province needed to reconfigure the house by moving the laundry outside, adding two bathrooms and enlarging one of the rooms for a wheelchair.



The new laundry at the Maison Saint Vincent

The Province sought assistance of the VSO. The VSO responded with a micro-project grant for the laundry and with donations and a match to finish the project.

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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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