



Vincentian Solidarity Office

October 2013 Bulletin



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



Chile is a land of great contrasts. The nation's terrain traverses 4,300 kilometers from north to south along the western coast of South America, but only averages 175 kilometers in width. Chile's climate varies from the extremely dry Atacama Desert in its north to the snowy, mountainous Patagonia region in its south. Contrasts are also pronounced in the socioeconomic makeup of Chile.

The nation has one of the most prosperous economies in South America. The distribution of wealth, however, is grossly uneven among its people.

Prosperity in Chile excludes the Mapuche--the country's largest indigenous group who live very different lives from the majority of the populace. The Mapuche experience extreme poverty. Assimilation efforts have robbed

them of their cultural identity and way of life.

Confiscation of their land

by the state and private interests has dispersed the Mapuche. Today the Mapuche live in remote mountain villages and in crowded urban barrios. Some Mapuche have organized to repossess their native lands, at times adopting extreme strategies such as hunger strikes and violence.



The Collipulli Mission among the Mapuche

major seminarians of our Chilean Province carry on the charism of St. Vincent and attend to the spiritual and material needs of the poor. Their works include urban parishes in Santiago and Valparaíso, rural parishes heavily populated by the Mapuche in the Araucanía region to the south, and the international mission in Punta Arenas far south in Patagonia. Our Chilean confreres evangelize peoples in marginalized and pastorally neglected places. Some strive to bring the justice and love of the Gospel amidst the violence that has arisen alongside the struggle of the Mapuche. Our Chilean confreres also closely collaborate with the Vincentian Family. This was especially evident in their response to the devastating earthquake and tsunami that struck the central coast of Chile in February of 2010. Our confreres coordinated with the Daughters of Charity and Vincentian laity to bring relief to many afflicted residents. Because of its limited financial resources, our Chilean Province has been designated as a beneficiary of the Patrimony Fund Project.



A confrere in the Punta Arenas Mission

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(www.cmglobal.org/patrimony-en)

A Hostel for Girls in Remalli

In 2010 our South Indian Province established a community health care program to serve 29 remote villages in Andhra Pradesh State. A key objective of the program is to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS, which threatens to become epidemic in the region. In launching the program, the Province identified an urgent need for housing, protection, and schooling among the village children whose parents have either died from AIDS or are too ill from the disease to care for them. These children have been suffering abandonment, abuse, lack of schooling, and enslavement in bonded labor and sex trafficking.



The newly constructed hostel for girls

In response to this situation, the Province decided to construct and operate hostels for the children where they can receive proper care and schooling. The Province started with a hostel for girls in Remalli Village, and sought the assistance of the VSO for the project. The VSO obtained a grant from a private European foundation and applied matching monies from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund. These funds, along with the contribution from the Province, financed the construction of the girls' hostel. The hostel can house up to 100 girls, ages 4-14. The VSO and South Indian Province are currently fundraising to construct a similar hostel nearby for boys.

A Truck in Bebalem

The Conference of Visitors of Africa and Madagascar of the Congregation of the Mission established a new joint mission in Chad in 2011. Chad is an impoverished nation located in central Africa. Three confreres from Cameroon, Madagascar, and Nigeria staff the mission. Their main work is the Paroisse St. Jean-Baptiste, centered in the town of Bebalem. The parish consists of 41 villages. Most are located 10 to 30 kilometers away from the parish center; the

furthest is located 42 kilometers away. Our confreres only had motorcycles to reach the villages. This limited what they could carry, and impeded their ability to bring pastoral services to the villages in rainy seasons when the roads become muddy.



The Toyota Hilux truck purchased by the mission

Our confreres in Chad requested the help of the VSO to find funding for an appropriate motor vehicle for the mission. The VSO obtained a grant from Kirche in Not and contributions from private donors in the United States, which it matched with monies from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund, to enable the mission to purchase a new Toyota Hilux pickup truck with a double cab. The truck ably carries up to 6 passengers, supplies, and equipment on the region's rough roads.

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. Miles Heinen, C.M., Executive Director:
Telephone: +1 215-713-2432
E-mail: cmvso@yahoo.com

Scott Fina, Associate Director:
Telephone: +1 215-713-2433
E-mail: scottfina@gmail.com

Teresa Niedda, Associate Director:
Telephone: +1 215-713-3983
E-mail: tniedda@cmphlsvs.org

Fax: +1 215-843-9361

Our websites: www.cmglobal.org/vso
www.cmglobal.org/patrimony-en/