



Vincentian Solidarity Office

December 2006 Bulletin

Comments from the VSO Administrator

Dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with us!

In November of 2006 the VSO funded two VSF Micro-Project Grant Applications with monies from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF). The VSO awarded VSF micro-project grants to the Province of Southern India to furnish its newly constructed St. Vincent's Seminary for pre-university seminarians in Belagola in Karnataka State, and the Tanzania Mission of the Province of Southern India to furnish the fourth phase of De Paul Seminary for major seminarians in Morogoro. Through the generosity of confreres contributing to the VSF, the seminaries were outfitted with such items as: beds; cupboards; desks; bookshelves; chapel altars, pews, benches, and kneelers; lounge chairs; library tables and chairs; computers and computer tables; and curtains.

Scripture readings at Liturgy during Advent remind me of the special place the poor have in the heart of the coming Messiah, who "shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted" (Isaiah 11: 4). In this season I am especially grateful for confreres who in their service or generosity, live in solidarity with the poor--banding their waist with justice and belting their hips with faithfulness.

Fraternally in St. Vincent,

Brother Peter A. Campbell, C.M.

A Hostel Farm in Natovi

Fiji is a nation of many islands and many challenges. In its short history since gaining independence in 1970, Fiji has experienced 3 coups--the most recent in 2000. Economic inequality among Fijians is extreme. A recent study indicated that the poorest 20% of Fijian households receive 5% of the national income, while the richest 10% of households receive 35% of

national income. Most of Fiji's poor live in rural areas, where education and other social services are often lacking.

A key work of the Fiji Mission of the Australian Province that serves the rural poor in Fiji is St. Vincent's College Hostel. The hostel is sponsored by St. John the Apostle Parish. The hostel and parish are located in the eastern coastal area of Natovi on Fiji's largest island of Viti Levu. Approximately 250 girls and boys, ages 6 to 18, board at St. Vincent's College Hostel so they may attend school. The parents of the children are subsistence farmers who can only afford to pay nominal fees for their children to live at the hostel. As a consequence, the hostel has faced financial problems and struggled to meet its costs. Earlier this year our Fijian confreres decided to establish a farm at the hostel with two purposes: to provide food for the children, and to sell produce at local markets to generate income to make the hostel financially self-sufficient.



The first fruits of the hostel farm in Natovi

St. John the Apostle Parish donated several hectares of land to the hostel for the farm. The hostel, however, needed money to rent equipment to clear and plow the land, purchase seedlings and fertilizer, and build fencing to protect the cultivated fields. The Fiji Mission obtained a VSF micro-project grant for these needs. Recently the Fiji Mission reported that St. Vincent's College Hostel is harvesting substantial crops of watermelon, cucumbers, tomatoes, and

capsicum from the farm to feed its children and sell at market. The hostel will also soon be harvesting pawpaw--a crop that especially promises to produce revenue. The farming is being undertaken by families of hostel children to provide them with a way to pay the hostel fees. Our confreres are confident that the farm will provide much needed funding for the hostel.

Computer Equipment in Slovakia

In 2000 the confreres of the Province of Slovakia established a Popular Mission Team. Since that time its popular missions have met with great success. The Popular Mission Team now conducts numerous popular missions in parishes across Slovakia and for Slovakian communities in the Ukraine and Romania.



A Slovakian confrere uses a computer projection during a popular mission program

In conducting popular missions, the Slovakian confreres learned that catechetical and spiritual programs can be greatly enhanced by using graphic presentations and pamphlets. These media are especially attractive for youth. The Popular Mission Team could not afford to purchase the computer equipment needed to develop these presentations and documents. The Slovak Province then applied for, and received a VSF micro-project grant to purchase a notebook computer, printer, scanner, multi-function projector, and screen for its Popular Mission Team. The team now uses computer-enhanced presentations and documents during its popular missions.

A Jeep in Pune

Some of the theology students for the Provinces of Southern and Northern India reside at Vincentian Vidya Sadan (Vincentian Theology Study House) in Pune in Maharashtra State, in southern India. The

seminarians study at the nearby Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion. The seminarians and their rector are able to walk the short distance from their residence to the Pontifical Institute, but have needed a vehicle to carry out their parish ministry and pastoral work at a prison, and to travel to town to purchase supplies or obtain medical services. The Province of Southern India applied to the VSO for assistance in purchasing a vehicle for the seminary. The VSO was able to obtain a grant from the Hackett Foundation that was matched with monies from the VSF, to purchase a new Mahindra Maxx Festara Jeep for Vincentian Vidya Sadan.



Seminarians and rector in front of the new jeep in Pune

Vincentian Solidarity Office
500 East Cheltenham Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19144
United States of America

Our goal: To assist the poorer provinces, vice-provinces, missions, and visitors' conferences of the Congregation of the Mission with obtaining funds for their works and needs.

How to contact us:

Bro. Peter A. Campbell, C.M., Administrator:

Telephone: +1 215-843-9018

E-mail: pcampbell@cmphlsvs.org

Scott Fina, Ph.D., Assistant Administrator:

Telephone: +1 215-848-1985 ext. 248

E-mail: sfina@cmphlsvs.org

Fax: +1 215-843-9361

Our website: www.famvin.org/vso