



Vincentian Solidarity Office

December 2009 Bulletin

Comments from the Executive Director

Dear Confreres,

May we prepare the way of the Lord!

Since October the VSO has awarded two more VSF Micro-Project Grants: one to the Vice-Province of Mozambique for schooling and social assistance for orphans through the Born Again for Hope Center in Chinhacanine; the other to the Tanzanian Mission of the South Indian Province for the construction of a water storage tank for DePaul Seminary in Morogoro. I am deeply grateful to the confreres whose contributions to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF) that make these micro-project grants possible!

This Advent, Luke's Gospel offers us tangible guidance on preparing the way of the Lord: "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise" (Lk 3:11). I find these words heartening as the VSO faces several large and pressing projects. I have previously mentioned the Patrimony Fund Project which will endow some of our needier provinces and vice-provinces. The VSO has also been asked to help raise 'seed' monies used to launch the microfinance project of the Vincentian Family in Haiti. The project will honor the 350th anniversary of the deaths of St. Vincent and St. Louise. Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. Its economy is in ruins. Micro-lending offers a promising avenue for systemic change to assist the poorest of Haitians to gain financial security and generate economic activity. The seed monies, in part, will support a project development office in Haiti. The office will foster and assess projects that are to receive micro-loans from members of the Vincentian Family and the 'Haitian Diaspora'.

Fortunately Ms. Teresa Niedda has joined the VSO as our second Associate Director. Teresa comes with substantial experience and has been connected to our Congregation for many years. We welcome Teresa's help as the responsibilities of the VSO grow. Even

with the addition of Teresa, the VSO will need the ongoing assistance of confreres to meet its expanding challenges. Confreres have provided the VSO with helpful contact information of potential contributors to projects benefitting our provinces and vice-provinces in need. Confreres have also solicited contributions on behalf of the VSO in support of projects. This bulletin describes three projects where confreres collaborated with the VSO in fundraising. I ask your prayers that the VSO can continue to help our confreres bring the gospel to the poor!

Fraternally in St. Vincent,

Father Miles Heinen, C.M.

Seminary Equipment in Matola & Maputo

Seminarians of the Vice-Province of Mozambique undertake studies at two formation houses: the Casa de Formación Ghébre Michael in Matola (housing philosophy and pre-philosophy students), and the Teologado Regis Clet in Maputo (housing theology students). The number of seminarians is growing.



Seminarians use their new computers in Mozambique

The formation houses were in need of equipment, especially computers and photocopiers to assist the seminarians with their studies. Father Sylvester Peterka, C.M. included the needs of the seminarians of the Vice-Province of Mozambique in his annual

African Appeal for Hope. The VSO matched monies from Father Sylvester's appeal with funds from the VSF to enable the Vice-Province of Mozambique to purchase 5 computers, 3 photocopiers, a printer, and 29 fans for the seminarians at the Casa de Formación Ghébre Michael and Teologado Regis Clet.

New Rooms for a School in Rwisabi

The Burundi Mission of the Province of Colombia administers the Parish of Rwisabi, the poorest parish in the Diocese of Ngozi. Residents in the parish suffer extreme poverty. Their poverty is largely a consequence of the murderous war in the region that only recently ended in 2003. There is great need to rebuild basic services and infrastructure in the aftermath of the violence. Among the most urgent is the need for education—especially secondary schooling which is unavailable for many poor children. In response, the confreres serving in Burundi have established a secondary school (the Lyceo San Vicente de Paul) in Rwisabi. They are building and expanding the school in stages. Students and their families are assisting with its construction.



Students and their families help construct the school

The confreres in Burundi have been seeking assistance to fund the new school. Bishop Alfonso Cabezas, C.M. solicited enough donations from an appeal to individuals in the United States--to be matched by the VSO with monies from the VSF-- to finance the construction of the teachers' and rector's room in the new school.

A Lab & Pedagogy Center in Jimma

Confreres of the Province of Ethiopia administrate SS. Peter and Paul School in Jimma. The school serves 870 elementary and secondary students, and is staffed

by 46 teachers. The school was in need of a laboratory and pedagogical center to improve the learning of its students and enhance the instruction by its teachers.



The new lab and pedagogical center at SS. Peter and Paul School

Father Aidan Rooney, C.M. was familiar with SS. Peter and Paul School from his work with lay Vincentian missionaries in Ethiopia, and offered to help. Father Aidan secured a contribution from a generous private donor, that the VSO matched with monies from the VSF, to finance the construction of the laboratory and pedagogical center at the school.

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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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