



Vincentian Solidarity Office

June 2005 Bulletin

Comments from the VSO Administrator

Dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with us!

I am happy to report that the work of the VSO progresses favorably. Since the establishment of our office in June of 2002, thirteen projects accepted for VSO service have been fully funded. These projects geographically span the globe, situated in nine countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. The projects vary widely in purpose, including: the construction and/or furnishing of seminary houses, pastoral centers, and a new church; the establishment of a computer training center for young adults; equipment and operating support for a school for deaf children; purchase of a vehicle for pastoral work; and academic support for a confrere preparing to work in a mission seminary. This bulletin describes a few of these projects in greater detail. A complete list and description of all fully funded projects will soon be available on the VSO website (www.famvin.org/vso).

Thanks to the generous response to the Superior General's appeal for the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF), the VSO is initiating a micro-projects grant program. A letter with a copy of the VSF Micro-Project Grant Application Form and instructions on how to apply for these grants has been sent to those who received monies from the Mission Fund Distribution of the General Curia in 2005. This information will also soon be available on the VSO website. Distribution of micro-project grants will occur four times a year, beginning in September of 2005.

I am edified by the wonderful works of confreres serving the poor in less industrialized countries.

Fraternally in St. Vincent,

Brother Peter A. Campbell, C.M.

A New Church in Ambo Town

This spring the parishioners of St. Justin de Jacobis Parish in Ambo Town, Ethiopia have a new place to worship: in their newly constructed church! Ambo Town (Hägere Hiywet) is a city of 20,000 residents in the West Shoa Province of central Ethiopia. St. Justin de Jacobis Parish was only recently established and is the first Roman Catholic Parish in the town. The parish is an outgrowth of the Ethiopian Province mission house and minor seminary in Ambo Town.

Poor residents in the area around Ambo Town have long been attracted to the spirituality and charitable work of the Ethiopian confreres. Parishioners used the minor seminary chapel for liturgies and other parish functions. Then the Ethiopian Province applied to the VSO for assistance in raising funds for a new church.

With a contribution from the Loyola Foundation and matching funds from the VSF, the VSO was able to finance the construction of the new church. Its design is in the shape of a cross. The left side of the nave of the church serves as the sacristy while the right side is used as meeting space for parish groups and catecheses. Parishioners have generously provided the church furnishings.



St. Justin de Jacobis Church, Ambo Town

The Ethiopian confreres are confident that the parish will continue to grow as news of the beautiful church and shrine to St. Justin de Jacobis spreads among the inhabitants of Ambo Town and its surrounding area.

Support for Deaf Students in Oraifite

The Vice-Province of Nigeria has a number of works serving the poor. One is its program for deaf children at St. Joseph's Primary School in the rural town of Oraifite, Anambra State, in southern Nigeria. The school is administered by its principal, Rev. Calistus Ajaero, C.M. Thirty-six deaf children live in a hostel on-site at the school. Monies from their modest tuition fall far short of the expenses incurred in running their program. Teachers certified to work with hearing-impaired students are few in number and command competitive salaries in Nigeria. Recently the school suffered hardship when its water pump failed. The pump provides the school, hostel and two nearby villages with potable water from a filtrated water system. The water system and pump depend on a generator powered by diesel fuel. Prices for diesel fuel continue to skyrocket in Nigeria.



Rev. Calistus Ajaero, C.M. and St. Joseph's students

The Vice-Province of Nigeria applied for VSO service in seeking financial support for the program for deaf students at St. Joseph's School. The VSO secured enough financing from private donors, matched by monies from the VSF, to purchase a new water pump, pay the annual salary of four teachers certified to teach hearing-impaired children, and cover the cost of the diesel fuel needed to operate the school's generator for one year.

Restorations in Havana

Since 1863 members of the Congregation of the Mission have been evangelizing the people of Cuba and promoting devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. One of the original Vincentian houses in Cuba is the residence attached to Our Lady of Mercy Shrine in Havana. The residence accommodates confreres working in the very popular shrine, the Visitor and

Provincial Treasurer of the Province of Cuba, and seminarians preparing for the priesthood and brotherhood. Time and the elements have taken their toll on the residence. Termites and rain water seriously damaged the roof over the rooms of the seminarians in the building. As a consequence this part of the building became uninhabitable.



Very Rev. Justo Moro González, C.M. (Visitor) and seminarians at Our Lady of Mercy Shrine in Havana

The Province of Cuba applied for VSO service in seeking the funds it needed to make repairs to part of the residence in Havana. The VSO was happy to assist and obtained funding from private donors, matched with monies from the VSF, to complete the restoration of six bedrooms of the building.

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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.

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