



# Vincentian Solidarity Office

## June 2008 Bulletin

### Comments from the Director

Dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with us!

The VSO awarded seven VSF Micro-Project Grants with monies from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF) since I last wrote to you. These included a VSF Micro-Project Grant for: (1) the International Mission in the Solomon Islands to purchase a boat and outboard motor for pastoral work at Good Shepherd Catholic Parish in Tenaru, Solomon Islands; (2) the Province of St. Justin de Jacobis to purchase a solar light and freezer system for the community house at the new Mission in Gullige, Eritrea; (3) the Province of Central America to purchase beds and a table for the Spiritual Retreat House “La Milagrosa” in Chimaltenango, Guatemala; (4) the Region of Cameroon (Province of Paris) to purchase furniture for the Regional House in Douala, Cameroon; (5) the Region of Vietnam (Province of Paris) to purchase computer equipment for the formation house for postulants in Tuc Trung, Vietnam; (6) the Province of Puerto Rico to repair and purchase pews for the new church at the Parroquia San José Obrero in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; and (7) the Region of Rwanda-Burundi (Province of Colombia) to fund the vocation pastoral for one year in Rwanda.

Through the generosity of confreres contributing to the VSF, the VSO has now awarded a total of 50 VSF Micro-Project Grants. These grants have financed micro-projects around the world for a variety of expenses, including equipment, furnishings, transportation means, construction and repairs, water utilities, and operating expenses for programs. The micro-projects have involved community houses, seminaries, parishes, mission stations, retreat houses, and centers for the elderly and children.

Fraternally in St. Vincent,

Brother Peter A. Campbell, C.M.

### Solar Power for Hostels in North India

The North Indian Province operates 21 school hostels at its mission stations in India: 18 in Orissa State and 3 in Manipur State. The hostels serve over 1,800 children from poor, tribal families living in remote villages lacking schools. The hostels provide the children with housing, food, and tutoring for 10 months during the year while they attend schools on or near the mission station compounds. Without the hostels the children could not obtain an education.

All of the hostels are located in mountainous regions where electrical power is unreliable. Several hostels had no access to electrical power. Others experienced electricity shortages from power failures by the public utilities in the regions of the mission stations. The lack of electricity prevented the children in the hostels from studying in the evening hours because they had no lighting. The lack of electricity also prohibited the use of fans in the hostels to comfort the children in the oppressive heat of the warm seasons.



*A technician installs the various components of a solar inverter power unit at a hostel in North India*

To address this situation the North Indian Province decided to provide all of its hostels with backup (and in some cases, basic) electrical power. The province determined that the best way to provide electricity to the hostels was to use inverter power units that

convert sunlight into electricity. The units include solar panels, inverter machines, and batteries for storing electricity. The units can power several lights and ceiling fans for up to 5 hours per day – enough to keep the children in the hostels cool and allow them to study during nighttime hours. The units are also cheaper to operate, quieter, easier to maintain, and environmentally friendlier than generators.

The North Indian Province requested the assistance of the VSO to acquire the solar inverter power units. The VSO obtained a grant from Kindermissionswerk, which it matched with monies from the VSF, to purchase and install solar inverter power units at all of the school hostels of the North Indian Province.

### **Computers for Seminarians in Ecuador**

The formation program of the Province of Ecuador has been growing. By next September the province's main formation house – St. Vincent de Paul Seminary in Quito – will have 4 theology students, 8 philosophy students, and 10 postulants. The seminarians at St. Vincent de Paul Seminary had been sharing a single computer. This has greatly impeded their studies. The Province of Ecuador received a VSF Micro-Micro-Project Grant from the VSO to purchase 6 computers with monitors, 6 computer tables, a printer, and a computer projector for its seminarians.



*Ecuadorian seminarians with their new computers*

### **A Grotto for Parishioners in South India**

The South Indian Province began serving the poor Catholic community of Mariapura in Karnataka State in India in 2002. Mariapura means “House of Mary” in the local dialect. Devotion to Mary has been

central to the faith of the Catholic community of Mariapura which became St. Mary's Parish in 2005. Parishioners are especially drawn to the Miraculous Medal Novena. Novenas at the parish have also been attracting people from surrounding communities.



*The new Miraculous Medal Grotto in Mariapura*

To accommodate the growing attendance at the novenas, St. Mary's Parish hoped to construct a grotto shrine for Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. The South Indian Province applied to the VSO for a VSF Micro-Project Grant to purchase the building materials and statutes for the grotto shrine. St. Mary's Parish in Mariapura now has the first and only shrine for the Miraculous Medal in Karnataka State.

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

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