



Vincentian Solidarity Office

October 2005 Bulletin

Comments from the VSO Administrator

Dear Confreres:

May the grace of Our Lord be always with us!

This month I am happy to announce the recipients of the first Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF) micro-project grants. The Province of Southern India is receiving a micro-project grant to finance urgent repairs to St. Joseph's Church, a new mission for the province serving poor parishioners in Koithurkonam in the State of Kerala. The South Indian Province's Mission in Tanzania has been awarded a micro-project grant to furnish the newly built rooms for the rector, assistant rector, 7 students and a guest at De Paul Seminary in Morogoro. The seminary is a residence for students studying philosophy and theology. I am thankful for the generous response of individual confreres, community houses, and provinces to the Superior General's October Mission Appeal that has provided monies for the VSF to finance such worthy micro-projects.

These last few weeks I, like many people, have followed the horrific events surrounding Hurricane Katrina's impact on Gulf Coast cities and towns in the United States. Over a thousand have died. Thousands more have lost their homes and means of employment. Most painful to watch were the tens of thousands being left behind to suffer thirst, hunger, illnesses, violence and despair. I am haunted by the fact that the majority of those who were neglected in this crisis were the poorest, most disabled, and least empowered residents. I realize that some confreres around the world often struggle with such tragic and unjust realities in their ministries. I am deeply humbled to be connected—through the modest efforts of the VSO—with their works that put the most marginalized of God's people first.

Fraternally in St. Vincent,

Brother Peter A. Campbell, C.M.

New Computers in Port-au-Prince

The Republic of Haiti suffers extensive, abject poverty (estimated at 80% of the population) and continuing political turmoil. But despite their long suffering, Haitians remain a faithful people: 80% practice Roman Catholicism.

The Province of Puerto Rico started a mission in Haiti in 1986. The mission sprouted an indigenous formation program when it established a candidacy program at the Mission House in Port-au-Prince in 2000. The candidates undergo intensive Vincentian and spiritual formation. They also pursue academic studies at the nearby St. Francis de Sales Institute of Philosophy in Port-au-Prince.

The candidates' studies were impeded by a lack of a furnished study room and computers. Many classes at the St. Francis de Sales Institute of Philosophy require assignments to be submitted electronically. The Mission of Haiti was unable to purchase the furniture and computers it needed for its candidates because of its many competing needs.



Candidates working on new computers in Port-au-Prince

The mission turned to the VSO for help in raising funding for computers and furniture to outfit a new study room for its candidates in the Mission House.

The VSO was able to secure a grant from the Hackett Foundation to finance the purchase of 2 computers and 5 desks and chairs for the candidates.

A Vehicle for Eritrea

In 2001 the Vice-Province of St. Justin de Jacobis established Abba Picard's Mission House in Shariki, Eritrea. The new mission house is located in a mountainous region that has crude roads and lacks electricity. The priests assigned to the mission house administer 4 parishes and provide parish missions to churches in 34 villages. The parishes and churches range from 3 to 26 kilometers in distance from the mission house. The priests at Abba Picard's Mission House lacked a vehicle and traveled on foot and by very limited public transportation to reach the parishes and churches. The lack of adequate transportation severely hampered their ministry to the faithful and poor in the region.

The vice-province applied for assistance in obtaining a vehicle for the priests at Abba Picard's Mission House with the VSO. The VSO was able to secure funding from the Missionary Vehicle Association, Inc. (MIVA) Slovenia, which was matched with monies from the VSF, to enable the vice-province to purchase a new Toyota Pickup Truck for the mission house.



Abba Ghebremeskel Fesseha, C.M., Local Superior of Abba Picard's Mission House, blessing the new vehicle

God's Gift in Kiev

The Vice-Province of SS. Cyril and Methodius was only recently erected in 2001. One of the biggest challenges for the new vice-province was to construct a central community house. The house would be

called "God's Gift," located in Kiev in the Ukraine, and have several functions. It would be a meeting place for members of the vice-province who serve in vast areas in the Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. It would accommodate seminarians and their directors. It would have a chapel to be erected as a canonical Roman Catholic Church in Kiev. And it would have a parish/social hall to facilitate outreach to the poor.



God's Gift nearing completion in Kiev

The VSO assisted in raising the funding needed to complete the construction of God's Gift. The VSO was able to match monies granted to the project by the Office to Aid the Catholic Church in Central and Eastern Europe of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops with funds from the VSF.

Vincentian Solidarity Office

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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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