



Vincentian Solidarity Office

December 2007 Bulletin

Comments from the Director

Dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with us!

Since I last wrote to you, the VSO financed three more VSF Micro-Project Grants: one to the Vice-Province of Mozambique for the second phase of renovations to the multipurpose hall at the Mission of St. Jerome in Magude; a second to the Kenyan Regional Mission of the Midwest Province of the United States to finish the interior work of a newly constructed hall at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Kamulu; and a third to the Vice-Province of Costa Rica to purchase equipment and supplies for the formation of missionary disciples at the Parroquia Santiago Apóstol in Talamanca. To date, the VSO has awarded a total of 41 VSF Micro-Project Grants – all made possible by the generosity of confreres contributing to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF).

This month the VSO completes its fifth year of funding projects in our poorer provinces, vice-provinces and missions. Over these five years the VSO accepted 88 projects. Of this total number, 80 have been fully funded and 5 have been partially funded. I am grateful for this productivity. But I also know that the success of the office derives from God's grace and the remarkable work of confreres in developing regions of the world who bring very worthy projects to the VSO.

The readings at Liturgy in December offer great hope, especially for confreres serving in impoverished and turbulent places. The Scripture imagery depicts a new order that turns an unjust and violent world upside down, where swords are beaten into plowshares, the wolf is a guest of the lamb, the lame leap like a stag, and a virgin bears a son. This Advent let us pray for God's new order to arrive – and for each other.

Fraternally in St. Vincent,

Brother Peter A. Campbell, C.M.

Mobilizing the Faith of Youth in Ecuador

The Province of Ecuador recently adopted a vocation plan to promote more applicants to the priesthood and brotherhood. The plan recognizes that the youth of Ecuador are restless and questioning. Young Ecuadorians are dismayed by the widespread injustice in their country, where nearly 40% of the population lives in poverty. Young Ecuadorians are also spiritually thirsty and seeking more meaningful lives. Ecuadorian youth are attracted to faith practice that is culturally and socially relevant. The vocation plan of the Province of Ecuador targets the faith preferences of youth. The plan calls confreres to support spiritual growth of young people in the context of their daily lives, social circles, and desire for a better society.



Father Luis Enrique García, C.M. with a group of aspirants and the new Toyota Hilux 4x4 pickup truck

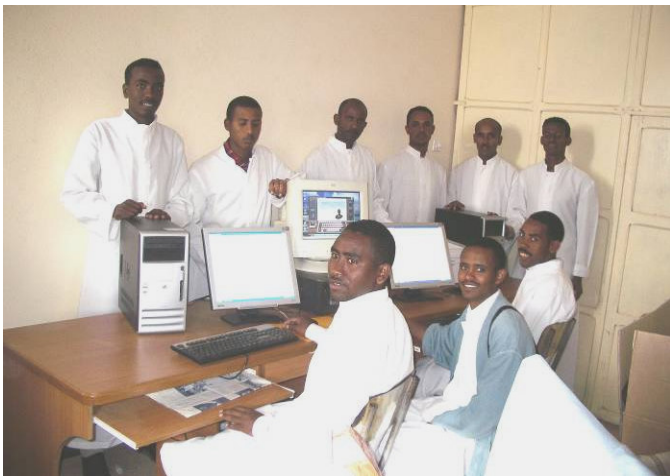
Connecting with young people and encouraging their faith are central to the work of Father Luis Enrique García, C.M. Father Luis serves as the Promoter of Vocations for the Province of Ecuador and the National Advisor of the Vincentian Marian Youth (JMV) for the country of Ecuador. Father Luis's apostolate requires him to travel throughout the country to pastor numerous groups of the JMV. (JMV membership in Ecuador totals 4,500.) Father Luis also facilitates spiritual and social gatherings of

groups of aspirants to the Congregation of the Mission in several provinces of Ecuador. Father Luis's work with the JMV and the aspirants requires him to travel to both urban and rural places. Public transportation is unavailable for many of his rural destinations. For some time Father Luis was impeded in his ministry by a lack of a vehicle.

The Province of Ecuador requested the assistance of the VSO to help Father Luis obtain a vehicle able to traverse the rough roads leading to most rural places in Ecuador. The VSO matched a grant from Cooperación Vicenciana para el Desarrollo – Acción Misionera Vicenciana de España (COVIDE-AMVE) with monies from the VSF to finance the purchase of a new Toyota Hilux 4x4 pickup truck, now used by Father Luis in his ministry to the JMV and aspirants.

Computers for Seminarians in Eritrea

The theology and philosophy students in the religious formation program of the Province of St. Justin de Jacobis live in 2 houses in Eritrea: Mary Immaculate Seminary in Ambagagliano, and a new formation house in Adi-Shiel. All of the seminarians take their academic courses at the nearby Asmara Catholic Theological Institute – Abune Kessatie Berhane. The seminarians were challenged by a lack of computer equipment needed to complete the rigorous requirements of their classes at the institute. The Province of St. Justin de Jacobis applied for and obtained a VSF Micro-Project Grant to outfit the two formation houses with computers and printers to be used by the theology and philosophy students in completing the assignments of their courses.



Seminarians of the Province of St. Justin de Jacobis with the newly purchased computer equipment

Support for Pastoral Agents in El Salvador

Recently confreres of the Province of Central America began working at a new parish in El Salvador: the Parroquia San Antonio de Padua in Nueva Concepción, Chalatenango. The parish comprises 29 dispersed communities. Many of the communities lacked pastoral services for years. Most suffer extensive poverty and social problems. The confreres serving the parish saw an urgency to form pastoral agents to serve these communities. Through their Province they obtained a VSF Micro-Project Grant from the VSO to purchase computer equipment, clerical support, teaching documents, and chairs for workshops to form 75 pastoral agents at the parish.



Workshop at the Parroquia San Antonio de Padua

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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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