



Vincentian Solidarity Office

June 2010 Bulletin

Comments from the Executive Director

Dear Confreres,

May the Holy Spirit set us afire!

I am happy to report on three new VSF Micro-Project Grants awarded by the VSO since I last wrote to you. These include micro-project grants for: the Province of Curitiba in Brazil to finance the dubbing of the film "Monsieur Vincent" in Portuguese for use in retreats by the Vincentian Family; the Province of Southern India to equip its new rural health care center under construction in Andhra Pradesh State; and the Province of Fortaleza in Brazil to outfit the provincial archives and meeting room with air conditioning and computers. It is the generosity of confreres contributing to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund that enables the awarding of these micro-project grants!

Recently the Pentecost sequence reminded me of how special this year is for our Congregation: "***Come Holy Spirit...father of the poor.***" How providential that the liturgical readings in 2010 take us through the Gospel of Luke during the 350th anniversary year of the death of St. Vincent and St. Louise. Luke is commonly referred to as both the gospel of the Holy Spirit and the gospel of the poor. Luke is also a special gospel for our Congregation. St. Vincent's writings and conferences manifest his special interest in the Lucan image of Christ. In describing the spirit of the Congregation, our Constitutions (Article 5) reference a seminal Lucan passage: "***The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.*** (Luke 4: 18-19)"

In this passage, Jesus invokes the jubilee vision: a prophetic ideal threaded through Scripture (Isa. 61, Lev. 25, and elsewhere) that calls for the forgiveness of debt and release of people from servitude every seventh (Sabbath) year, and a radical reallocation of societal resources in the year following seven Sabbath

years--the jubilee year (50th year). Luke 4: 18-19 is a weighty passage for us in this 350th anniversary of the death of our founder--its seventh (Sabbath) jubilee!

Today we see disparities within our Congregation. Some of our provinces and vice-provinces are flooded with worthy applicants and overwhelmed by the pressing needs of the poor. Yet their limited financial resources hamper an adequate response. Wealthier provinces have given generously to bolster the means of confreres in developing regions. But this has not been enough to assure the fulfillment of our mission.



A recent class of Vincentian novices in Nigeria

The Patrimony Fund Project (PFP) will provide some of our less endowed provinces and vice-provinces with more financial resources to evangelize the poor. The PFP also offers a compelling opportunity for individual confreres to help build solidarity within our Congregation. How appropriate that the VSO will launch the concerted efforts to meet the goal of the PFP in this jubilee anniversary of the death of St. Vincent and St. Louise!

This issue of the VSO Bulletin provides details on the PFP and describes the ways in which confreres can help the Congregation meet its goal. I hope you will join us in our efforts!

Fraternally in St. Vincent,

Father Miles Heinen, C.M.

A Call to Build our Vincentian Legacy

Biographer Pierre Coste, C.M. relates how a lawyer of the French parliament questioned Vincent de Paul about the Congregation's ability to afford its operations. St. Vincent responded with these words: *"The treasure of divine Providence is indeed great; it is well to cast one's cares and thoughts on Our Lord."* St. Vincent may have held such feelings in his heart, but he never dared to test Providence. Father Coste describes in many places how the saint worked arduously to finance the programs, institutions, and the needs of the Congregation and the Daughters of Charity. A recent work by John E. Rybolt, C.M. assesses the financial concerns of Vincent de Paul and concludes that the saint was a vigilant fiscal manager and ambitious fundraiser (*Vincentian Heritage Journal, Vol. 26, Issue 1, 2005*). Father Rybolt also notes how St. Vincent considered the funds he raised for the Congregation and its members as the *"patrimony of Jesus Christ for His poor members."*

The PFP reflects the practicality of St. Vincent and his burning zeal to effectively serve the poor. By raising monies for the missionary needs of some of our poorer provinces and vice-provinces, the PFP will help extend the legacy of St. Vincent's charism in developing regions and into the future. A private foundation has challenged the Congregation with a \$5 million USD matching grant. The grant will build patrimony funds (semi-endowments) for the Province of Chile, Province of Ecuador, Province of Fortaleza, Province of Hungary, Vice-Province of Mozambique, Vice-Province of Nigeria, Province of St. Justin de Jacobis (Eritrea), Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius (Belarus, Russia, & Ukraine), Province of Slovakia, and for the Superior General for the benefit of certain organizational members of the international Vincentian Family. The Congregation must also secure \$5 million USD, some of which is already in place. Our task is to raise the remaining matching monies required by the challenge grant.

Beginning in 2010, confreres will be asked to help the Congregation meet the challenge grant of the PFP in two ways. The VSO will work with certain confreres to identify and solicit contributions to the PFP from potential donors outside the Congregation. Secondly, all confreres are being asked to consider designating the PFP as a recipient in their last will and testament. To make this designation, confreres should indicate in

their wills that their estate or a specific portion thereof, is being left to the:

"Procura Generale della Congregazione della Missione di S. Vincenzo de Paoli and restricted for the Patrimony Fund Project," and further state that: **"If the above mentioned program no longer exists, I specify that my donation be at the discretion of the Superior General."**



Confreres will help support the works and needs of generations of Vincentian missionaries by contributing funds to the PFP through their wills.

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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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