



# Vincentian Solidarity Office

## October 2018 Bulletin



### Hope within the Rubble of War in Syria



*Fr. Mavrič, Superior General, and  
Fr. Arar, C.M. addressing students*

In Damascus, Syria, the Vincentian confreres are known for their house “Couvent des Lazarist,” founded 1783. From the “Couvent des Lazariste,” the Vincentians administer a school, Alfajer Ecole. The war in Syria has greatly and negatively impacted the lives of Christians in the Middle East, especially, by disrupting education. On April 12, 2017, Provincial Superior, Fr. Zaid Haddad described the situation to the VSO: “This year our school welcomes students from sixty families, affected by the war. We struggle because of the lack of resources to support the costs of their education. We also need to support our own students who suffer from lack of resources in these times of war.” The VSO provided a grant to the Vincentian school for

the support of the children and families of refugees. Through the generosity of donors, the VSO was able to provide a 20,000 EURO (\$23,513 USD) grant to stabilize needy families and facilitate their children’s education. Fr. Khalil Arar, C.M., the project director, reported on the following activities to assist students of Alfajer Ecole and their families: direct economic support to families, purchase of computer equipment, clothing for pupils, school supplies, and scholarships. In total, seventy-five students and their families were helped.

The ministry of the confreres brings a glimmer of hope for Christian refugees by providing important supports for struggling families. The grant aided access to education for those who were forced to abandon study because of war, and provided an incentive for families to remain in their Syrian homeland. Fr. Khalil wrote about the first day of school, “Wednesday September 6 [2017] we began our school year with 330 students...everything was fine except the distant gun shots, and the absence of three teachers who are leaving Syria for Canada as immigrants,

I feel bad because of the people’s fear.”

The support of Christian refugees also added a level of stability to the struggling school. Fr. Khalil Arar, C.M. reported that lack of security and fear has pushed people to look beyond the boundaries of the homeland for a new beginning. Fr. Khalil wrote to the VSO, “Thank you father for all the work you did for our students to assist them, and they remain in the country with their families.”

If families and their children receive this and other kinds of supports, they will be encouraged to rebuild their future from the rubble of war. This project is a small, yet important step in rebuilding peace in Syria.



*Children in new clothing*



*Scholarship recipient*

**Support VSO projects: [Donate at http://cmglobal.org/vso-en/contribute/](http://cmglobal.org/vso-en/contribute/)**

## Three Motorbikes for the Democratic Republic of Congo



*Vincentian Missioner and Parishioners*

The VSO funded the purchase of three motorbikes for use by Vincentian priests and catechists of Yumbi, Momboyo and Bikoro. The priests and designated faithful will use the motorbikes to conduct pastoral visits, attend catechetical instruction in the villages, console the sick, and administer the sacraments. The indirect beneficiaries of the projects are the faithful, who will have more frequent access to instruction and pastoral care. Each Vincentian Community will use the motorbikes approximately twice per week to evangelize the inhabitants within area of the mission. A portion of the church collections will be used for fuel and maintenance. The realization of the project has led the other Vincentian houses to want to replicate its success in the communities of Air Congo, Itipo, Iboko, Maluku and Mbandaka.

## Solar Power for Indoor Lighting at Kribi Minor Seminary, Cameroon

The Vincentians of Cameroon administer the minor seminary in the Diocese of Kribi, located 200 km from the economic capital of Cameroon. The present minor seminary was built and maintained by the first missionaries to this geographic area. Several years ago, the missionaries abandoned the complex. Subsequently, the local bishop of Kribi entrusted the buildings and local parish to the Cameroonian Vincentians. The small complex of buildings now houses a minor seminary. The VSO is currently assisting the Vice-Province to rehabilitate the buildings, namely, to remodel the

kitchen, recreation room, and dining room. However, the community immediately needed electric power to light the various common rooms and dormitories. New solar panels and batteries were installed at the seminary in order to facilitate night time activities. The beneficiaries are the forty-eight seminarians and the five Vincentian resident formators. The entire seminary community is now able at night to engage in reading, eating, and prayer.



*Evening Study Hall*

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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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