



Vincenzian Solidarity Office

October 2009 Bulletin

Comments from the Director

Dear Confreres,

May Christ ever turn our hearts to the poor!

I am delighted to report that the VSO has awarded 8 VSF Micro-Project Grants this October. These include micro-project grants for (1) the International Mission to the Solomon Islands to transport a confrere and two Vincentian Family members to the Systemic Change Seminar in Bangkok; (2) the Province of Argentina to support formation and collaboration in evangelization with lay missionaries in Colonia Gutiérrez, Santa Lucia, and San Juan; (3) the Honduras Mission of the Province of Barcelona to purchase an outboard motor and accessories for a boat used to visit villages in the parish in Puerto Lempira; (4) the Province of Hungary to give the public access to the chapel of the Provincial House in Budapest; (5) the Province of Indonesia to fund a 15-month program of socialization and training on permaculture for the Dayak Community in the District of Menukung, West Borneo; (6) the Province of Southern India to purchase 3 multimedia projectors for the retreat center and provincial team in Mysore and novitiate house in Dharcas; (7) the Vice-Province of Nigeria to renovate parts of De Paul Theology House in Enugu; and (8) the Vice-Province of SS. Cyril and Methodius to purchase camping materials for community building in the parishes of Shereshevo and Prujane, Belarus. Seeing such widespread benefits from confreres helping confreres by contributing to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF) is most encouraging!

And the zeal of the Confreres keeps the projects coming! The VSO also continues its efforts to meet the challenge of the Patrimony Fund Project, explained in our last bulletin. Your ongoing support, suggestions, and prayers are most appreciated!

Fraternally in St. Vincent,

Father Miles Heinen, C.M.

A School Hostel in Kanchili

The Mandasa Mission of the South Indian Province is located in the town of Kanchili in a mountainous region of Andhra Pradesh State. The mission serves the 32 villages inhabited by 8,595 members of the indigenous Soura ethnic group. The Soura villagers are impoverished. Many survive by selling firewood from the forest and growing food on small family plots. Most live in simple thatched huts. The poverty of the Souras can be partially blamed on the remote location of the villages. Marginalization also plays a role; the Souras lack social standing and influence.



The new school hostel in Kanchili

Another socioeconomic handicap of the Soura people is their lack of education. Only 18 of the 32 villages have a primary school. Many children have no school within walking distance of their homes. As a consequence, 48% of school-aged children in the 32 villages are unschooled. Many unschooled children perform manual work to help their families survive.

The plight of many Soura children and the promise of education as a means for economic development in the villages motivated Father Thomas Enchackal, C.M., the mission director, to establish a school hostel for children in 2003. The mission renovated a two-room building with a thatched roof in Kanchili to serve as a temporary school hostel. The hostel

program quickly grew to house 20 boys from villages that lack schools. The boys attend school in Kanchili.

Faced with the need to provide the boys with better living quarters, Father Thomas sought the assistance of the VSO through the South Indian Province to construct a permanent school hostel in Kanchili. The VSO obtained a grant from Stichting Porticus--which it matched with monies from the VSF--to construct the first floor of a new hostel building and a water well. The new school hostel accommodates 25 boys. Future plans at the mission include adding a second floor on the hostel and constructing a hostel for girls.

Church Pews in Chinlun

The Province of China administers St. Joseph Parish in Chinlun in Taiwan. The parish serves 5,000 aborigine people—the poorest members of Taiwanese society. Father Aloysius Budijanto, C.M. works as the parish priest. While evangelizing the aborigines, Father Aloysius also assists them to preserve their cultural identity and communal ties. Seeking these ends the parish determined it needed more appropriate worship and meeting space for its members.



New pews in St. Joseph Church and Activity Center

With the assistance of the Netherlands Province and the Bethlehemite Fathers--and sacrificial contributions from its member--St. Joseph Parish began to construct a new church to also serve as an activity center. To help furnish the new building the Province of China obtained a VSF Micro-Project Grant from the VSO to fund the construction of the pews.

A Compound Wall in Gitarama

Perimeters walls are often necessary to protect people and property at seminary and mission compounds in

developing regions. They are also very difficult projects to fund for the VSO. One such project involved St. Vincent's Seminary in Gitarama, Rwanda, which houses the religious formation program of the Rwandan Mission of the Province of Colombia. The Rwandan government required the mission to construct a wall around the new formation house and surrounding land to certify its ownership of the property. Mostly through the efforts of Bishop Alfonso Cabezas, C.M., the VSO acquired donations in the United States that were matched with monies from the VSF to construct the 250-meter wall around St. Vincent's Seminary.



Constructing the new wall at St. Vincent's Seminary

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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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