



# Vincentian Solidarity Office

## April 2019 Bulletin



### The Healing of African Migrants at Vincentian Center, Algeria, Africa

The tearful journey from oppression to liberation continues in the lives of African migrants. In his own day, St. Vincent de Paul understood the struggle poor people faced when fleeing poverty caused by war. Today similar conditions force many to undertake the risky journey from Sub-Saharan Africa. The dangerous journey takes its toll as loneliness, violence, forced labor and detention. The journey often ends in North Africa, for example in Algiers, Algeria. Here, Vincentians missionaries minister to the migrant population. Cases of desperate and abused migrants are too numerous to count in this part of the world. Often the dream of liberation leads to a descending path of successive instances of enslavement. At the end of the journey, in desperation, some migrants find their way to the Vincentian Center.



The ministry of the Vincentian Center in Algiers, Algeria, stands between further descent into despair and an about face towards hope. Our Vincentian confrere, wishing to preserve anonymity writes, "The Vincentian Center supported by Caritas Algiers, is committed to be a humanitarian and daily support to the most vulnerable people in partnership with other structures." The staff welcomes the suffering migrant and applies the medicine of compassion. Pope Francis said: "Dear friends, let us not forget that the flesh of Christ which is the flesh of refugees: their flesh is the flesh of Christ." The Pope's words capture the essence of Vincentian spirituality, namely, that Christ abides in those who suffer. With the help of the VSO, Caritas Algiers, was able to fund services at the Vincentian Center for the care of traumatized migrant women and children. The center provides important resources for assisting migrants, namely, medical care, housing and counselling. The center provides stability and healing. This form of care for the migrant renews their lives in a supportive community in order that they may become self-sufficient and build a better future.



Sensitivity training session



Caring for sick woman

Vincentians are called to be aware of new forms of poverty, represented by the migrants who flee oppressive situations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Today, more than ever we meet the suffering Christ in the migrant seeking safety and healing. We do well to keep our confrere and his staff in our prayers, and especially, the residents of Vincentian Center.

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## Cattle Breeding Project, Talamanca, Costa Rica, Latin America

The parish of Santiago Apostol, Talamaca in Amubri is located in the Caribbean Zone of Costa Rica. The project management falls to the pastor, Fr. Marvin Gamboa Robles, C.M., and Br. Álvaro Herra, C.M. The provincial business manager, William Chacón, assists with project design and reporting. The cattle breeding project employs

the method of “systemic change” for the improvement of the pastoral care of the parishioners at the various mission stations, and the betterment of the lives of the “campesinos,” peasants. In total, ten head of cattle were purchased and located on a pasture near a source of water on land owned by the parish. The project hopes to produce a herd of animals that can be sold at market. This project builds upon a previous successful project that was also sponsored by the VSO at the Parish of Santiago Apostol. Two *campesinos* are paid to care for the animals. A local veterinarian also provides expert advice when the cows give birth. The secondary beneficiaries of the project are the parish catechists and lay leaders of the Word. These pastoral volunteers connect many distant rural communities to the proclamation of God’s Word at the Sunday Celebrations of the Word in the absence of the priest and the Eucharist. The Vice-Province plans to benefit other poor parishes by introducing similar projects of systemic change.



*Cattle Herd at Pasture*

## Toyota Hilux Pick-Up for Parish and Minor Seminary, Chad, Africa

At the request of the Bishop of the Diocese of Moundou, the Congregation of the Mission established a new mission in Chad in central Africa in 2011. The mission is located at the Paroisse St. Jean-Baptiste in the town of Bebalem in southern Chad and serves several impoverished villages which are very much dispersed. The two Vincentian priests were challenged in their duties because of the limited public transportation and poor roads. Much of the work of the priests must be carried out through visits to the villages since they are so distant from the parish

center. With the help of the VSO and our partner, the Chad Mission purchased a new 4x4 Toyota Hilux pick-up for transport in and around the town of Moundou. The work of the Vincentian priests in the Paroisse St. Jean-Baptiste includes sacramental and catechetical activities, formation of lay members as catechists and local spiritual leaders of the villages, and response to the material needs of the most impoverished parishioners and other residents of the parish territory. These same priests serve on the staff of the Academie Jean Paul Minor Seminary. In short, travel time to distant communities is greatly reduced, and access to communities is more frequent. The Parish Community with its mission stations are now more united and better served.



*St. John Paul II Minor Seminary and Hilux Truck*

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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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