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The

# Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

December 2012

## Thanksgiving Food Drive 2012



As in previous years, the St. Vincent de Paul Society at OLMC assisted many needy families in Tempe by providing them with a food box - complete with a turkey - for their Thanksgiving feast. Many parishioners arrived at McCready Hall as early as 7:00 am on Saturday, November 17, to pack the food boxes. The **Cub Scout Pack #71**, under the direction of **Scout Master Scott Shroll**, not only helped with the preparation of the food boxes, but also handed a check in the amount of \$406.00 to **President Julian Natividad**.

Before the volunteers began with the delivery, Spiritual Advisor **Fr. Camilo de Villa** blessed them and the food. **Cox Communications** had sent their **night crew** (see image below) who, with their six huge trucks, delivered food boxes to 50 of the families. With the help of so many volunteers who generously gave of their time on a Saturday morning, 235 families were served this year.

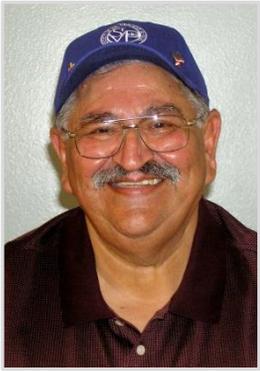
Enjoy a slide show of the event at our new website:  
<http://olmctvincentdepaul.weebly.com/photos.html>



Many hands made this tremendous job easy. On behalf of the families that were helped, we thank all those of you who donated food during the parish food drive at the last weekend in October, supported our ministry financially, and organized the food drive.

## From the President's Pen

"As often as you do these things for the least of my brethren, you do them for Me."



The first Vincentians (six of the seven were young university students) felt the need to declare and love God by serving Him in the persons of the poor. They quietly began to implement a goal, "Let us go to the poor," with no intention of starting a movement.

But their practical idealism soon proved both appealing and contagious. The Society quickly grew, welcomed everywhere by priests, parishioners, and the poor.

With the continuing approval of the people of God and in keeping with its origins, the Society has ever since preserved its heritage of lay responsibility and lay action. Management and direction are vested in lay people; the Society's officers are lay persons.

In every diocese and parish, the Society can be counted on to cooperate with the laity and all others engaged in Christian ministry.

No matter how good the social service "safety net" provided by governments may be, a need for the Society will always exist. "The poor you will always have with you" is not an excuse for inaction. Government largess with our tax dollars does not mean we have fulfilled our obligation to live up to the Gospel message: "I was hungry, ...thirsty, ...a stranger, ...naked, ...sick, ...in prison, ... and you cared." True Christian

charity exists only when we extend help to another in a spirit of love and friendship, and in a personal encounter.

Thank you for all your continued assistance.

God Bless,

**Julian Natividad**

*President, St. Vincent De Paul – Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Tempe*

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## Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program



The OLMC conference of St. Vincent de Paul continues to maintain a flourishing Christmas "Adopt-A-Family" Program. Under the direction of **Albert and Susana Marquez**, we hope to again be able to make Christmas brighter for about 100 families in our community.

It is not too late to sign up as a **sponsor**. Please pick up a neon pink brochure at the back of OLMC church or give us a call at 480-966-1974 by **December 15**.

You can also register online. Our **new website** contains a downloadable registration form and all relevant information for prospective donors. You can access it at

<http://olmcstvincentdepaul.weebly.com>



## Halloween Cheer

(by Adelheid Thieme)

It was the Monday before Halloween. Ela and I were scheduled to do a home visit with a family with four young children, ages 5 through 10, who had called our St. Vincent de Paul office for food and utility assistance. When we arrived, we were greeted by three of the children who were sitting on a blanket on the grass in front of their apartment. The five-year-old, a boy who was dressed up for Halloween, greeted us with a cheerful smile and showed off his ability to do perfectly straight cartwheels, much to the admiration of his older sister who tried to outperform him.

There was definitely less cheer inside the children's home. Their mother had recently lost her job as a caregiver for an elderly lady, who had passed away. Their father was working, but did not earn enough to provide for the needs of his family. With the meager amount of \$1.19 on their M-Power electricity account and no money to deposit in it, the couple knew that their apartment would go dark in a few hours. Food was in short supply, too.

After the October special collection at OLMC church, our financial resources had been replenished (thanks to your generosity, donors). Thus we had the financial means to offer assistance. We immediately called the counseling department at SRP and gave a check guarantee for an amount that would cover the family's electricity needs for the next week. The food boxes we provided brought tears to the mother's eyes. "What a blessing," she said. "This will tide us over until my husband gets his next paycheck on Friday." We also invited them to sign up for our Adopt-A-Family Christmas program, in which a sponsor will provide a clothing item and a toy for the family's children. The good news about the Christmas program brought a smile to the grateful parents.

When we left the apartment, their five-year-old son had perfected his Halloween appearance. His sister had painted a black eye and a bandage on his face with white, red, and black markers. "Look at me," he said. "I am all ready for Halloween." We waved good-bye to him, wondering if his mother would share his joy when she would scrub his little face before he would go to bed.

## The Brave Little Soul: A Story (cont. on p. 4)

*When we visit people in their homes, we are often faced with extreme suffering: children disabled by brain injuries, women despairing over domestic violence, men feeling useless after the loss of a job, families on the brink of eviction. In these situations, we often remember the following story by John Alessi (submitted by Ela Jackiewicz):*

Not too long ago, in Heaven, there was a little soul who took wonder in observing the world. He especially enjoyed the love he saw there and often expressed this joy to God. One day, however, the little soul was sad, for on this day he saw suffering in the world. He approached God and asked, "Why do bad things happen? Why is there suffering in the world?"

## The Brave Little Soul (cont. from p. 3)

God paused for a moment and replied, "Little soul, do not be sad, for the suffering you see unlocks the love in people's hearts." The little soul was confused. "What do you mean?" he asked. God replied, "Have you not noticed the goodness and love that is the offspring of that suffering? Look at how people come together, drop their differences, and show their love and compassion for those who suffer."

The little soul began to understand and listened attentively as God continued, "The suffering soul unlocks the love in people's hearts much like the sun and the rain unlock the flower within the seed. I created everyone with endless love in their heart, but unfortunately most people keep it locked up and hardly share it with anyone."

Just then the little soul got a wonderful idea and could hardly contain himself. With his wings fluttering, bouncing up and down, the little soul excitedly replied, "I am brave; let me go! I would like to go into the world and suffer so that I can unlock the goodness and love in people's hearts! I want to create that miracle!

God smiled and said, "You are a brave soul, I know, and thus I will grant your request. But even though you are very brave, you will not be able to do this alone. I have carefully selected many souls to care for you on your journey. Those souls will help you create your miracle; however, they will also share in your suffering." In parting, God said, "Do not forget, little soul, that I will be with you always. Although you have agreed to bear the pain, you will do so through my strength."

At that the moment the brave little soul was born into the world, and through his suffering and God's strength, he unlocked the goodness and

love in people's hearts. Priorities became properly aligned. People gave from their hearts. Those that were always busy found time. Many began spiritual journeys, some regained lost faith - many came back to God. Parents hugged their children more tightly. Friends and family grew closer, and distant families reunited. Many prayed. Lives changed forever. The miracle had happened.

*Many people in our parish come together and offer donations so that the suffering in our community can be cared for. As Vincentians, we try to comfort the families who share their burdens with us. Together we pray and ask God to offer healing and hope. May God bless us all in this coming year as He gives us the strength to work His miracles.*

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## Annual Financial Report 2011-12

Thank you, donors, for generously supporting our St. Vincent de Paul conference. Our total **income** was **\$69,374.81**. We provided **assistance** in the amount of **\$82,374.60** (see chart below).

