



# The Vincentian

Newsletter for supporters of the  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul,  
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

Summer 2006

## Are you born a Vincentian?



No! You are raised to be a Vincentian by the faith taught by our Mother Church. Vincentians live the self-sacrificial love of neighbor. But with what intention? NOT for vain self-glory, but rather in the spirit **“Jesus in me loves you!”** The Vincentian answers the

call to be the **Church’s witness** of the genuine love that Jesus has for the poor. This is a high calling. Vincentians work together as a team. A flower out in the field is a beautiful thing, but a field of flowers is more beautiful in unison. Vincentian work is done cheerfully and in prayer. May you rejoice in His Peace!

Prayerfully your fellow Vincentian,

*Fr. Johnrose, Spiritual Adviser*

## Finding Christ Among the Poor

(by John Reigelsberger)

Thinking about making home visits in the 1980’s, I recall one incident that I would like to share with others who are calling upon the needy in their homes.

We had just returned from dropping off some food boxes at several rundown trailer courts on Apache Boulevard. We met Ed Kittock, who was the president of our conference at that time. I recall Ed asking me, “Well, John, did you see Christ out there today?” I first thought he was kidding me.

Taking a second look at him, I realized the seriousness of his inquiry.

It is sometimes difficult to feel close to those we visit. However, if we learn to find some sign or image of Christ in them, our call is beneficial not only to them, but also to ourselves.

I am pleased to say that Ed Kittock, who will be 92 in August, is still making home visits with me on Tuesdays. He is still out there finding Christ in those we visit.



Active members of the conference at OLMC celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in the Diocese of Phoenix.

### Quarterly Report (January – March 2006)

Home visits: 469 (2,814 persons served)

Food boxes delivered: 922

Value of food delivered: \$38,520

Rental and utility assistance to clients: \$18,647.54

Volunteer hours in our conference: 928

# Instructions from Our Blessed Mother

(by Barbara Hoffman)

It all started in November of 2003 as I stopped at Safeway after Mass on Sunday and met the prefect from the Sodality at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. We talked for a few minutes, and she suggested that the Sodality create a new banner. I agreed that it was a good idea, and so we parted.

As I was going down the next aisle, a voice said, "You can do it." I just thought, "I don't know how to do anything like that," and just fluffed it off. The voice, however, was very persistent and would not give up. I was given instructions to buy the needed materials. My husband and I went to the Mary Immaculate gift store and bought the most beautiful statue of Our Lady that we had ever seen. Then I was told to get a barstool. "What a funny idea," I thought, but I obeyed. I then received the instruction to attach gold casters to the legs of the stool. My husband kept busy making trips to the hardware store, sawing, and drilling holes.

The stool needed a gold skirt, and since I am not much of a seamstress, I sent the materials and measurements to my sister in Connecticut. She made it, and it looked perfect. Subsequently, I was sent to a store where the banner would be made. The man taking the order said that he was usually not there, but that he could design the banner for us. Then my husband and I went to a store where I was told a man would make the pedestal. Again it was perfect. The flower shop made a wreath of pink mini roses. After all these tasks were finished, I was instructed to make up a memorial to Msgr. McCready to attach to the back. I objected that I barely knew Msgr. McCready, but then I remembered that this was not about me. I made up the memorial and attached it.

Fr. Ifunaya blessed the banner on the feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in July 2004. We were really amazed watching the people's reactions after Mass. They passed by and blew kisses, stopped to kneel and say a prayer, and some ladies had cameras and were getting pictures taken with the banner. When one lady read the memorial to Msgr. McCready, she wiped away a few tears and said,

"Msgr. McCready would be proud to have his name on there."

The banner attracted a lot of attention on Rosary Sunday at the Civic Center. We got a lot of compliments. When we passed in procession, Bishop Olmstead looked at our banner and smiled. I was told that the banner should be kept in the reception area of the Rectory where lots of people would be able to see Her. This is where it is permanently displayed.

In the beginning, my husband and I did not even consider what the cost would be. After it started mounting up, I began wondering where the money was going to come from. I was told, "Don't worry about the money; it will come from somewhere." A few weeks later, I won \$1,500, twice the amount of what the whole work had cost. I was not to take any credit or praise for this, and I don't. I just wanted to share an awesome story.



(Statue of Our Blessed Mother in the OLMC Rectory)

## Meet our Volunteers



When **Debbie Corte** joined our conference in 2002, she was not a newcomer to the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Prior to becoming a member of our team, she had served food to the needy in the Mesa dining room for many years. For the past four years, she has taken time out of her busy schedule every Thursday afternoon to respond to the messages that our clients leave on our answering machine in the office. Since 2003, she has served as Co-Vice President and taken on a multitude of responsibilities such as training new members, inviting members to special events, hosting potlucks, communicating with other agencies, and soliciting donations from corporate sponsors.

Debbie developed her admirable practical and interpersonal skills through her varied professional experience. She enjoyed her career as a beautician, but soon discovered her priority was raising her two children, a daughter who is now 26 and a son who is 24 years old. She was able to earn a living and have flexible work hours as an interior plant care provider for commercial businesses. She has been working as an interior plantscape designer for 21 years and owned her own business for 16 years. Her daughter and son-in-law gave her a precious granddaughter, who is now two years old. Debbie enjoys outdoors activities like gardening, tennis, and riding her bike. She also likes cooking and baking for her family.

Our members and clients appreciate Debbie's keen intuition. She is an excellent listener who easily picks up on the deeper needs and true feelings of the clients she counsels over the phone. One Thursday afternoon, for example, she was responding to the call of a 67-year-old lady who needed a food box. "She broke my heart," Debbie says. "Here was this lady who had raised five children and who had twenty-three grandchildren, and no one was able or willing to help her. She did not even have a kitchen table and a chair. She loved gospel music, but did not have a CD-player to listen to it." That same night Debbie arranged for a food

box and issued a voucher for a kitchen table and two chairs. The next day, she baked a pumpkin pie for her granddaughter. She brought the lady one half of the pie as well as a gently used CD-player that she had in her closet.

We are very fortunate to have Debbie in our conference. She never fails to inspire us with her heartfelt compassion and to refresh us with her cheerfulness and her youthful spirit.

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## Our Food Delivery and Pantry Team



(1<sup>st</sup> row [left to right]: Adelheid Thieme, Steve Petruzzella, Mary Ziegman, Mary Rasmussen, Valerie Nigro, Trisha Brandt-Fox; 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Barbara Hoffman, John Reigelsberger, John Schiffer, Bob McKay, Bart Nigro, Don Ong; 3<sup>rd</sup> row: Kathy Gibbons, Nicole Culbertson, Mike Hoffman, Bob Erickson, Matt Culbertson, Ela Jackiewicz)

## Our Phone Persons



(1<sup>st</sup> row [left to right]: Julian Natividad, Karen Kawam, Alice Allen, Frances Garcia, Ramona Verdugo; 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Sharon Sullivan, Debbie Corte, Rebecca de la Torre, Shirley Ouellette)

# Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Violence

(by Adelheid Thieme)

Do the food boxes we deliver make a significant impact in the lives of the families that call us for help? I have often asked myself that question. Every now and then, I have the privilege of seeing that God works through us, touching the lives of the people we serve in a profound way.

A few weeks ago, Ela and I were visiting a family with two young children to bring them a food box. The name seemed familiar, and we remembered that we had served this family about two months ago. Teresa, the mother, had had black and blue bruises on her face, her throat, and her arms. We had found out that her husband had been abusing her physically for a long time, often in a most brutal way. Ela had urged her to stop the cycle of abuse and protect herself and her sons. She had advised her to call our office the next morning to obtain the number of a domestic violence hotline.

This time, Teresa seemed to be doing much better. Her face had healed, and she seemed cheerful and in good spirits. After she had helped us carry the food boxes, she invited us in. "Do you have a minute?" she asked. "I have to tell you something. A couple of weeks ago I had a visit from St. Vincent de Paul. It changed my life. My husband had been abusive to me for a long time. He even started to hurt my son. Then this lady from St. Vincent de Paul came and told me that I did not have to take this kind of treatment from my husband. That conversation opened my eyes, and it changed my life." Ela took off her sunglasses, and Teresa recognized her.

She then told us that, soon after our last visit, she had finally decided to call the police. Her husband was arrested and imprisoned for four weeks. She now had a restraining order against him, and she was looking for a job so that she would be financially independent of him. She had also, much to her mother's delight, started to attend mass again on Sundays, and she inquired about the possibility of enrolling her sons in the religious education program at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

We concluded the visit with a prayer, calling the Lord's blessings on this family. Teresa's 5-year-old son joined our circle. As we prayed the Our Father, he jumped up and down with excitement, proud that he knew the words of the prayer that his grandmother recited with him over the phone every night. We hope that Teresa will find healing and peace on her journey to recovery from domestic violence.

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## Rainy Day Visit

(by Valerie and Bart Nigro)

It was one of those rare days when it is raining in the Valley. Before setting out from the pantry, we called to make sure the family that had requested rental assistance would be home. We asked if they needed any food items. "Just some canned fruit for the children would be appreciated," we were told.

The client, Michelle, and her children were waiting for us. They were happy to receive the fruit, and the young mother said she was sorry that we had to be out on this rainy day for their benefit. As the kids returned to their projects, Michelle explained to us that she and her husband had both lost their jobs within two weeks of each other. Severe health problems caused by a brain tumor and several pinched nerves resulted in Michelle missing too many workdays, and she was let go. Her ailments had been treated, and she was now ready to start a new job, which she had secured. Her husband was still looking for work.

We paid the overdue rent and then offered to pray with Michelle. She was pleased and volunteered that she had recently started to read the Bible. She had tears in her eyes in gratitude for the bountiful love that God had sent her that rainy day.

Before we departed, the children brought colorful drawings they had been making for us as we visited with their mother. The older one had printed on his paper, "In God We Trust." We were deeply moved.

It was still pouring when we stepped outdoors, but we were grateful to have been God's instruments that day.