

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
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The Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

Summer 2007

Contents

Spiritual Adviser's Note 1

Quarterly Report 1

"Blessed are the poor" 2

Meet Our Volunteers: Ramona Verdugo 2

From the President's Pen 3

Food Donations from USA Today 4

Three generations delivering food together 4

The Vincentian Uniform



On duty police and military personnel wear uniforms to facilitate and optimize the performance of their duties. Anyone encountering one "in uniform" has a certain expectation of the kind of service one may receive.

But such "body language" also **constantly speaks** to the one wearing the uniform to serve to a higher standard than self, that is to be true to the purposes the uniform represents and moreover to **consistently answer** to this higher calling while performing one's duties.

Many businesses and services dealing with "John Q. Public" also use a uniform for the same reason; for example, hotel

doormen, restaurant waiters, and nurses mostly wear uniforms. Liturgical vestments are "uniforms" and remind all who **see** that they are participants among the **people of God** in the liturgy.

Similarly, we Vincentians work among God's people. Hence, we too must wear a **uniform of demeanor** so that all who observe us serving God **constantly** see God's deep love, tender care, and sincere compassion **consistently** in our humble, cheerful service to others as well as our dealings with fellow Vincentians. We particularly must be true to the purpose our **Vincentian uniform** represents – Christ, the Lord!

Prayerfully your fellow Vincentian,

Fr. Johnrose, Spiritual Adviser

Thank you for all the food items that you place in the St. Vincent de Paul bins in the Church. They are very much appreciated and allow us to provide the people who call us for help with nutritious food boxes.

Here is a list of items that we need the most:

- Pasta/Macaroni and Cheese/soups
- Hamburger Helper/Canned Meats
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Bar soap/toothpaste

Quarterly Report (January to March 2007)



Deliveries to clients:	308
Food boxes:	616
Vouchers for Clothing	\$ 1,356.51
Rental Assistance:	\$ 4,732.81
Utility Assistance:	\$ 1,678.62

“Blessed are the poor”

(by Adelheid Thieme)



“Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of God” (Luke 6:20). I have long been familiar with this verse

from the Sermon on the Mount, but I must say that I never quite understood it. How can the poor be blessed, those who struggle to keep food on the table, those who worry about paying their rent to avoid eviction? One of our recent home visits gave me a deeper understanding of this benediction.

Rosa, a mother of two girls ages 11 and 12, had called our office for a food box and rental assistance. She helped us carry in the food boxes and

welcomed us into the living room of her trailer home. The light brown carpet was spotlessly clean. The room was bare except for four old, disintegrating Rattan patio chairs, whose seats were covered with towels, and a TV set that was probably twenty years old. The only adornment in the room was a small statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe and a crucifix on the wall.

Rosa offered us a seat, closed the door, and began to tell us about her situation. Ever since her husband, who had been abusive to her and her daughters, had left her three years ago, she had struggled to make a living for herself and her family by cleaning people’s houses. “Some people are really nice to me,” she said. “They pay me decent money. But some people call me every six months or so, when their houses are a total mess. Then they expect me to clean up their houses in two hours and

they give me almost no money for my hard work. I have arthritis in my knees and hips, and bending over is getting harder and harder for me. But I have no choice. If I don’t work, we don’t eat.”

Two weeks ago, three of her regular clients had cancelled her services because they could not afford a cleaning lady any more. As a result, Rosa was short of money and could not pay her rent. She was about to be evicted in two days. A friend had offered to lend her some money, but it was not sufficient to cover the rent. When we assured her that we could make up the difference and thus prevent her from eviction, she broke into tears.

Once she had regained her composure, she shared with us that, just a few days

continued on page 3

Meet Our Volunteers



Every Wednesday morning, since 2001, **Ramona Verdugo** has been accepting our clients’ requests over the phone. Many of the families who ask for assistance speak only Spanish, so Ramona’s bilingual skills come in extremely handy. She is also

known for her efficiency.

Together with her partner, Eva Picone, she answers up to 30 phone calls in a two-hour period and responds to messages that clients have left on the answering machine.

“I like to help,” she says, “and I find it very satisfying to give people information about other resources so that they can help themselves.”

continued on p. 4

“Blessed are the poor” (continued from p. 2)

ago, after having received the eviction notice from her landlord, she had gone to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel church. She had knelt down in front of the statue of the Virgin Mary and implored her help. When she returned to the car, she saw a heap of what looked like sand on the driver’s seat. She could have sworn that it was not there when she had locked the car and headed into the church. A pleasant fragrance of roses emanated from the sand on her seat. Rosa said, “I was shocked and confused. However, I took it as a sign that the Blessed Mother had heard my prayer and that she was blessing me. Right now I can vividly remember that same fragrance.”

We had no doubt that the Blessed Mother was acting through us. We asked Rosa if she had ever considered looking for a different line of work, one that would be easier on her ailing body and make her less dependent on the solvency and good will of other people. She replied, “How should I find a better job? I have no skills at all.”

We told her that she had a lot more skills than she was aware of. She had a warm and caring personality, excellent communication skills, the ability to read and write both in English and Spanish, a valid driver’s license and a functioning car. Her eyes lit up as we took stock of her skills that she could use to, for example, provide valuable services to homebound seniors.

We suggested various ways of locating job opportunities, such as the newspapers and bulletin boards in grocery stores. She realized that, if she made good use of her talents, she could become more financially stable and self-sufficient. She thanked us for giving her hope.

Before we left, we joined hands in prayer. We opened our prayer with the words we usually use when praying with clients: “Lord, you told us that when two or three are gathered in your name you will be in their midst.” I sensed that He was truly present in this humble abode and that He was blessing all of us, but especially this lady who, in her troubles, trusted in the Lord and His blessed Mother and never lost faith.

From the President’s Pen

(by Barbara Pawlak)



At St. Vincent de Paul, we are blessed with our ministry and our ability to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the poor. Let me share with you an instance of the power of prayer.

As we make our weekly home visits, John and I always pray with the families, usually using a spontaneous prayer, which asks God’s help for the specific problems they are encountering. Of course, we always also pray for our donors, reminding our clients of the many people in our community who literally share in their plight.

A few weeks ago, we visited a weekly rental place in one of the poor neighborhoods of Tempe. Many of the families who live there have no credit

rating or, to say the least, a very poor one. Since they often cannot meet the apartment complexes’ requirement of paying a deposit and the rent for the first and the last month, they are forced to pay weekly rentals.

After visiting a mother with two small children and agreeing to pay one week’s rent, we went to the manager’s office with the check. The manager had a smile on her face when she answered the door. While we were conducting the transaction, I kept looking at her, knowing that I had seen her before. Finally, my curiosity, always acute, got the best of me. Don’t I know you?” I asked. Her smile turned to a broad grin. “Yes, she replied, “you paid my rent about a month ago and prayed that I would find a job. And here I am, thanks to you!” With tears glistening in our eyes, we hugged, silently thanking God for answering our prayers in such a dramatic fashion.

As always, we ask God’s blessings on you and yours.

Food Donations from USA Today



Thank you to all the wonderful employees at USA Today. The food drives they held at their workplace for Thanksgiving and Easter provided us with many boxes of much needed food items. We greatly appreciate their effort and value their partnership with St. Vincent de Paul.

Three Generations Delivering Food



On Saturday afternoons, three generations of the Picone family deliver food together. Shown (from left to right) are David Picone (dad), Amy Picone (daughter), Steven and Craig Picone (sons), and Ben Picone (grandpa).

Meet Our Volunteers (continued from p. 2)

Ramona was born in San Patricio, New Mexico, and grew up in the mining town of Morenci, Arizona. After her graduation from high school, she worked for several years first for the Phoenix Credit Bureau and then for State Farm Insurance. After having raised a son and a daughter with her husband, Ruben, she attended Mesa Community College and earned an Associate's Degree in Bilingual Education. In 1980, she graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work. For the next 20 years, she worked at Tempe Elementary Schools.

In her spare time, Ramona likes to read. She also stays active, taking exercise classes at the local YMCA, participating in cleaning the church, and delivering Meals on Wheels. Prayer plays an important part in her life. She is the co-leader of St. Cecilia's Rosary Group of the Sodality at OLMC as well as a member of the Rosary Group of Our Lady of Guadalupe. As one of the Prayer Angels, she also accepts prayer requests submitted by parishioners.

We hope that Ramona will continue to volunteer with our conference for many more years. Our clients could not find a more patient and compassionate person who is willing to listen to their troubles.

