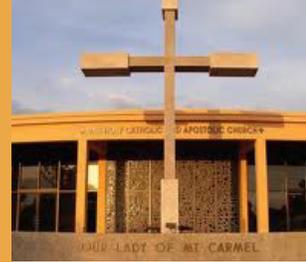




THE Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference June 2017



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Welcome, Sisters of the Servants of the Plan of God



Q: Sr. Veronica, we are excited to welcome the Sisters of the Servants of the Plan of God in our parish. It is a pleasure to have you, Sr. Maria Alexandra, Sr. Maria Cristina, Sr. Maria Jose, and Sr. Stephanie with us. Could you tell us about your community?

A: Our community, inspired by of the Holy Spirit, was founded in 1998. Our Feast Day is August 15, the day of the Assumption of Mary. We are an order of consecrated women, we live in community, and our way of consecration is through the full apostolic availability, giving our entire life to spreading the gospel and serving those most in need. Our motto is "By Faith with Charity." God showers us with his abundant love, and we want to share His love with all people, especially the poor, the sick, and the fragile. We have developed apostolic missions in countries in South America, Asia, and Africa, and this is our first mission in the United States of America.

Q: Why did you choose Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in the diocese of Phoenix ?

A: We were guided here by the Holy Spirit. We chose the diocese of Phoenix because it is still relatively young and constantly growing. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel seemed perfect because it is close to Arizona State University, has a Catholic school, and vibrant ministries. We also thank Fr. John Bonavitacola. He was also open to the Holy Spirit because he openend the doors to our community and has been extremely welcoming and supportive.

Q: How do you see your role in the diocese and the parish?

First, we want to open our hearts to all people we encounter, and we strive to be of service especially to those who have material and spiritual needs. We are currently involved with the Religious Education program and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at OLMC School. We also visit the sick in the hospital and the homebound, participate in the RCIA and Full Circle Program
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WorkBridge Students Helping SVdP (by Elizabeth Clements)

Four years ago, **Jeff Richards**, a Tempe Union High School teacher, contacted our conference president, **Julian Natividad**, to offer the services of a program called “The WorkBridge.” This program is part of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) curriculum for eligible students who are willing to gain on-the-job experience while earning school credit.

Students who are enrolled in this program will work at no cost in local businesses and non-profit organizations in hopes of observing real-life work settings, learning job skills, enhancing social/professional etiquette and, hopefully someday, working for or receiving recommendations from those whom they have worked for.



Since that day four years ago, every Tuesday and Wednesday, **Jeff Richards** (left in picture) and his assistants, Todd and Jessica, bring their troops of workers to our pantry. **Julian Natividad** (right in picture) has always raved about what a great help these students have been to our conference. It never came into my own perspective until I witnessed the students first hand.

Each week at 9:20 and 12:10, the van pulls up, and young adults hop out and jump into action. The students disperse in all directions, instinctively knowing what needs to be done. One student ran towards me as I was carrying a banana box full of food. He lifted the box out of my hands and asked where it needed to go.

Another young man smiled and said good morning as he grabbed a broom and dustpan to start cleaning our dust storm ravaged parking lot. I stepped back in the office since I obviously did not need to guide any of these seasoned professionals.

While I was working in the office, Todd approached me to ask if we had any spare paperclips. I assumed he needed to attach some files together and handed him two small paperclips. A few minutes later, Todd informed me that he had fixed our dustpan. My first thought was “What dustpan?” Once outside, I saw what once must have been a glorious part of our equipment, but was now a tattered and duct-taped piece of garbage that even the trash collector refused to dispose of. In true Macgyver style, Todd had opened two paperclips and woven them together to connect the dustpan to the handle. I didn’t have the heart to tell Todd that we should probably just buy a new one.

Once inside the pantry again, I couldn’t help but smile as I watched the hard-working teens sorting cans and preparing food boxes. They appeared to be having a good time. I showed them that the cans placed on the shelves need to have their labels facing the front. Ready for them to turn on me, I was surprised that they actually did what I asked them to. They even asked for advice and included me in their conversations. I heard about their friends, likes, dislikes, and goals for the future.

One rather shy young man looked panicked when I asked him if he enjoyed working at our pantry. Then his face lit up, and he said he was hoping it would help him get a job after graduation. I do too!

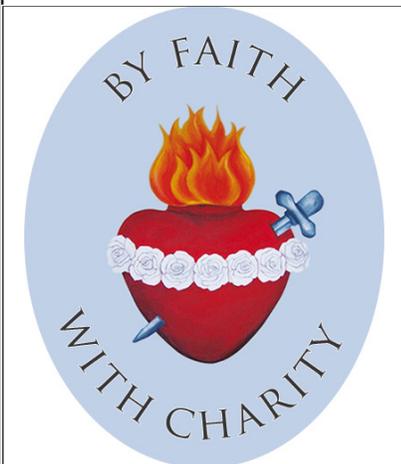
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Welcome, Sisters of the Servants of the Plan of God (cont. from p. 1)

for youth at risk and the Junior High Program, and we work together with the Newman Center at Arizona State University. Our house is also designed to be a welcoming place for the parish community to gather and pray. Now that the chapel is finished, we will invite parishioners to join us for adoration. In everything that we do now and that God will ask us to do later on, we pass on the treasure that we have, our charism, which we have received from God.

Q: Everybody who has had the pleasure of meeting you feels drawn in by your kind demeanor and your radiant smiles. You are also easily recognizable by your habit. Why do the Servants of the Plan of God wear a habit?

A: The habit is a visible sign of our faith and our commitment to a life of service. We see ourselves as conduits of the love of God, and the fact that we wear a habit is an invitation to approach us, pray with us, and ask for assistance. The habit identifies us and emphasizes the apostolic service and the charitable work we carry out. You may be interested in our emblem (see left), which captures the essence of our mission.



Q: Would you please explain the elements of this emblem?

A: I will be happy to. You see the blue background, which stands for the horizon of eternity. Our feet are on earth, but we are destined for life in heaven. The heart in the middle signifies the immaculate heart of Mary, whose heart was pierced by sorrow, and the flames symbolize her love for God and all mankind. Like Mary, we all experience suffering, but the fruit of our suffering is a deeper love for God and our fellow human beings. The white roses stand for purity. If you take a close look, you will see that each rose is different. The beauty of our vocation is that we are unique individuals, endowed with different talents and gifts, but that together we are called to do God's work as members of a community.

Q: Sr. Veronica, thank you for providing these insights into the mission of the Servants of the Plan of God. We are looking forward to getting to know each of the sisters, who will be featured in the next issues of our newsletter.

(Interview by Adelheid Thieme)

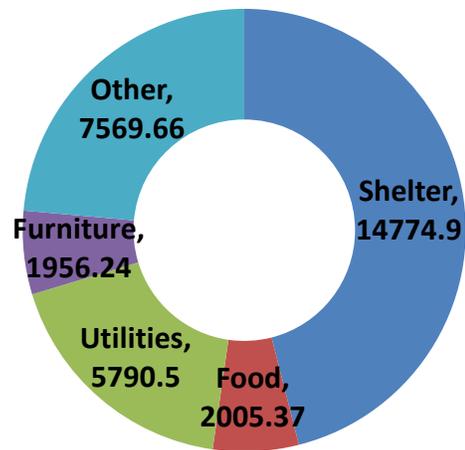
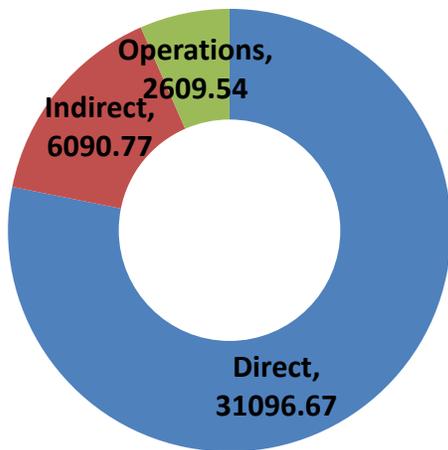
WorkBridge Students (cont. from p. 2)

All the students were amazing in their own way, but my favorite student was a young lady who absolutely glowed as she was cleaning out our refrigerator. I asked her if she liked working in our pantry, and she said "I love it." I remarked that it was such a good feeling to know we were helping people who really needed it. The girl looked down and choked up as she told me that helping the poor and hungry was personal to her because a close family member of hers is homeless.

SVdP News and Events

Financial Report First & Second Quarter 2016-17

Thank you, donors, for your continuing financial support that allows us to provide **direct** assistance to our local clients here in Tempe (see chart on the right). We mainly help with shelter, food, utilities, and furniture. We also provide **indirect** assistance to the poor by twinning with other SVdP conferences and tithing with regional SVdP facilities such as the central organization in downtown Phoenix with its public dining room and clinic. We try to keep our operational expenses as low as possible (see chart on the left). The need is great, and we rely on your generosity.



St. Vincent de Paul Ice Cream Social

Saturday & Sunday, July 8 & 9
(after 5pm and 7, 9, and 11 am Masses) in McCreedy Hall

All are welcome to help celebrate the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and learn more about our ministry.

All expenses are paid by active members of the local SVdP Conference. No donations are used for this event.

Our SVdP Conference is in need of **volunteers to help serve meals to the poor and homeless**, on the first Sunday of each month. The SVdP Dining Room is located at 67 W. Broadway in Mesa. The serving time is 9am to 11:30am.

Please sign up to help us serve in this Corporal Work of Mercy.

For more information, please contact **Jennifer Green** by email: greenteacher@hotmail.com.