

St. Vincent de Paul
Society at
Our Lady of Mt.
Carmel

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The Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

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An Interview with Fr. Craig Friedley

Q: Fr. Craig, we at OLMC appreciate your service as Parochial Vicar since July of last year. Would you mind telling us about your early formative years?

A: Certainly. I was born in Chicago and raised in a Catholic family. During my childhood, my family moved around quite a bit. I lived in Illinois, Florida, Utah, Texas, New Mexico, California, and several other states. I went to high school in California and attended the Willamette University in Oregon, where I earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Physics and a minor in Psychology.

Q: Did you enter the Seminary right after finishing college?

A: No, for several years I enjoyed teaching junior high school students in California and working as a youth counselor at the YMCA. Then I joined the military and served in the Air Force for 13 years.

Q: Did you find your priestly vocation while you were in the military?

A: No. After leaving the Air Force in 1994, I served as a professional baseball umpire for a while, did part-time teaching, and worked in the computer industry for four years. I began my return to the Catholic Church while investigating the Mormon faith. The Life Teen Program had a lot to do with my return to the faith and becoming a priest here in Phoenix.

Q: Serving in the Air Force and gaining professional experience in a variety of areas before you became a priest must have filled several years of your life.

A: That is true. It was a circuitous road, and I am not as young as many parishioners might think. Beginning in 1999, people encouraged me to enter the priesthood. Bishop Jim Wall of Gallup and Fr. Jack Spaulding were major influences during these years of discernment. In 2000, Fr. Don Kline and the diocese accepted me to enter seminary.

Q: What do you consider your primary function as a priest?

A: I want to bring the sacraments to the people, especially the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation. I would like to encourage people to serve the Lord.

Q: Do you have a “word of wisdom” for the members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society?

A: I strongly support everything that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul does for the poor in our community. It is so easy to take our material wealth for granted and give in to greed. As Christians, we are called to be grateful for the many gifts we have been given by God, share our affluence, and be generous with our time, talent, and treasure.

Q: Thank you for taking the time for this interview and for your support of our ministry.

An Answer to Her Prayers

(by Adelheid Thieme)



Brenda is a hairstylist with many years of experience. Before the economy reached a rough spot, she owned a house where she lived with her 9-year-old daughter. However, as more and more of her customers were reducing their expenses for personal care, waiting longer between haircuts and coloring their hair at home, her income steadily decreased.

For several months, she kept paying her mortgage, relying on her savings. Yet with more money going out than coming in, she eventually had to sell her house, on which she owed more than it was worth in the current housing market.

When my partner and I enter the small apartment where Brenda now lives, we are pleasantly surprised by the tasteful furniture and decorations. On the wall over the sofa, there is set of portraits that show her daughter as a baby, a toddler, a first-grader, and a first communicant.

Brenda invites us to have a seat. She is obviously embarrassed that she is in need of utility assistance, stating repeatedly that this is the first time in her life that she needs help.

She understands what it feels like to be too poor to afford a haircut. Therefore, in her free time, she volunteers at a nearby nursing home, offering to cut indigent residents’ hair for free. Grateful for her services, some of her clients pay her a few dollars, which she puts towards the rent so that she and her daughter will at least keep a roof over their heads.

This month, however, she is short of \$112, and the utility company has notified her that her electricity will be disconnected in three days. “I have been praying a lot these days,” she says. “I want to offer my daughter a nice home, decent food, and a good education, all of which cost so much money. For food, we are down to two cans of beans. If I don’t get help, I will have to choose between food and electricity. Without electricity, I won’t be able to cook and keep the lights on.”

Tears come to Brenda’s eyes when she hears that we will cover her utility bill and that we also have two big banana boxes of food for her in the car. We invite her to call us for a food box once a month and refer her to other places where she can get free food. Our visit is an answer to her prayers.

FROM THE PRESIDENTS' PEN (by Albert and Susana Marquez)

Everyone who participated in “Turkey Saturday” and “Turkey Tuesday” this past Thanksgiving season had a fun time and experienced the rewards that come to us when we do some of our Lord’s work: feed the hungry.



Collecting turkeys on “Turkey Tuesday”: Albert Marquez, Judy Bawcom, Barbara Pawlak, and Susana Marquez.

It was very gratifying to see so many parishioners turn out to help with the delivery of 300 food boxes. Our members and repeat volunteers did a lot of the behind-the-scenes work that made the whole operation run smoothly. With the help of Cox Communications employees, who delivered approximately 50 boxes, the delivery was accomplished in less than two hours.

The Thanksgiving food drive made a big difference for the families we serve. They received a turkey complete with all the trimmings such as stuffing, bread, potatoes, fresh celery, onions, carrots, cranberry sauce, and even a pumpkin pie with whipped cream.

All this was possible because of our generous benefactors who provided the turkeys, traditional Thanksgiving food staples, and money to purchase food items. The turkeys were collected during “Turkey Tuesday”, which takes place on the Tuesday just before Thanksgiving Day. This

event is sponsored jointly by our main downtown St. Vincent de Paul and Radio Station KNIX and hosted by all the Basha’s and Food City grocery stores in the Valley.

What makes “Turkey Tuesday” so memorable is to see many people coming to the stores to buy one, sometimes two, extra turkeys and additional food items to donate to St. Vincent de Paul. Our volunteers say it is a lot of fun interacting with the donors and promoting St. Vincent de Paul.

What made Turkey Tuesday so successful was not only the hard work of Conference members, but also the wonderful cooperation between sister conferences. We worked together with Sacred Heart, Holy Family, St. Anthony, and St. Stephen conferences to collect as well as share turkeys so that all conferences had the turkeys they needed.

We have been very appreciative of all the efforts made on behalf of our needy brothers and sisters during last November’s “Turkey Saturday” and “Turkey Tuesday”, and we look forward to next year.

New Member Commissioning Ceremony

(by Albert Marquez)

During our most recent conference meeting, two members were formally installed in a commissioning ceremony. Our newest members are **Patti Rogers** and **Jerry Reeves**.

Patti has been a member of our conference for several months, but she was never formally inducted. She works very hard receiving, sorting, and shelving the food that we receive from downtown St. Vincent de Paul, United Food Bank, OLMC School, and parish food drives. She also

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Commissioning Ceremony

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assembles the food boxes for our clients. Patti has recently been appointed Pantry Manager.

Jerry is a more recent newcomer to us. As a team, he and his wife deliver food boxes to our clients. He also enjoys assisting Patti in the pantry, sorting and shelving the food. Our conference is blessed by the addition of Patti and Jerry.



Jerry Reeves (left) and Patricia Rogers were inducted into the St. Vincent de Paul Society by Allen Vaughan, District 12 President.

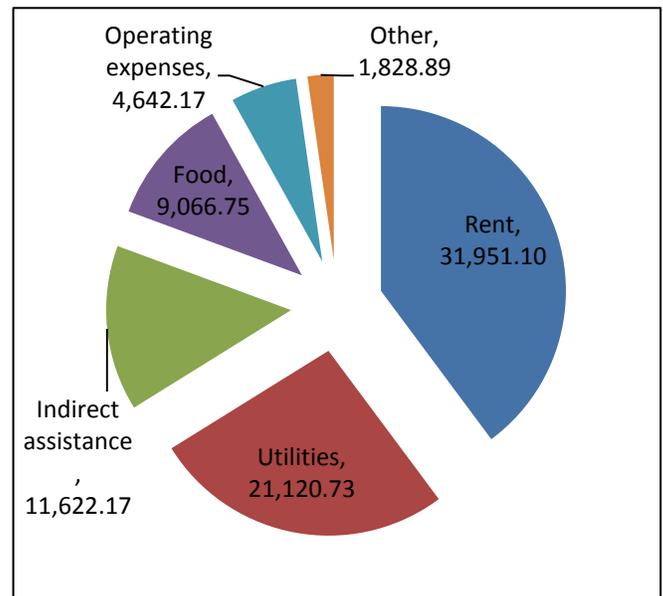
The Commissioning Ceremony was conducted by our District 12 President, Allen Vaughan. Patti and Jerry were formally received by our conference after they pledged to grow in holiness and friendship and strive to affirm the dignity of the poor and suffering. They also will work to promote the Mission and Values of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The conference members, in turn, offered to support and pray for Jerry and Patti so that together we would carry out the mission of the Society. At the conclusion of the ceremony, both Patti and Jerry received a pin of the Society.

Financial Report 2010

We would like to thank our donors who continued to generously support our St. Vincent de Paul conference in 2010. Our **total income** from church/poor box, fundraising, and other sources (e.g. Fitness Ministry, Lenten Soup, OLMC School Mission, Rosary Groups) was **\$ 86,167.03**.

The chart below shows our **total expenses**: **\$80,231.81**.



Our Wish

Do you have a refrigerator that you could donate for use in our pantry? Please call us at 480-966-1974.