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# The Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

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## OLMC School's "Baby Jesus" Diaper Drive



In December, under the direction of **Regan Iker-Lopez** (left), the students of OLMC held their annual "Baby Jesus" Diaper Drive. The Student Council (above) proudly delivered the diapers, which are very much appreciated by the families with young children that come to SVDP for help.

## Million Can Crusade

(by Bill and Janet Richwine)

In early November, we received a call from the St. Vincent de Paul main campus, indicating some organizations in Tempe were interested in helping with the Thanksgiving Food Drive. One of the organizations was **The Valley Child Care** on W. Ray Road in Mesa.

On our first contact, we asked how many boxes they felt they could use – and the answer was "about 3." On Monday before Thanksgiving, we called to see if the boxes were ready to be picked up and were told, "No." It seemed the children and staff were conducting a challenge and that they could use more boxes. We quickly dropped off 4 more boxes and were told to come back after Thanksgiving and probably bring a truck.

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## Million Can Crusade *(continued from p. 1)*

On Monday after Thanksgiving, we were pleasantly surprised with about **20 boxes** of cans and miscellaneous food items. Many of their collection boxes were brightly decorated. We completely filled the pick-up truck. The children and staff exemplify the true spirit of Thanksgiving. Their parting words were: "Make sure we're on the list for next year."



Albert Marquez, Co-President, picking up donated food items from The Valley Child Care in Mesa.

Also, from our pre-Thanksgiving Food Drive, we received very substantial contributions from **Harter Aerospace** and **Lawyer's Title**, both in Tempe.

We need help in delivering food boxes. Will you help?

## Surviving on a Fixed Income

(by Adelheid Thieme)

During one of our recent home visits, my partner and I meet Laura, a lady in her early 70's who has been a parishioner of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel for 46 years. For many years, she has donated to St. Vincent de Paul; she never imagined that she would ever need to ask for help from our organization. As she welcomes us into her home, she is obviously embarrassed.

We sit down at her kitchen table where she has placed her utility bills for us to review. Up until recently, Laura has been able to supplement her meager Social Security check by working at a local store. However, since she is suffering from acute anemia, she has been unable to retain employment. "I have done everything I could think of to make ends meet with my fixed income," she says. "I have rented out two spare rooms to single mothers, but usually, after one or two months, they do not keep their commitment. On the contrary, I end up providing meals for them, sitting their children free of charge, and buying food for their dog. I like to help wherever I can, but I need to pay my bills, too. After I have covered my medical expenses, there is no money left for water and electricity."

Laura is extremely grateful that we are able to pay a large portion of her water bill, thus preventing the water to her house to be shut off. She has tears in her eyes when she sees the two banana boxes full of food, even though she regrets that the boxes do not contain bath tissue and toothpaste, a real luxury for her these days. We hope that we will be able to include some the next time we bring her a food box. As we leave, Laura promises to pray for our donors, on whose generosity she is currently relying for help.

## An Evening on the Spirituality of Mother Teresa

(by Adelheid Thieme)

On January 25, at our St. Vincent de Paul meeting, **Fr. Ernesto Reynoso** gave a presentation about Mother Teresa and showed a video of an interview with her. Mother Teresa's ministry attracted many volunteers from all over the world. Looking for meaning in their own lives, they felt inspired by the charitable love practiced by this simple nun.



As she was alleviating the suffering of many people in the streets of Calcutta, she was following Jesus' call to service: "Whatever you did for the least of My brothers and sisters, you did for Me." (*Matthew 25:40*). Giving love

to one person at a time, Mother Teresa made a tremendous difference to the sick and dying and led her co-workers to connect with the Lord and grow in holiness. The following words of Mother Teresa demonstrate the power of faith and love: *"The fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service, the fruit of service is peace."*



Members of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference attending Fr. Ernesto Reynoso's presentation on Mother Teresa

## From the President's Pen

(by Albert Marquez)

Recently, my cell phone rang, which is not unusual. What was unusual is that it was a call from a person asking for assistance from our St. Vincent de Paul Conference. As a practice, volunteers don't give out private home or cell phone numbers to clients or others outside our group. Most of the calls for financial help or for food come to our pantry office. Usually they may be answered by a person during regular hours or they go into our message machine and the calls are returned later or the next day.

So I was a little irritated that someone had given my private number to a client, especially since my wife and I were just about to drive out of town on a short weekend holiday. I started to explain to the person that she could call our pantry and leave her number and someone would call her back and we would respond in a timely manner. But it occurred to me that on a weekend it would be at best two or three days before we could respond to her needs. As she described her situation, my wife and I decided to make a home visit and further assess her needs.

We visited a young woman under 30 years old at one of Tempe's very modest motels where residents pay by the day or by the week. She is a single mom who is living alone because she is unable to care for several young children and barely able to take care of herself. She suffered a stroke last year and has been through some health care and therapy until she lost her AHCCCS coverage. Her children are being cared for by her mother and she visits them on some weekends for short periods because the

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## From the President's Pen *(continued from p. 3)*

children get upset at her condition of halting speech and memory lapses.

The father of the children is not around and is not providing any support. She lived with her step-grandfather for a time, but was unable to remain with him. She is in the process of getting her Social Security Disability approved and hopes it will start soon.

She is a very intelligent person who understands quite well her medical condition and limitations. She is very self-conscious of dealing with people with her speech and memory problems.

We were able to help with one week's rent. In retrospect, I believe the Lord was calling us to alter our plans and respond to the needs of this young woman. I am glad she had our phone number.

## Christmas 2011 Adopt-A-Family

(by Erlinda Varela Schweller)

On October 29, a committee of eight volunteers (most of them new to the Adopt-A-Family program) found themselves scurrying to deliver Adopt-A-Family applications to families requesting to be adopted.

These volunteers met weekly to screen applications, made phone calls to families for corrections or questions, and translated from Spanish to English. Then the committee matched the sponsors' requests for a small, medium, or large family. A liaison was assigned to each sponsor.

Christmas 2011 was made happier by providing **food and gifts to 121 families, toys and clothing to 421 children, serving a total of 627 family members.**

A big thank you to the sponsors and volunteers who helped make the AAF 2011 a success and provide a better holiday for many families in Tempe.

## In Memory of Fr. Johnrose Hayden

(by Ben Picone)



Our conference lost a very dear friend who was also our Spiritual Advisor for approximately two years. He was a true Vincentian.

Fr. Johnrose was an extremely humble person and a very pious priest. Even after his illness prevented him from being active, he attended meetings periodically. We felt honored that he could remember us by our first names. When he led us in prayers, he made us feel that we were not only truly doing God's work, but that we could also do so much more.

Now that he sits among the saints and the angels, we pray that he keeps an eye on our conference. May he rest in peace.