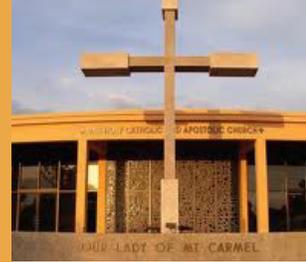




THE Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference March 2016



visit us online at <http://olmcstvincentdepaul.weebly.com>

OLMC School Partners with St. Vincent de Paul to Serve the Community



During Catholic School Week, students of OLMC School collected items for nutritious food boxes. They packed and creatively decorated more than 100 boxes to be distributed to needy families in Tempe.

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Catholic Schools Week (CSW) is a nationwide celebration of Catholic Schools in America. In 2016, the theme was Faith, Knowledge and Service. Catholic schools all across the nation created and participated in various activities to celebrate our Catholic schools.

In Tempe, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel K-8 Catholic School, we decided to take the service aspect to its pinnacle. To kick off Catholic Schools Week, the school partnered with the OLMC St. Vincent de Paul food pantry to help needy people in our community.

“As the CSW coordinators, Mrs. Curtin and I wanted to help the children understand that we are all called to serve and that, no matter how young or old a person may be, service in His name reflects God’s love,” says Lisa Montanez, kindergarten teacher at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. (continued on p.2)

OLMC School Partners with St. Vincent de Paul (continued from p. 1)

Each of the 18 classes at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School and the Little Lambs Preschool were asked to donate a specific item that was in great demand at the pantry. The goal was 50 items per class (900 in total), but they greatly exceeded that goal and collected over 3,100 items, including pasta, soup, peanut butter, jelly, soap, canned meats, stew, cereal, spaghetti sauce, canned fruits and vegetables, rice and mac & cheese. The students also included notes of well wishes and faithful sentiments such as "Love is food for the soul. God is love" or "With God all things are possible."



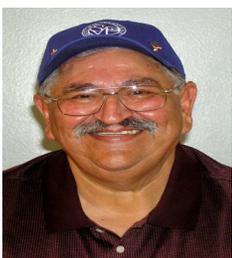
Mrs. Montanez and Mrs. Curtin (8th grade Teacher) worked with Mrs. Reagan Iker-Lopez, an OLMC Vincentian, to help coordinate the food packing and eventual distribution of the boxes. The school transformed the cafeteria into a food collection and packing center on Monday, February 1. Each of the nearly 400 students participated to help pack over 100 boxes for the OLMC St. Vincent de Paul pantry.

"More than one person remarked to me the impressive nature of the donations and the good example of the power of working together we have set as a community to support those in need," says Bruce Hermie, Principal at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School.

"The partnership between the OLMC SVdP and OLMC School has been ongoing for a number of years as the school considers SVdP to be part of their Corporal Works of Mercy campaign each month. Joining the resources of our generous school community with the loving servants at SVdP was a natural extension of our partnership," says Regan Iker-Lopez, Sr. Director, Strategy-Home Delivery & Member Services.

Catholic Schools Week at Our Lady of Mount Carmel...living His word, educating His children and serving His people.

The Year of Mercy at SVdP



As the journey of our Year of Mercy unfolds, I am reminded of the journey of St. Vincent de Paul. It was an encounter of many challenges, imprisonment, shipwrecks, isolation and even abandonment. Ultimately, the road led to Vincent's conversion to the poor. This was not the road he thought he was on when his travels began. The road he was traveling, he thought, led him away from the poor. However, the road the Lord put him on instead led circuitously to the poor. Vincent's ambition, his drive to succeed, was refocused to liberate the poor from their degradation and enslavement. He saw the poor as his masters.

Jesus is near us so that he may save us who cry out to him and call his name. Our journey began on Turkey Saturday, a day when all of us at OLMC came together and took 217 food boxes to those in need. It was followed by "Adopt a Family" before Christmas and, during Catholic Schools Week, continued on with the help of our OLMC students, school teachers and parents. They brightened the smile of **Jesus** as we helped those in need. Thank You!

Blessings,
Julian Natividad
President, SVdP-OLMC

Adopting a Family for Christmas (by Jenelle Van Brunt)



Jenelle Van Brunt,
OLMC parishioner

Our family adopted a family from St. Vincent de Paul this Advent season. I phoned the mother of the family, and we had a chat in Spanish, during which she told me about herself, her husband and five children, and the gifts they wanted and needed for Christmas.

Shopping is not my favorite pastime, but I figured that I had more free time than anyone else in my family. So I took off, list in hand, to tackle the job of finding 21 gifts (three for each family member) in the right sizes, colors, and specifications requested. Before I entered the store, I made a very wise decision: I asked the Blessed Mother to be my personal shopper!

Within ONE HOUR in ONE STORE, I had purchased 90% of the items on the list. Tell me THAT isn't a miracle! The other items were left for another short trip to another store, and I happily headed home, and hauled the large shopping bags upstairs to a bedroom where they would be stored until FAMILY GIFT WRAPPING NIGHT to be held on Sunday after a dinner at our home.

Everyone, from my husband to our six-year-old grandson, was involved in this project. The gifts were in seven groups, with name cards provided. Lots of wrapping paper, scissors, tape, ribbon, and assorted boxes and gift bags lay all over the floor. With Christmas music playing in the background, our family had nicely wrapped each gift in less than half an hour.

One more phone conversation with the mother, and we had the menu for their Christmas Eve dinner. She was so excited and said her children were crying because there were no gifts for them this Christmas. Her husband, who works laying tile, was out of work, and they had no extra money.

We made a run to Food City to pick up the masa, meat and banana leaves for her tamales, plus the chocolate donuts she wanted for their dessert, and we were ready for the three-car caravan to their mobile home on December 23. She had said they wanted a small Christmas tree, and the nice man at the tree lot agreed to sell us a "Charlie Brown" tree for \$20! We packed the little tree along with all the bags of wrapped gifts and the groceries.

We agreed upon a delivery time, picked up our grandchildren to join in, and arrived in front of the brightly decorated mobile home in Tempe, to be greeted warmly by the entire family.

They invited us into their small, clean living room. The younger children were very excited to meet us and see our

grandchildren. The father told us of their youngest daughter's "miracle." The two-year-old girl had received life-saving medical care here in Phoenix. With the high cost of medical services and his lack of employment, he felt blessed that his children would have Christmas presents this year.

We stayed for half an hour with this family, laughing, smiling, and communicating as well as we could. A large picture of Jesus and a framed portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe were prominently displayed on the wall of their kitchen. This is a family that is poor in worldly goods, but rich in faith and love.

I couldn't help but notice the little Christmas tree that was on the floor of their home. The mother said someone had just given them the tree, with some lights and ornaments. But, her next door neighbors did not have a tree, and so it was promptly decided where the "Charlie Brown" tree was to go. As we bade our farewells to this family, they were on their way to bring some joy to their neighbors.

As I was driving my grandchildren back to their home, I asked them how they felt about what they had just done. Their answers all reflected the joy and satisfaction that only comes from giving. It was, I think, our greatest Christmas gift to them this year.

Requesting Baptism into the Catholic Church (by Maxine Malini)



After Christmas, my partner and I were doing home visits. Our first stop was a young woman, out of work, who needed a food box. A young man, her brother, stood behind

her and offered to carry the food boxes upstairs to the apartment.

As he came with us, we asked if there was anything else we could help them with. The young man, who lived in an adjacent apartment, said he could use help with his electric bill as his work hours had been cut back severely.

We said we could help and walked with him to his apartment, where we met his wife and their 6-month-old baby. His wife asked with interest, "Where are you from?" We said we were from St. Vincent de Paul at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

"That's a Catholic church, isn't it?" she said. "I am a baptized and confirmed Catholic, and I would like to have my baby baptized. I have been looking for a nearby Catholic church. My mother has been praying for years for me to come back to the church, but I was not ready until now. Can the baby be baptized if my husband is not Catholic? Are there any classes for my husband to become Catholic?"

We gave them information about Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church and asked their permission for follow-up contact. We then prayed with them in thanksgiving for so unexpectedly being able to meet their material needs and the spiritual desires of their hearts. God used a corporal work of mercy to draw a family into His love, into His church.

Thank-you Note from Maggie's Place



St Vincent
de Paul

We are so grateful for your recent donation of baby food formula to Maggie's Place. Your generosity and faithful support helps our moms on their journey to create a new life for themselves + their children.

Thank you
Sincerely
Wendy



Providing houses of hospitality and ongoing support for pregnant and parenting women in need.