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The Vincentian

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Conference

December 2011



Interview with Rev. Ernesto Reynoso

(by Adelheid Thieme)

Q: Padre Ernesto, at OLMC we recently welcomed you as “priest in residence” in our parish. What are the responsibilities that Bishop Olmsted assigned to you in addition to assisting Fr. John?

A: My major responsibility is to serve as Adjutant Judicial Vicar of the Tribunal of the Diocese of Phoenix, where I am mainly involved with marriage cases. I find this work very meaningful as it provides both justice and healing. My assignment deals also with all kind of issues related to Church law such as the creation of religious orders and erection of parishes.

Q: When did you enter the priesthood?

A: As a matter of fact, I entered the priesthood relatively late. After earning my Bachelor of Arts degree in Electronic Media from the University of Texas in El Paso, Texas, I worked as a software engineer for 3 ½ years in the semiconductor products sector of Motorola. I served as a project leader for the development of an intranet that consolidated all the internal departments into a single portal. Even though I enjoyed my work, I did not feel that I was serving the Lord the way He wanted me to.

Q: How did you find your vocation?

A: I have always been a faithful adorer of the Blessed Sacrament. One day after spending time in adoration and urgently asking the Lord to show me His way, I was approached by a second adorer, the only person who had been in the chapel with me. This person told me that I should enter seminary. I thought that this was a random comment that I could safely ignore. The next time I went to adoration at a different time so that I would not meet this person again. However, the same person was there and reiterated that I should consider the priesthood. I took this as a sign now, no longer as a coincidence. After an extended period of discernment, I entered St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana, completed the Master of Theology and the Master in Divinity, and was ordained on June 2, 2007.

Q: Where was your first assignment as a priest and how did you prepare for your current office?

A: I was assigned to Most Holy Trinity in North Phoenix, where I stayed until 2009. My work in this parish was very satisfying, and I was pleased to receive the 2009 Arizona Knights of Columbus “Priest of the Year” Award. Then the bishop asked me to study for my Licentiate in Canon Law. I attended the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC and graduated in 2011.

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Q: Did your family play a role in the early formation of your faith?

A: I come from a close-knit Catholic family. My parents were very religious, and so were my two brothers and my sister. I grew up in Juarez, a border town in Chihuahua, Mexico, where I was exposed to both Mexican and American culture. In my prayer life at home, I learned to value the beautiful prayers that are found in the traditional prayer books.

Q: How do you see your role at OLMC?

A: I want to serve the people in this parish in humility and bring them hope and joy. Many parishioners I have met impress me by their holiness, and I learn a lot from the young, the sick, the elderly, and the couples with young children. I feel blessed to have been sent to such a good community, and I would like to get involved with some of the groups in this parish.

Q: How do you keep balance in your life?

A: I try to devote a good amount of time to prayer. To remain physically healthy, I go swimming. When I was in high school, I participated in swim competitions. I am also interested in many other sports, and I like to draw in pencil or ink.

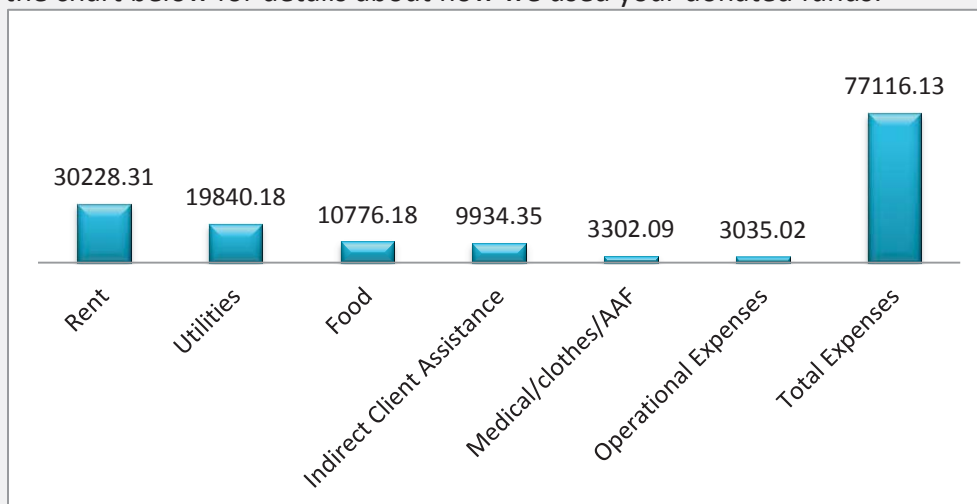
Q: Thank you for taking the time for this interview. Do you have a final “word of wisdom” for the members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society?

A: I am very impressed by the sincere efforts of the SVDP conference to assist the needy and the support that they get from the parishioners. Their acts of charity, as the Book of Revelation says, are their “wedding garments,” the righteous deeds of the saints. I would like to conclude with the beautiful grace found in the phrase of 1 Peter 4:8 when he talks about doing charitable works for the love of the other. This type of charitable love “covers a multitude of sins.” So stay on the mission, and God bless you all.

Annual Financial Report

As the year 2011 comes to an end, we would like to take the opportunity to thank all our donors for their continual support. Every week, we find bags of groceries in the bins at the entrance of the church. What a wonderful way to remember the less fortunate for whom a box of cereals or a can of corn makes a difference.

We are also grateful for the school mission funds that were donated by the students at OLMC School, a total of \$770.49. In addition, we received donations from the Fitness Ministry, the Cub Scout Pack 71, and the Rosary Group. Our special thanks go to all our regular donors. The **total donations** in the fiscal year that ended on September 30 were **\$86,177.55**. Tax statements and letters of appreciation will be sent out in January 2012. Please see the chart below for details about how we used your donated funds:



A Difficult Choice

(by Adelheid Thieme)



Steve is an Afghanistan war veteran. Now that the weather has cooled down, he spends part of his days sitting in front of his apartment, striking up a friendly conversation with passers-by. We say "hello" to him as we deliver a food box to the family next door. Realizing that we are from St. Vincent de Paul, Steve invites us into his apartment to show us a crucifix that a friend gave him after a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It is carved out of olive wood and is studded with turquoise and mother-of-pearl.

As we start talking with Steve, we learn that he is trying to make ends meet on a small veteran pension that he receives after returning from combat with severe injuries. His hearing is significantly impaired, and he has a neurological condition that prevents him from finding employment. Medical expenses often force him to choose between getting necessary medications and buying groceries, a difficult choice indeed. He needs to carefully budget the money he spends on food so that he can afford the co-payments for his medications, without which he can barely walk and is practically confined to his bed. Fortunately, the apartment manager lets him take care of the landscaping in the courtyard of the apartment complex, a job that he enjoys and that allows him to supplement his meager income.

We invite Steve to call our office for a food box, but let him know that he may have to wait for more than a week. Even though our pantry is well stocked, we lack volunteers to deliver the food boxes. Will you help?

Adopt-A-Family 2011

The OLMC conference of St. Vincent de Paul continues to maintain a flourishing Christmas "Adopt-A-Family" Program. Under the direction of **Erlinda Varela-Schweller** this year, we hope to again be able to make Christmas brighter for about 100 families. It is not too late to sign up as a **sponsor**. Please pick up a neon pink brochure at the back of OLMC church or give us a call at 480-966-1974 by **December 15**.

Saturday Food Deliveries: Volunteers Needed

Every week, we receive many requests for emergency food boxes. We are often inundated by requests and need to inform families that they may have to wait for more than a week before we will be able to take them their food.

If you and your partner have time to deliver a food box on **Saturday mornings**, please call **Albert Marquez** at **602-329-3847** or **Ben Picone** at **480-221-6914** for more information. If we know you are coming, pre-packed food boxes and maps showing the location of the families will be available from 9:00 to 12:00. Please remember our Lord's words, "What you do for the least of my brethren, you do it for me."

Million Can Crusade 2011

(by Susana and Albert Marquez)

OLMC St. Vincent de Paul Conference is participating in what is billed as the Valley's largest food can drive. The drive is being promoted by KNIX Country Radio's Ben & Matt all across the valley. Principal businesses that are taking part are Safeway, Ace Hardware, Desert Schools Credit Unions, Arizona Ford Dealers,

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Rio Salado College and Mirrasou Winery. The campaign is nominally scheduled from November 1st through the 23rd. However, some businesses have decided to continue through December.

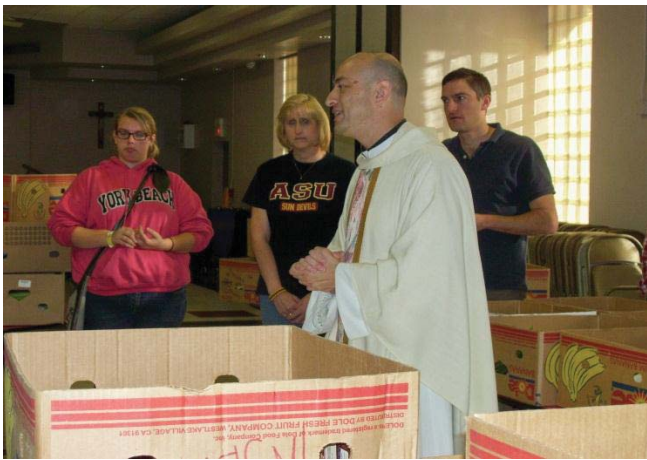
As smaller businesses sign up to collect food cans, our Downtown SVdP office assigns them to the nearest SVdP conference to supply boxes and pick the cans up at the end of the crusade.

On the local scene we have been assigned five offices that will collect cans for us. They are Harter Aerospace, Lawyer's Title, Valley Child Care, Body Works By Design and ATMI. We have taken boxes and are in contact with them. Also, as we visit apartment managers, we have invited several to take part in the crusade. So far three apartment complexes have joined. They are Desert Palms, Haven Luxury Apartments and The Park In Tempe.

Since our requests for food deliveries have increased quite a bit, this food will come in very handy.

Turkey Saturday Delivery to 300 Families

Every year, on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, the St. Vincent de Paul Conference at OLMC delivers a Thanksgiving food box to needy families in our community. This year, we were able to serve 300 families.



Fr. Ernesto Reynoso joined us for a prayer and blessed the food.

As early as 7:00 am, many parishioners convened in McCready Hall to pre-pack the food boxes: corn, green beans, peas, potatoes, onions, celery, and a pumpkin pie.



Genevieve Leach, Stephanie Leach, Pat Martin, and Denise Murphy (left to right) helped with the packing of the boxes.

Other volunteers drove to a cold-storage facility and picked up the 300 turkeys that had been stored for our use. At 8:00 am, about 100 more parishioners joined them to deliver the boxes to the families that had been notified to expect them.

The event was a family affair. Three generations enjoyed working together for the benefit of the less fortunate. Thank you to all the parents who are teaching their children to care for the poor.



Maryann Kassel (left), Laura Daily and her sons, Jarrod and Jake Daily, participated in the food drive.