



# Vincentian Solidarity Office

November 2025 Bulletin

## Eritrea: Tapping Clean Energy for Children's Health and Hygiene

Thanks to the support of the Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO), and other benefactors, the Hebo Orphanage in Eritrea has successfully completed a transformative solar energy installation. Because acquiring electricity or fuel to power the generator is unreliable, the orphanage has had to survive sometimes for weeks without power. Without power, the orphanage cannot do the laundry for the 30 children under the age of 4 in their care. By harnessing the bountiful sunlight into electricity, the missionaries at Hebo are able to keep the children clean.

A building was constructed to house a solar-powered water pumping system. Then 36 solar panels were mounted to power the water pump and laundry facilities. Despite delays due to government restrictions and technical hurdles, particularly sourcing and installing the inverter and batteries, the team

persevered with help from engineers, volunteers, and local suppliers.

This initiative not only ensures clean water and improved sanitation but also enhances the quality of care for the orphans, many of whom lost their mothers at birth. The Vincentian community, including the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity, expressed heartfelt gratitude. Fr. Amine Weldeghebriel, C.M. and Sr. Sara Hagos, D.C. who are on site in Hebo, wrote that the laundry is important for keeping the babies neat and clean. They also wrote that "having a solar system is important for the protection and growth of the orphans."



Above: Work begins on the construction of the pump house.



The finished building with new solar panels installed. The pump is said to be faster now.

### Fr. Joel's Solidarity Notes

Harnessing Water for Building Solidarity

We feature community-based water projects (Eritrea, Honduras, Cameroon) as drivers of grassroots development. Collective efforts to harness water can have ripple effects of improving the well-being of communities, creating a healthier environment and fostering economic growth. Sustainable water management delivers wide-ranging benefits across the planet, people, and progress (triple bottom line).

- Environmental Impacts

It safeguards ecosystems, improves water efficiency, and strengthens climate resilience while reducing pollution and energy use.

- Community Impacts

For communities, it enhances health, equity, and education—empowering women and vulnerable groups through safer, better access and participation.

- Economic Impacts

Economically, it creates jobs, boosts productivity, supports agriculture, and drives inclusive growth.

Together, these projects secure water for the future while advancing environmental sustainability, social well-being, and economic prosperity.

Vincentian Solidarity Office | 500 East Chelton Avenue | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19144 | USA  
Telephone: +1 215-713-3998

Our goal: To assist the Congregation of the Mission with mobilizing resources for its evangelization and service of the poor.

How to contact us:

Fr. Joel Bernardo, C.M.  
Executive Director  
Email: jbernardo@cmphlsvs.org

Lauren Lynch, Project Manager  
Email: llynch@cmphlsvs.org

Regina Rossi, Executive Assistant  
Email: rrossi@cmphlsvs.org

Jill Witmer Sinha, Report Manager  
Email: jwsinha@cmphlsvs.org



Vincentian Solidarity Office

www.cmglobal.org/vso

[Click here to give a gift in support of our projects](#)

## Honduras: Harvesting Water to Keep the Harvest Flowing

In the El Merendón region of Honduras, people are facing water shortages. This is due to problems like deforestation, uneven rainfall, and weak infrastructure, especially the lack of systems to deliver water. Recent disasters, such as heavy rain, landslides, and a dam collapse, have made things worse. Ongoing problems include insufficient capacity for water management and distribution, leading to communities lacking access to clean water.

These are the circumstances facing The Virgen de Suyapa Agricultural School in El Merendón, Honduras. The school's water shortages were affecting students and their agricultural activities. With the help of the VSO, funds were secured to enable them to install a closed water supply system with filters and storage tanks, a

drip irrigation system, and rainwater harvesting solutions.

The project now provides clean drinking water and sustainable irrigation for over 150 students, teachers and staff, improving hygiene, food security, and local development

Looking ahead, the school plans to sustain the system through crop sales, preventive maintenance, and educational programs promoting water conservation.



*Above: opening the pipes from new tank to the irrigation system*



*The school community celebrating the new water system.*

## Cameroon: Drilling a Wellspring for Community Wellbeing



*Above: the community drawing the first water just flowing from the well*



*Drill strikes water for the first time.*

Mfoundi, Cameroon, which includes the capital city Yaoundé faces other significant water-related challenges due to urbanization, infrastructure issues, and flooding risks. During the dry season people must walk long distances to gather water. They are not always sure where to go find it either. Fr. Laurent Zibi, CM requested help from the VSO to drill a borehole well and construct a system to bring drinking water to the entire community of the Parish of Jean Marc de Mvog-Betsi.

By drilling the well, constructing the water

tower and installing the plumbing to water fountains, the project hopes to reduce the risks of disease and, indirectly, boost the economy of the parish. Over 300 people now have reliable access to drinking water. According to Fr. Zibi, the people are very happy with the new water source. Families are paying a small monthly sum to use the fountains. The money helps with the electric bills for the pump and will start a reserve fund for repairs and upkeep in the future.



The VSO is grateful to the donors and agencies that make our work possible, including:

The Franz Foundation;

The Diocese of Essen, Germany

Oeuvre d'Orient

AMPER Naples

Mr. Rivera

Congregation of the Mission Western Province, USA;

Congregation of the Mission Eastern Province, USA;

Congregation of the Mission New England Province, USA;

Fr. Sy Peterka's Africa Appeal;

The Provinces and Houses of the

Congregation of the Mission who contribute to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund;

USA Donors;

And donors to VIMS for their support.



[www.VIMS1617.org](http://www.VIMS1617.org)