

## **Voice of the Poor Discernment**

By Rosemary Anton

Many obstacles faced by thousands of poor and marginalized people cannot be solved by the good works of individuals or even large organizations like SVdP. Only citizens organized through governments can provide meaningful response. Governmental budgets answer the questions:

- What do we as a people believe about our obligations to assist the poor and vulnerable?
- What safety nets are so essential that we do not consider ourselves a humane society if we do not provide them?

Part 7 of the Society's Rule "Relationship with Civil Society: Work for Social Justice" calls Vincentians to contact their elected officials to support legislation that is consistent with their Gospel and Vincentian call to care for the poor and disadvantaged among us.

## **Emergency Utility Assistance**

Last year SVdP Conferences in northern and central Arizona contributed \$1.425 million in emergency utility assistance to desperate families. The City of Phoenix spent over \$6 million for emergency utility assistance – an amount that serves only 2% of the nearly 600,000 eligible for help. *This year requests to our Conferences, CAP offices and City of Phoenix Family Service Centers are greater and more numerous.* Voice of the Poor continues to work with members of the Arizona congressional delegation to increase LIHEAP funding (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program) for AZ. Even with a revised federal formula taking into consideration extreme heat, AZ is still below other "sun belt" states such as FL, GA and TX. To be effective, VOP needs information and stories from our conferences about the critical need for emergency utility assistance.

*Thank you to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Corpus Christi and St. Clare of Assisi for responding to the utility survey below. It is NOT too late! Please help us tell the stories by completing the Conference Report on Utility Assistance at the end of this article.*

## **Kino Border Initiative Program a Success:**

Thank you to Kathy Jorgensen, Debbie DiCarlo and Lisa LaLiberte for their efforts.

Over 125 came to St. Paul's on September 20 to be educated about the KBI's work

**Conference Report on Requests for Utility Assistance** *Cut and paste and send to*

*Lucy Howell at [Howishome@aol.com](mailto:Howishome@aol.com) or mail to Lucy c/o SVdP. P.O.Box 13600, Phoenix, AZ*

*85002*Name of

Conference \_\_\_\_\_ Address of  
Conference \_\_\_\_\_ Name/phone  
number of Conference Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

- Examples of conditions you are seeing when you make home visits in response to requests for utility assistance?
- Are requests (number and amount) larger this year? Can you quantify increase over last year?
- How is your Conference managing these requests?
- What is your experience with Family Service Centers or CAP offices?
- Have you had success in working with APS? SRP? How?
- Where have you had success in getting utility assistance?
- Innovations to help stretch utility dollars?
- Comments or suggestions?

**VOP next meets on Mon., 10/12 at 3:30 p.m. at the law office of Ron Meyer located at 3636 N. Central Avenue, Suite 700 in Phoenix.**