

## SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Recently Armen Boyajian, an executive for the Golden Harvest Food Bank, requested a description of St. Mary's St. Vincent de Paul activities for an article in the agency's Spring newsletter, Loaves & Fishes. A Vincentian volunteer, Marie Pelkey, responded. She noted that the Golden Harvest program has enabled us to purchase food at 17 cents per pound, and as a result, serve hundreds more needy clients than would otherwise be possible. In 2004 we had well over 2,000 client visits, representing over 7,000 people, for emergency food supplies. We were also able to help over 700 clients, many with large families, keep their utilities in service.

Marie included examples of our clients, such as a handicapped man unable to work while he and his wife were expecting a baby. They were given food as well as furniture donated by a parishioner. The crib and other necessities made their home more livable when their newborn arrived.

Twelve people were found living with no heat and trash bags over the windows to keep out the wind. A heater was provided, and Tom Grillo, Society President, and other volunteers filled his van and delivered food, kitchen supplies, linens and bedding.

Two families, living in a trailer, asked for help. They were taking turns sleeping on the floor in sleeping bags, while trying to repair a second, abandoned trailer. Financial support, beds and food were provided, while volunteers worked weekends to help make the second trailer livable for one of the families.

Dean Keaton, Society Secretary, described a female client who was deaf and mute, communicating with pencil and paper. She needed food, but also wrote she was sleeping on the floor and experiencing severe spine and shoulder pain. Dean conferred with other officers, and it was decided to purchase her a bed. He also located a donated love seat to replace her broken down couch. When the bed set arrived, she was presented with sheets, pillow cases and a blanket. Dean wrote that the woman was like a six year old walking into the family room Christmas morning to find a new bicycle. Mr. Boyajian wrote in the newsletter that Marie's letter was one of the "most compelling descriptions of service to the poor" he had ever read.

Next weekend, May 21-22, after masses, is our monthly **I CARE, I SHARE** collection. You, our fellow parishioners, make our work possible.