



**ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CENTER** for the Mentally and Physically Disabled is operated by religious sisters of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary, Mother of Mercy in the Diocese of Umuahia in the State of Abia, Nigeria.

Superstition that has not yielded to the light of the Gospel sometimes results in the view that children born with mental or physical disabilities are a punishment of the parents/family who have somehow "angered the Spirits." These misperceptions often result in shame or resentment by family members toward the handicapped, and can lead to their neglect or abuse in terrible ways. When coupled with acute poverty and the absence of even minimal government social services, the resulting situation for the mentally and physically challenged children can be desperate.

The Center provides both material care (food, shelter, etc.) and religious and vocational training according to the needs and abilities of each individual. In some cases, the Center provides this assistance to children in conjunction with care from their parents and families. Sadly, because of the stigma attached to physical and mental handicaps in the local culture, some children are abandoned to the total and permanent care of the Sisters at the Center.

If your charity leads you to desire to help these children at the St. Vincent de Paul Center in Nigeria, you can send your donations to the priest who serves as the Center's local Procurator. Because of banking irregularities and excessive fees that are levied on foreign transactions by Nigerian banks, the Procurator will cash the checks locally and send the funds electronically via "money-grams" to the Center. The addresses of donors will also be transmitted so that they may receive written acknowledgement of their gifts from the Sisters.

Checks should be made out to: The Rev. Fr. Samuel Kalu J.C.L. Procurator (for the St. Vincent de Paul Center) and mailed to him at the Catholic Pastoral Center 2300 S. 9<sup>th</sup> St. Lafayette IN 47909-2400