



Society of St. Vincent de Paul Our Lady of the Atonement Catholic Church

15415 Red Robin San Antonio, Texas 78255 (210) 695-2944

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"No work of charity is foreign to the Society."

A JOURNEY OF FAITH FROM IRAQ TO TURKEY TO SAN ANTONIO AND OUR LADY OF THE ATONEMENT

It's been one year since Saif Alalossi and his wife Zina found their way to Our Lady of the Atonement. Here is their amazing story:

Saif was an interpreter at the U.S. Embassy in Bagdad and an escort for VIPs who traveled outside the safe Green Zone. He feared reprisals after his contract was up three years ago due to his relationship with the U.S. and his Orthodox Christian faith. He and Zina left Iraq for Turkey, where an Air Force captain he had worked with helped him with immigration paperwork. A local Iraqi doctor sponsored him to come to San Antonio.

Initially, Catholic Charities helped with rent, food, and utilities. However, Saif & Zina gave up federal aid as refugees when he found employment as a security guard. It was difficult to make ends meet and so they contacted us. SVDP set up the initial home visit. They needed some groceries. And, Zina was seven months pregnant with their first child and had nothing ready for the baby.



**Our Lady of the Atonement SVDP members
celebrating Joseph's Baptism**



Saif, Zina, & Joseph; godparents Chris Cortes & Katherine Wright (parishioner); and Father Moore

Our Vincentians donated newborn essentials and baby furniture and gear. We visited the hospital when Joseph was born. We made regular home visits and watched Joseph grow into his big smile and precious eyes. Saif and Zina welcomed us into their lives. They showed us how to be hopeful for the future and realize how blessed we really are. They were grateful for our friendship and grateful to be in America with the possibilities of a better life for Joseph.

And, this is not the end of the story...

Saif is now working at a technology job with better pay and taking classes at San Antonio College. Zina is taking community education classes to improve her English.

Saif and Zina have a deep trust in God. It has also been a journey of faith. They want to become Catholic. They registered at Our Lady of the Atonement and Joseph was baptized Catholic. Both look forward to the day Joseph becomes a student at The Atonement Academy!

CHARITY MAGNIFIED

A big THANK YOU to our parishioners who helped out a single mom with two children whose Honda needed many repairs to keep it running and for those who provided her with four kitchen chairs.

Also, THANK YOU to the parishioners who donated bicycles, helmets, TVs, sofas, beds, a kitchen table, and miscellaneous items to our refugee families in need. We couldn't do the work we do without your generosity. These folks are coming to our country with very, very little. (My husband talks about his grandfather arriving in New York from Europe with \$5 in his pocket and the address of a cousin. When he arrived at the cousin's house, the cousin had moved!) It is a very scary situation to come to a new country, where you don't know the language or the customs, and with no money. Catholic Charities provides financial support to the refugees for a period of time. But, our Society of St. Vincent de Paul may be asked to help with some food and household items.

I wish you could have seen the expressions on the faces of those who received your goods – their joy and astonishment at your kindness!

Thank you, once again for taking care of God's poor. *"Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me."*
Matthew 25:40 (CK)

ITEMS STILL NEEDED: new or gently used kitchen table with 4 chairs. *Call us and leave a message at (210) 695-2944*

**THANK YOU FOR THE SUCCESS OF OUR
FALL/WINTER PROJECTS:
COAT & SWEATER DRIVE
CHRISTMAS ANGEL TREE**

Have you thought about becoming a member of SVDP?

- You will be serving God.
- You will be growing spiritually.
- You will be helping those in need.
- You will be working with a dedicated group of Vincentians.
- YOU ARE NEEDED.

Please contact Mary Ellen at (210) 260-0595

2016 Atonement SVDP Financial Update

During 2016 – Our parishioners donated **\$35,295** for our mission of charity.

During 2016 - We distributed **\$13,365** to aid our own OLA families and those in our geographic area.

During 2016 - We sent **\$17,100** to SVDP Conferences serving in these poorer communities:

International Twinning – SVDP conferences:

Jifna, Palestine & Njeru Town, Uganda

Local & Area Twinning - SVDP conferences:

St. Agnes, St. Alphonsus, Christ the King, St. Ann, Little Flower, Sacred Heart (Von Ormy, TX), St. John Bosco (Natalia, TX)

During 2016 - We sent **\$2,800** to SVDP conferences in our district to help their specific families in need of help.

During 2016 – We contributed **\$500** to the **SVDP International Disaster Relief Fund** providing food, water, shelter and educational assistance.

We are most grateful to our parishioners at Our Lady of the Atonement for your continued support of the monthly Black Bag collections.

UPCOMING ANNUAL PROJECTS:

MARCH 5th & MARCH 12th -Toiletries for the Homeless (*Start saving your travel sizes.*)

APRIL 23rd & APRIL 30th – Baby Shower for Allied Women's Center

HELP KEEP OUR NARTHEX NEAT

Dear Generous Parishioners,

Our Lady of the Atonement SVDP does not have storage facilities for donations outside our specifically scheduled donation drives. (typically lasting 2 Sundays in a row with deliveries to beneficiaries the following week)

Please call and leave a message on the SVDP answering machine before leaving anything in the Narthex outside those scheduled drives. We will be happy to call you back with ideas on where you can donate your items.

If you or someone you know is in need of assistance or a home visit, please call us at (210) 695-2944