

The Vincentian



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION

BY MARY FRANCES JASTER

At a recent event in Denver, more than 150 members of the Vincentian Family gathered to discuss the Catholic social teachings regarding immigration issues in the United States. Participants were committed to coming away with a shared vision and collective response to the challenges many immigrants face in their journeys.

The theme for the event was *Challenging Voices. Healing Voices. How Can We Be Silent?* Participants were encouraged to meet people from various branches of the Vincentian Family, to learn from one another and hear different perspectives.



Fr. Guillermo Campuzano, C.M., the delegate from the Congregation of the Mission to the United Nations, offered an insightful overview of many of the challenges and opportunities associated with immigration. His remarks focused on increased globalization, cultural and ethnic diversity in the United States, Catholic social teaching which affirms the right for any human being to migrate, separation of immigrant children and parents, and a nation's right to regulate borders.

The focus on these challenges created the climate for offering a healing presence for each participant to consider. How can we as Vincentians respond to the need for healing – healing for those who have migrated here from other countries yet have no rights, as well as healing for our nation? Do we see the person without documentation in our neighborhood and offer hospitality? Do we pray for healing for individuals who come to the United States for protection and find themselves victims of human trafficking? Do we offer sanctuary in our churches, city, state? How can we be silent?

(SEE UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION, PAGE 2)

Members of the Vincentian Family gathered in Denver to discuss Catholic teaching on immigration.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Letter from Fr. Ray
- 3 Donor Profile
- 4 Reaching Out to Younger Catholics
- 5 Around the Province
- 6 Memorials & Tributes



UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Atim Oti, Immigration Lawyer with Lutheran Family Services, shared with the participants the process for citizenship that is in place here in the United States. How do we use our voice to share with others in our own communities about the injustices? How do we vote, considering those who live here without documentation? How do we use our voice in Congress, writing to our representatives or otherwise publicly sharing our views and what we have learned?

“Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who leave or are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all, for being more.”

— Pope Francis

As we ended the evening, each member chose an action step and a statement of something they learned to take to their branch of the Vincentian Family. Let us voice our own concerns; let us speak with our voting; let us write letters; let us learn more; let us enter into a relationship with those who are different from ourselves.



“There are still poor people who need our help. There are still people who need to hear glad tidings – the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is you and I, followers of St. Vincent de Paul, who will do that.”

— Fr. Ray Van Dorpe, C.M.

DEAR FRIENDS,

As you well know, the Vincentians of the United States have been celebrating the 200th anniversary of our arrival here in the United States. On the feast of St. Vincent, September 27, about 250 people gathered at the Basilica of St. Louis (the “Old Cathedral”) under the Gateway Arch, for a special Mass for the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, and to remember those first missionaries who arrived there some 200 years ago.

Members of the Vincentian Family, collaborators, donors and friends from all over came together for a very special Mass and dinner. Bishop Mark Rivotuso, Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis, was the principal celebrant of the Mass, and Father Tomaž Mavriž, C.M., our Superior General, was our special guest. Other celebrations on or near the feast of St. Vincent took place in different locations around the Western Province, and perhaps you attended one of these. Thank you!

In my homily that evening, I shared one of my favorite quotes from St. Vincent: “Do the good that presents itself to be done...those things God lets us know he wants of us.” There are still poor people who need our help. There are still people who need to hear glad tidings – the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is you and I, followers of St. Vincent de Paul, who will do that.

In this newsletter are examples of people who are doing the good that God has let them know he wants them to do. Please read about the scholarship that the Vincentians helped create in New Orleans. Read also about Jerry and Linda Girsch, and their special devotion to the senior Vincentians in Perryville. Then take note of the story about the latest evangelization app developed by Father Ron Hoye in conjunction with Catholic Home Study. These are just a few examples of how the Vincentian charism is alive in the United States today.

Much of what the Vincentian priests and brothers do every day is helped by your gift to our Annual Appeal. Your generous gift will be used to further our ministries and to help care for our senior members. We are very grateful to all who have already donated to the 2019 Annual Appeal. Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas. May the joy and peace of this holy season brighten all the days of your New Year!

Joyfully yours,

Fr. Ray

Fr. Ray Van Dorpe, C.M.
Provincial Superior

EMBRACING THE VINCENTIAN MISSION

JERRY AND LINDA GIRSCH

Jerry Girsch and his wife Linda first learned about the Vincentians when Jerry was invited to join the board of trustees at DePaul University. As they drew closer to the Vincentians at DePaul – the largest Catholic university in the country – they knew quickly that they wanted to play a role in supporting the mission.

“We liked that the university offered opportunities for first-generation college students and families in need,” Jerry recalls. “Linda and I did not come from wealthy families and our parents did not have college degrees, so the idea of helping students in need struck a chord with us.”

The more Jerry and Linda learned about the charism and works of the Vincentians, the more they wanted to help. After being involved at DePaul for several years, the couple joined others from the Vincentian Family on a trip to Paris to learn about the life of St. Vincent. They visited historic sites, experienced Vincentian spirituality and formed friendships with others working to promote the mission.

“When we see the work that Vincentians are doing all over the world, we have complete confidence that our gifts will help the poor in a meaningful way,” Linda explains. “The Vincentians take their mission seriously, and we know the funds are being put to good use.”

Jerry and Linda love that education is a top priority for the Vincentians. Early in their marriage, the couple was involved with a mentoring program for inner city youth. They saw that, through education, entire families can be lifted out of poverty. Their support of DePaul University has allowed them to continue offering opportunities to people in need through education.

Jerry and Linda live in Chicago, where they are active in their parish and support other charitable initiatives. They have five children and ten grandchildren.

“We were concerned that a lot of students do not graduate in four years,” Jerry explains. “Many of these students have family issues, health concerns, financial issues. We helped the university find ways to provide financing for these students in need beyond their first four years at DePaul.”

Jerry and Linda love the humility and zeal for the Gospel that they have seen in so many of the priests and brothers they have met over the years. “Every time I’m in their presence, I sense the love they have for our Lord,” Linda says. “They are a joy-filled group of men.”

“When Fr. Dennis Holtschneider, C.M., first started as president of DePaul University – his first day on the job – he attended Jerry’s dad’s funeral and concelebrated the memorial Mass,” Linda recalls. “It was so touching to us that he would take such an interest in our family.”

“We are so grateful for all the blessings in our life. The ability to share those with others through the work of the Vincentians is a great privilege for us.”

— Linda Girsch

More recently, the couple has extended support for the retired priests and brothers at the Apostle of Charity Residence in Perryville, MO. After a trip to see the facility and meet with retired confreres, they decided to help in whatever ways they could.

“When you understand what the Vincentians are all about, it is an easy thing to embrace,” Jerry explains. “For anyone who has been blessed

like we have with family, friends, health, financial stability, it is easy to get behind the Vincentian mission of helping the poor.”

Jerry and Linda live in Chicago, where they are active in their parish and support other charitable initiatives. They have five children and ten grandchildren. “We are so grateful for all the blessings in our life,” says Linda. “The ability to share those with others through the work of the Vincentians is a great privilege for us.”





VINCENTIAN ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

Each year the Vincentians award scholarships to African-American students at Xavier College. Juniors or seniors who are achieving at high levels academically, committed to social justice and in need of financial aid may apply. Each awardee participates in the Vincentian Family Mass and shares their career aspirations.



Timothy Al Ambrose, Jr. Timothy is active with the Xavier College Democrats in their “get out the vote” voter registration program. He works with students on ways to engage in the practice of defending their faith. Timothy plans to use his law degree to pursue justice in underrepresented communities.



Tyla Kennedy Tyla is a senior psychology major with a minor in public health sciences. She is planning to earn a PhD in health psychology and focus on eliminating the stigma of mental health among minorities and eliminating health disparities.



REACHING OUT TO YOUNGER CATHOLICS

Catholic Home Study, an evangelization ministry of the Western Province, is always pursuing new ways of spreading the Gospel in the digital age. In addition to Catholic faith formation resources available free on their website, the ministry recently launched a new prayer app and podcast.

“We are looking for transformational ways to reach out to younger people and invite them to embrace and live their faith,” explains Fr. Ron Hoye, C.M., Director of Catholic Home Study. “I teach people that the more time you give to God, the more God expands in your life.”

The new app, *God Moments*, is centered around the idea of encouraging people to take time – even a few minutes – for daily prayer. “We try to overcome people’s concerns that they don’t have time for prayer or that they are unsure of how to pray,” Fr. Ron suggests. “The *God Moments* app invites you, through a notification on your phone, to take a moment to pray three times a day – to give God your time and attention.”

“We are looking for transformational ways to reach out to younger people and invite them to embrace and live their faith.” – Fr. Ron Hoye, C.M.

The app has already attracted more than 5,000 active users. “We are tapping into people’s natural desire to connect with God and cut through the noise and busyness of life,” says Fr. Ron. “Once your spirit gets into a habit, you start taking those moments naturally.”

In addition to the app, Catholic Home Study has launched *God Minute* – a prayer podcast based on a simplified version of the Divine Office of the Church.

“Many good people – myself included – struggle to give God time in prayer,” says Fr. Ron. “We’re able to meet this need, this desire, to draw people into the holy while still being immersed in their lives.”

AROUND THE PROVINCE

After a lengthy hiatus, *Around the Province* is back with good news from the confreres of the Western Province. I don’t know about you, but it is good to hear some good news for a change!



Fr. Henry Grodecki, C.M., has joined the international missions as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Co-Cathedral in Anchorage, AK. The local diocesan paper wrote a feature article about him. Visit vincentian.org for a link to our story.



Fr. Paul Golden, C.M., reports that the 18 new Colorado Vincentian Volunteers, with many questions about the abuse scandal in the church, met with him for discussion. Thank you, Paul, for engaging with these young people on a difficult topic. The next week Fr. Paul celebrated Mass for the volunteers and their guests for the feast of St. Vincent.



Fr. Golden and **Fr. Joe Williams, C.M.**, traveled to Nairobi in October for the annual regional meeting of confreres in Kenya. A spirited meeting, with great conversations about future ministry and life in Kenya, was held. **Fr. Hugh O’Donnell, C.M.**, presented a day of prayer and reflection.



Fr. Ed Murphy, C.M., and the parishioners of St. Vincent’s Parish in St. Louis kicked off their 175th anniversary year of celebration on September 30, 2018. A beautiful liturgy and reception was held, and service, worship, prayer and parties are lined up for the coming year!



Another great celebration was held at Sacred Heart Parish, Patterson, CA. **Fr. Rex Hays, C.M.**, reports that after seven years of planning, their new Parish Center was dedicated on September 30, 2018. The bishop of Stockton, Most Rev. Myron Cotta, presided at the liturgy.



A spirited celebration was held, followed by an outdoor reception. This new center will be well used by the parish, school and the city of Patterson.



Fr. Tom Croak, C.M., has moved from Chicago to Perryville, where he continues to work with the Immigration and Asylum Clinic at DePaul University, a work that is very dear to Fr. Tom’s heart.



A weekend-long celebration was held in Perryville in October in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the Association of the Miraculous Medal. **Fr. Kevin McCracken, C.M.**, spiritual director of the Association, tells us that new statues and other elements of the newly renovated Church of the Assumption and the shrine grounds were dedicated and blessed. The Archbishop of St. Louis, Most Rev. Robert Carlson, presided at the afternoon Mass. Most Rev. Edward Rice, the Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, was the homilist. A festive banquet followed Mass that Sunday afternoon.



Fr. Chris Robinson, C.M., traveled with a group of students and staff from DePaul University to Spain to experience the Camino de Santiago. Sadly, during their walk, Fr. Chris fell and injured his knee. He underwent knee surgery at the beginning of September and is recovering nicely in Chicago. Fr. Chris plans to make this trip an annual activity in conjunction with one of the classes he teaches at the University.



Also from Chicago, **Fr. John Rybolt, C.M.**, writes to say that *The Vincentians*, a six-volume set of the history of our Congregation, is available in electronic format from Amazon. Those who would like the original books can get them from Fr. John at a much lower price than Amazon. Let us know at the Province office if you are interested.



The final word from around the province goes to **Fr. Mark Pranaitis, C.M.**, Fr. Mark helped our Superior General raise almost \$200,000 for international projects at a Chicago event in August. Over the last year, he has been working with the Diocese of Lexington, KY, to increase weekly offertory collections and their annual appeal. In September he offered four training sessions for pastors and parish leaders in anticipation of the appeal’s launch in October.

He also made changes within Catholic Charities in Gary, IN, to shift its services from maintaining clients in their poverty to engaging them in transformative processes. The goal of these processes is to increase household stability, which provides a foundation for moving out of poverty. Great ministry, Fr. Mark! Raising money for the poor, and raising up the poor!

MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES

In prayer and gratitude, we lift up those who have made gifts between May 3, 2018, and October 23, 2018. We apologize for any names inadvertently omitted or misspelled.



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IN MEMORIAM – MR. BILL HAY



The Hay Project at DePaul University mourns the loss of Bill Hay (MBA '66, DHL '06), a great leader and benefactor who died on July 15 at

the age of 75. A DePaul business school alumnus, instructor and friend of the university for more than 30 years, Hay made a good life for himself and many others guided by the Vincentian values of service and community.

Bill Hay exemplified the Vincentian mission in action.

Hay taught at DePaul in the business school and in the School of Public Service. He founded William E. Hay & Company, a consulting and executive search firm, in 1982. In 2002, Hay generously funded Vincent on Leadership: The Hay Project, inspired by a desire to spread the leadership concepts and practices of St. Vincent de Paul. At the time, he said, “I don’t ever want anyone to come to this university without knowing about the legacy of our patron.”

His friends and colleagues remember him as “a trusted advisor, an aficionado of organizational design, an incredible communicator, a frustrated golfer, a man of detail, having an infectious laugh, and for his great insight and generosity with board work and charitable endeavors.” Bill Hay exemplified the Vincentian mission in action.



CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION
WESTERN PROVINCE

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join us in prayer and offer your support. Visit us online at vincentian.org.

CHRISTIAN MUSICIAN

DAVID KAUFFMAN

*Special Concert to Benefit
the Vincentian Kenya Mission*

4 p.m. on Sunday, March 24, 2019
St. Catherine Laboure Parish, St. Louis

All are welcome to enjoy an afternoon
of spiritual nourishment!

