

The Vincentian



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS

BY FR. J. PATRICK MURPHY, C.M.

In Little Rock, Arkansas, 6601 Heather Lane is the first house opened to a homeless person in the 13 Houses Project. The initiative launched in Rome in November 2018, as a project of the worldwide Vincentian Family.

"I am excited and proud that Little Rock is the site of the first 13 Houses Project developed in the U.S.," says Mandy Davis, Depaul USA's Little Rock Director. "Every day we draw on our Vincentian heritage to serve our homeless neighbors with dignity and love."

Last November, members from branches of the Vincentian Family gathered to launch the 13 Houses Project, an initiative to develop 13 units of housing in 151 countries with a Vincentian presence. The program's larger goal is to eliminate homelessness in 150 cities by 2030.

You may be asking: Why 13 houses? Fr. Bob Maloney, C.M., has the answer. In 1638, Vincent took up the work of the foundlings. Initially, the children stayed with Louise de Marillac and the sisters. Between 1638 and 1644, the number of children grew to 1,200. One can imagine the problems involved in lodging, staffing and financing this work.

Vincent – a shrewd businessperson – was inventive in finding a solution. When Louis XIII died in 1643, his will permitted Queen Anne of Austria to assign \$1 million to Vincent as an endowment for his missions in Sedan.

Vincent used the money to build 13 houses close to Saint-Lazare. He then rented them to the Ladies of Charity to lodge the foundlings. Rent money became the endowment for the missions in Sedan. Vincent got two for one: the king's bequest bought houses for the foundlings and rent from the Ladies supported the missions in Sedan.

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The 13 Houses Project seeks to develop houses for the homeless in 151 countries with a Vincentian presence.



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13 HOUSES PROJECT
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Fr. Ray Van Dorpe, C.M., provincial superior of the Western Province, encourages every confrere and every Vincentian house to be involved in the 13 Houses Project. A Vincentian community may build a house, rehab an apartment or simply offer 13 meals over the year to poor families.

“I am excited and proud that Little Rock is the site of the first 13 Houses Project developed in the U.S.”

– Mandy Davis, Depaul USA’s
Little Rock Director

“The Province continues to expand its efforts to repurpose unused assets to serve poor people,” Fr. Ray explains. “We recently did this with Vincentian-owned properties in St. Louis, Missouri, in collaboration with Depaul USA.”

The Vincentians hope to announce new collaborations on the 13 Houses Project later this year. In the meantime, the first homeless person who moved into 6601 Heather Lane in Little Rock is a man named Vincent.



“St. Vincent believed that we should be mobile missionaries – ready to get up and go wherever we are needed.”

– Fr. Ray Van Dorpe, C.M.

DEAR FRIENDS,

What does C.M. mean? Of course, most of you know it means Congregation of the Mission – the official name of our community. But every once in a while a person not familiar with us will pose that question. Some years ago, a confrere of mine was asked this question by a woman who was new to his parish. He responded with a bit of humor, “Ma’am, C.M. means ‘Constantly Moving.’” To some degree, he was exactly right! St. Vincent believed that we should be mobile missionaries – ready to get up and go wherever we are needed.

At this time of year, we are looking at new assignments for our priests and brothers around the Western Province. I will be asking a number of them to “get up and go” where they are most needed. We are also looking at our ministries and asking ourselves if we are still being effective in a certain place or if should we move on to a different ministry. All this movement means change, and change, as we all know, is difficult. It is difficult for the Vincentians who are asked to move, and difficult for the people they have served to say goodbye.

The dynamic of change is at the heart of the season we are now celebrating in the Church – the season of Lent. Early Christians focused on this dynamic, using a Greek word to describe it: metanoia. It means a total and deep change of heart, mind and soul. Metanoia is an attitude that heeds the call of the Ash Wednesday liturgy: “Turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel!”

The poet Maya Angelou said, “We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.” I sincerely hope that this Lent brings you the changes in your life that will draw you closer to the beauty of God’s abundant grace and give you an even deeper sense of faith in our Lord Jesus.

Faternally,

Fr. Ray

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

HEARTS DEDICATED
TO THE POOR

JEFF AND MELINDA BURDS

As a young couple, Jeff and Melinda Burds lived in an atmosphere of missionary service. Their small town in Northeast Iowa was home to Divine Word College, a school for Catholic lay leaders and missionaries. Drawn to this mission, the couple became involved at the school, often opening their home to students from overseas.

Their love for missionary service took off from there. When Jeff and Melinda first heard about the Vincentians years ago, they knew immediately they wanted to get involved. “We were so impressed by the way they reach out to the poor,” Melinda recalls. “It is not simply a handout – they really try to change things at the grassroots level, to lift families out of poverty.”

Recently, Melinda and two of her children, along with 10 other volunteers, traveled to Kenya on a Vincentian mission trip. They stayed at DePaul Centre in Nairobi, visited a parish and outreach center in Thigio, performed many works of service and celebrated Mass with a Kenyan youth group.

“The Mass there is unbelievable,” Melinda explains. “They walk for miles to get to church. They wear their very best clothes. The liturgy lasts for hours – they sing, pray and dance. During the offertory, each person brings up something to offer – baked bread, money, other simple gifts.”

One of the experiences that stood out most to Melinda was the trip to the Kibera Slum. The group drove by countless shacks to get to the rescue center and nursery school. “It is so eye-opening. Children as young as four years old walk every day to the nursery school,” Melinda recounts. “There they receive two meals a day – for many children, the only food they have all day.”

Melinda Burds, along with 12 other volunteers, traveled to Kenya to serve in parishes, schools and outstations.



Jeff, Melinda and their children have offered their support to the Vincentian mission in a variety of ways. Beyond the mission trip this past summer, the family offers their prayers and financial support for the work of the Western Province.

“When you find something that means so much to you, you support it wholeheartedly,” Jeff says. “We have seen firsthand how the Vincentians use donations to have the greatest impact on the people they serve.”

“When you find something that means so much to you, you support it wholeheartedly... We have seen firsthand how the Vincentians use donations to have the greatest impact on the people they serve.”

– Jeff Burds

The mission trip to Kenya was certainly difficult at times. But when Melinda thinks back to her time there, it is not the poverty or desperate living conditions that stand out most. It is the joy of those she met. “Our cheeks hurt from smiling so much,” she says. “The people we met were so friendly, grateful and filled with vibrant faith.”

Jeff and Melinda have four children, ranging in age from 25 to 16. In addition to the Vincentians, the couple supports Catholic education, their local parish and other charitable outreach efforts.





A SYMBOL OF LOVE

INSPIRED BY
FR. GEORGE WEBER, C.M.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” These words of Jesus on the cross point to a great irony: I am a young man, growing in my ministry, gaining followers. I’m healing the sick, proclaiming the Good News! I’m making a difference in people’s lives! And here I am nailed to the cross, enduring ridicule and harassment, pain and suffering.

Jesus did the will of his Father, even when he didn’t understand it.

Yet, the cross with our Savior hanging on it is the symbol of what Christianity means to us: Jesus did the will of his Father, even when he didn’t understand it. And what a symbol it has become! Everywhere you look today, there is the cross with Jesus hanging on it.

What does the cross mean in your life? Does it lead you to love and service?

A WELLSPRING OF HOPE

PREPARING TO SERVE AS A PRIEST IN KENYA



As the Catholic Church in Kenya, East Africa, continues to thrive, more and more men are following Jesus’ call to the priesthood. Kevin Ochieng’ Nyanjom is among those men. Here is his story.

Kevin was born on October 14, 1987, in Siaya County, Kenya, to Fredrick Owino Nyanjom and Rose Nyanjom, who died when he was younger. Along with his two siblings, Kevin attended Boro Primary and Secondary Schools, completing high school in 2006. Before joining the Vincentians, Kevin worked as a teacher in a nearby school and was involved in several youth programs near his home.

“I was drawn to the simplicity and humility of the Vincentian way of life. I love how they reach out to the poor in our community. I want to mirror that missionary spirit in my own priestly ministry.”

– Kevin Ochieng’ Nyanjom, C.M.

Kevin first encountered the Vincentians when he met a Vincentian deacon at his parish. He was admitted to Vincentian formation in 2010, completed his degree in philosophy in 2014 and entered the novitiate at Damascus House in Nairobi. Kevin completed his theological studies for the priesthood at Tangaza University College this past May. Deacon Kevin was recently selected from his classmates at DePaul Centre to attend the 400th Anniversary of the Vincentian Family celebration in Rome with the Superior General and the Holy Father.

After ordination to the diaconate last year, Kevin was assigned to St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Giathugu, Nyeri County. He will be ordained to the priesthood this coming May. We invite you to remember Kevin, and all of the Vincentian seminarians in Kenya, in your daily prayers.

PILLARS UNDER THE “L”

Once known as “the little school under the ‘L,’” DePaul University is now the largest Catholic university in the country. To memorialize the school’s Vincentian heritage, Bro. Mark Elder, C.M., and his art students developed a project to paint murals on the pillars beneath the Fullerton “L” platform.

Designed to celebrate 120 years of achievement and diversity at the university, the murals beautify a much-used but barren part of the campus.

“People get excited when they come together to create something as a community.”

– Bro. Mark Elder, C.M.

“The big thing about community-supported public art is just that, it benefits the community in tangible and intangible ways,” says Bro. Mark. “People get excited when they come together to create something as a community.”

The extensive mural series will depict honorable alumni, notable milestones and significant historical events from the university’s past. It will include 25 pillars under the platform by dividing them into six groups of four, where each group represents a 20-year span of history at DePaul. Learn more and view a photo gallery at vincentian.org.



YOUR GENEROSITY AT WORK

**WALKING WITH THE POOR GRANTS
SUPPORT OUTREACH MINISTRY**

St. Jude Church - Tuba City, AZ
Awarded \$10,000 over 2 years for the Tekakwitha Conference.

Hotel Hope - New Orleans, LA
Awarded \$24,000 for housing for homeless mothers and children.

Vincent Gray Academy - East St. Louis, IL
Awarded \$16,000 over 2 years for high school education for at-risk young adults.

DePaul Evangelization Center - Los Angeles, CA
Awarded \$10,000 for legal assistance for low-income clients.

St. Vincent’s Church - Chicago, IL
Awarded \$10,000 for Bro. Leo Vincentian Outreach.

Colorado Vincentian Volunteers - Denver, CO
Awarded \$10,000 for Clinica Tepeyac.

Our Lady of the Lake - San Antonio, TX
Awarded \$10,000 for social justice work in the city.

DePaul Evangelization Center - Los Angeles, CA
Awarded \$10,000 for the Coming Together to Get Ahead Program.

St. Vincent de Paul Church - St. Louis, MO
Awarded \$25,000 for Community Support Fund.

St. Vincent de Paul Church - Perryville, MO
Awarded \$25,000 for a new food pantry.

Sts. Joachim & Anne Conference - North Little Rock, AR
Awarded \$12,500 for services for the poor.

Rebuild Center - New Orleans, LA
Awarded \$12,500 for the Rebuild Center.

Center for Spirituality At Work - Denver, CO
Awarded \$25,000 for the incarcerated women program.

MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES

In prayer and gratitude, we lift up those who have made gifts between October 24, 2018, and February 6, 2019. We apologize for any names inadvertently omitted or misspelled.



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BENEFIT CONCERT FOR KENYA MISSION

Join us for a special concert featuring Christian musician David Kauffman to benefit the Vincentian Kenya Mission. All are welcome to enjoy an afternoon of joyful music and spiritual nourishment.

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

For more information about this event, please contact us at development@vincentian.org.



**CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION
WESTERN PROVINCE**

13663 Rider Trail North
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Learn more about the Congregation of the Mission Western Province,
join us in prayer and offer your support. Visit us online at vincentian.org.

A REASON TO CELEBRATE

FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATION AT SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH, NEW ORLEANS

On January 24, Father Tom Stehlik, C.M., hosted a celebration at St. Joseph Catholic Church in New Orleans. The reason for the celebration was the founding of The Little Company – the Congregation of the Mission – by Saint Vincent de Paul on January 25, 1617.

An evening of vespers, reflection and Vincentian spirituality was attended by clergy, Daughters of Charity, affiliates, donors and lay members of the parish. Everyone was invited to reflect on Vincent's charism, collaborative spirit and charitable ministry, and the impact he has had on the lives of those served. To top off the evening, guests enjoyed a traditional Louisiana meal of gumbo, jambalaya and grits.

Established in 1625, Vincentian priests and brothers follow St. Vincent's example, dedicating their lives to prayer, community life and evangelical service. Together with our lay collaborators, we seek out those most in need of God's love and mercy.

