

The Vincentian

2021 PROVINCE REPORT


Fall 2021

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‘Be creative to infinity’

Pandemic Poses Tests in 2021-22

As winter gave way to spring last year and the realities of a global pandemic set in, the Vincentians of the Western Province had to re-think church services and a whole range of programs that rely on a closeness and presence that was no longer possible.

Fr. David Nations, C.M., pastor of St. Vincent’s Parish in Los Angeles, said in-person services were shut down with very little notice.

“We switched to live-streaming Mass, which we did until Labor Day, when we were allowed to have some liturgies outside,” Fr. Nations said. “All prayer group meetings were streamed online as well.”

Once outdoor services were allowed, the school parking lot became the venue for drive-in services. They built a stage, and parishioners attended in their cars, honking their horns in lieu of handshakes during the sign of peace.

At St. Vincent’s Parish in St. Louis, Fr. Dan Thiess, C.M., said he and his group had to completely transform their robust food programs.

“St. Vincent urged Vincentians to, ‘Be creative to infinity,’” Fr. Thiess said.

The usual sources of volunteers were no longer available, and demand for the food pantry and other food programs increased by 300 percent over normal levels.

The pantry and soup kitchen went to a drive-up and walk-up model, and a lunch window served 400 homeless customers every day.

Businesses like Anheuser-Busch, Schnucks grocery stores, and the St. Louis Cardinals all donated, and other parishes and organizations joined in support.

“It comes down to what St. Vincent talked about—getting to know people and inviting them to the mission,” Fr. Thiess said.

(continued p.4)

Fr. David Nations, C.M., celebrates mass in the parking lot at St. Vincent Church in Los Angeles.

A Deeper Commitment



Dear friends,

The lead story for this issue of *The Vincentian* names just a few accounts of how our Vincentian missionaries have responded to serving their communities during the pandemic. There are similar stories of innovations and accommodations at our missions in Perryville, MO; St. Catherine Laboure in St. Louis; Holy Redeemer and our Lady of Perpetual Help in San Antonio, TX; St. Joseph in New Orleans; St. Peter's Vietnamese in Dallas; Indian Reservation Mission in Tuba City, AZ; Sacred Heart in Patterson, CA; and our five parishes in Kenya. The challenge of the pandemic has brought forth in us Vincentians a deeper and more zealous commitment to serve our communities and the most abandoned among us.

“ It is my earnest hope that we, as a Vincentian family, can grow in better serving the most pressing needs of our church and the world. ”

The many examples of service from this pandemic era are lessons for all of us to be always open, creative, and responsive to the direct needs of God's people. The crisis of this pandemic will pass; however, there will still be people in need of food, shelter, employment, and many other basic human needs. It is my earnest hope that we, as a Vincentian family, can grow in better serving the most pressing needs of our church and the world.

I am most grateful for all the support, prayers, and contributions from you, our friends and collaborators, during this painful and difficult time. May God bless you and your families with the peace and joy of having served well.

Sincerely in Vincent de Paul,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Patrick McDevitt, C.M.".

Rev. Patrick McDevitt, C.M.
Provincial Superior

Double Duty

Vincentian Twins on a Mission to Reignite Faith



Fr. Robert and Fr. Richard Gielow, C.M., were born in 1943 in the small town of LaSalle, IL. The fraternal twins belonged to a parish staffed by Vincentian priests and the Daughters of Charity. As their eighth-grade graduation neared, Bob and Dick made a surprising discovery. Unbeknownst to each other, both planned to attend St. Vincent de Paul High School in nearby Lemont — a seminary run by the Congregation of the Mission.

On September 26 of this year, the two will celebrate their 50th anniversary as ordained Vincentian priests (though Fr. Dick crossed that threshold in 2020 and could not celebrate because of the pandemic lockdown). They are the only known ordained twins in the Congregation's 400-year history.

"Missions are something new and fresh and different than what they ordinarily get. One night, as we invited people to the altar for confessions following the Mass, a woman left. I found out later she drove around for 30 minutes, then came back to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. She hadn't been to confession in over 25 years."

Fr. Robert Gielow, C.M.

"I'll never forget what we did in Des Moines ... we invited the whole city to come to Drake University for Holy Week. We set up the altar on the basketball court. Our mission priests heard confessions during the day prior to each evening's service. More than 3,000 people came, along with Des Moines' bishop. Pastors later told us they noticed attendance was up at their Holy Thursday and Good Friday services."

Fr. Richard Gielow, C.M.

Early Ministry Years ...

Fr. Dick began his Vincentian priestly ministry by serving as director of vocations for the Western Province. He was then assigned to the faculty of St. John's High School Seminary in Kansas City, MO, a position he held for six years. Fr. Bob began his priestly ministry at Regina Cleri Seminary in Tucson, AZ, then served at DePaul University in Chicago as an instructor, director of campus ministry, and, eventually, the university's director of athletics.

(continued, back cover)

Vincentian Mission House Leads New Recruitment Plan

On Tuesday, June 29, the Congregation of the Mission Western Province finalized the purchase of a building in the city of St. Louis that will become the centerpiece of a new recruitment and formation initiative.



“A matter of great urgency for Vincentians today is the recruitment and formation of new members to carry on the mission of following Christ evangelizing the poor,” said Fr. Patrick McDevitt, C.M., Provincial Superior. “With an aging personnel pool, the confreres are eager to invite

qualified men to join in sharing the rich Vincentian tradition of common life and apostolic works for the evangelization of the poor.”

The Province will soon establish the Vincentian Mission House, a new provincial initiative in vocation recruitment, discernment, and initial formation. Built in the 1890s, the three-story house is in St. Louis near agencies and parishes that serve the urban poor and within walking distance of educational institutions such as the Aquinas Institute and Saint Louis University.

The house will also serve as a place of discernment where a candidate might live and work as he reflects on a possible call to the Vincentians. The house will be home for our associate and admitted seminarians preparing for service as future Vincentian priests and brothers. While the house is being renovated, confreres are working to revise and update the Province’s vocation and initial formation programs.

The doors of Vincentian Mission House – and a new chapter in its vocation, discernment, and initial formation – are slated to open in August 2022.

(continued from cover)

Bob Beatty, Director of Community Development at St. Vincent’s Parish in Chicago, said they made similar major adaptations to their food and social assistance programs and created teams of people to make wellness calls on parishioners.

In addition to streamed online services, a variety of programs were developed to be offered entirely online.

“We started a weekly lecture and learn presentation to talk about issues of the day,” Beatty said.

Streaming capabilities that were developed for Mass remain in place, even as in-person liturgies have returned.

“It has allowed us to expand on what we do and reach more folks,” Beatty said. “As for the other programs, some have discovered they like meeting online, so we do both.”

Back in L.A., when the church reopened to in-person services in July, Fr. Nations and his staff held an all-night candlelight vigil with live Latin pop church music, at the end of which parishioners carried in the candles to “re-light” the church.

“It was quite an event,” Fr. Nations said. “There was a 78-year-old woman who danced the whole night.”

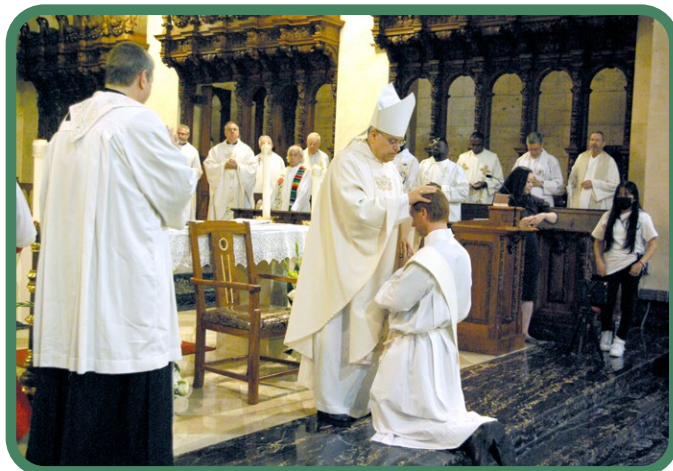
Archbishop Bellisario, C.M., Ordains Rev. Scott Jakubowski, C.M.

On June 25, Rev. Scott Jakubowski, C.M., was ordained a Vincentian priest at St. Vincent's Church in Los Angeles. Most Rev. Andrew Bellisario, C.M., Archbishop of Juneau-Anchorage, Alaska, and himself a Vincentian, was the ordaining prelate.

The ordination was something of a homecoming for Archbishop Bellisario, who was also ordained at St. Vincent's in Los Angeles in 1984.

The ordination was celebrated at the end of this year's Provincial Assembly; many Vincentian priests and brothers were in attendance. Fr. Scott is a native of Arizona. He came to know the Vincentians years ago by engaging in the works of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and other members of the Vincentian family. Fr. Scott's first assignment is as associate pastor at St. Vincent's Church in Los Angeles.

The beautiful ordination liturgy was celebrated in St. Vincent's, which has a long tradition of dedicated Vincentian service over the decades. Through the laying on of hands and prayer, Fr. Scott was anointed and vested. He joined the ranks of other Vincentian priests sent out to evangelize the poor.



Archbishop Andrew Bellisario, C.M., (center)

At the liturgy, Fr. Scott welcomed the support and the prayers of the congregation and his fellow Vincentians. Then, he stepped out into the California sun to bestow blessings, one by one, upon a line of his new parishioners.

"I am very grateful to everyone and to God for supporting me and helping me to get ordained a priest with the Vincentians," Fr. Scott said. "I ask for prayers to be a good priest and to continue on the path God has set before me."



Fr. Scott Jakubowski, C.M., speaks at a post-ordination reception.



Montebello Property to Serve Mission in a Different Way

For nearly 70 years, the Congregation of the Mission's property in Montebello, CA, served the Vincentians as a seminary high school and then an evangelization center. It is closing but will still serve in the Vincentian tradition.

Fr. Perry Henry, C.M., who served in different capacities at DePaul Evangelization Center from 2014 to 2021, said that plans are underway to transform the campus into a site that provides much-needed affordable housing.



Fr. Jay Jung, C.M., Fr. Mike Boyle, C.M., Fr. John Rybolt, C.M., and Fr. Mike Joyce, C.M., at an event on June 24 celebrating the history of the Montebello campus.

The 14-acre property was originally the home of the Andrew Pansini family and was given to the Congregation of the Mission in 1954. The Doheny Foundation financed the construction of the buildings, and St. Vincent's, a high school seminary, opened in 1958.

"In 1985 or 1986, many high school seminaries were closing, and the property was repurposed as an evangelization center," Fr. Perry said.

In its new role, it hosted youth and high school retreats and programs for engaged couples and formation of lay ministers. It was known for its Spanish-language programs and hosted youth basketball and programs with other organizations.

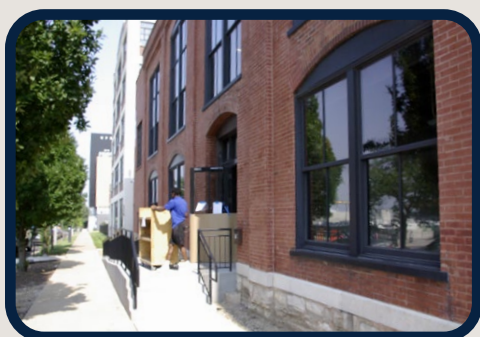
Because of a lack of staff to run it, the decision was made a couple years ago to close the facility. In addition to the plans for affordable housing, the convent building on the site is currently being leased to A New Way of Life, which provides interim housing and training for women returning to society from incarceration.

"The property was given to the community to promote the Vincentian mission," Fr. Perry said. "The hope is that the future use of the campus will continue in that spirit."

Fr. Perry Henry, C.M., speaks at the June 24 Montebello event.



Western Province Office Moves to Midtown St. Louis



On Wednesday, July 28, the Congregation of the Mission Western Province moved its office from Earth City, MO, to 3701 Forest Park Ave. in Midtown St. Louis.

The new office is part of a ministerial cooperation and facilities sharing agreement with Aquinas Institute of Theology.

Fr. Patrick McDevitt, C.M., Provincial Superior, said that the new office is closer to the communities we serve, our partners, and other Catholic organizations.

Give Monthly as an Apostle of Charity



The Congregation of the Mission is launching a new monthly giving club called the *Apostles of Charity* that gives donors the ability to support the mission in an easy, ongoing way.

Monthly donors can break their gifts into affordable increments and are contacted only once per year by the Development Office. Monthly donors are also automatically added to the Ministry of Prayer program, where they are prayed for at daily Mass.

"I have an interior fondness for the Vincentians," said Dan Hindes, a monthly donor for 13 years and former seminary student from Minnesota. "I had the privilege of studying under some great priests. Later in life I became even more appreciative of my Vincentian experience."

To enroll in the Apostles of Charity program, click "Donate Now/Make a Donation" from Vincentian.org. Choose the amount you would like to donate each month and indicate where you would like your donation allocated. Then, check the "I would like my donation to recur" box and select "Monthly" from the menu.

For more information on the Apostles of Charity monthly giving club, contact Lisa Randazzo at LRandazzo@vincentian.org or 314-344-1184.

Mass of Remembrance Planned

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, in-person liturgical celebrations could not be held for several months. Consequently, we were not able to memorialize the priests and brothers we lost during this difficult time.

Mindful of this, a Mass of Remembrance will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. on November 2, 2021, All Souls Day, at St. Mary's of the Barrens in Perryville, MO. The service will be livestreamed on the St. Mary's of the Barrens Facebook page.

Please join us in remembering our beloved priests and brothers:

Rev. John Francis Clark, C.M.

Rev. Thomas A. Grace, C.M.

Rev. Robert J. Jones, C.M.

Rev. Nicholas Kaloki, C.M.

Bro. John J. Mangogna, C.M.

Rev. R. Stafford Poole, C.M.

Rev. Walter L. Reisinger, C.M.

Rev. Daniel R. Schulte, C.M.

May they and all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

Your Gifts Support So Many

Donation Revenue for Fiscal Year 2021 How Your Donations Were Allocated

\$1,300,375

Education and Formation in the U.S.
for seminarians and clergy

\$295,203

International Outreach to the Poor

\$162,916

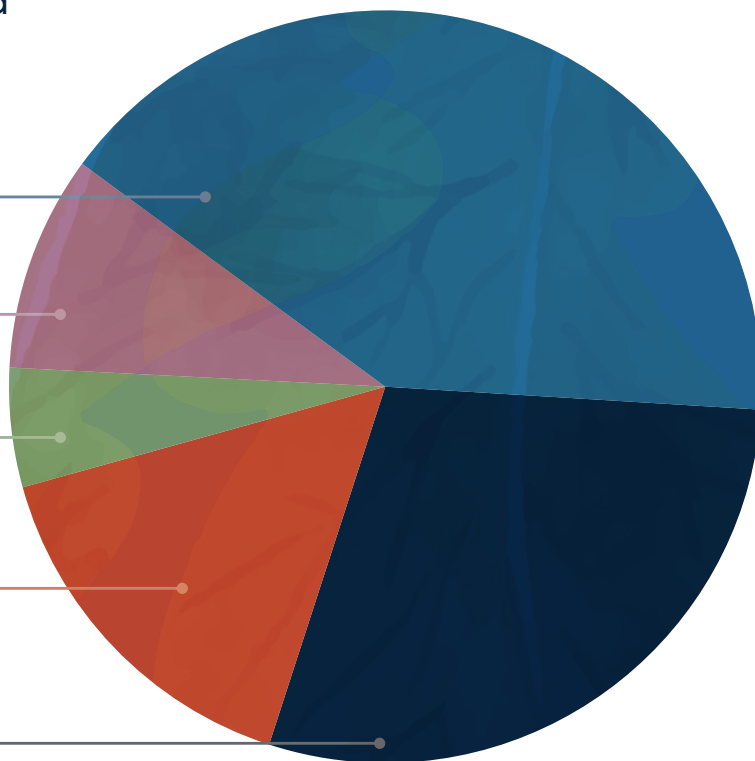
Care for Senior Priests and Brothers

\$499,157

Service to the Poor, Young People,
and Evangelization in U.S.

\$923,217

Kenya Mission (Education Formation
and Direct Service to the Poor)



2,194

Gifts in Fiscal Year 2021

\$3,180,868

Donated in Fiscal Year 2021

In addition, \$130,000 was received from The God Minute donors in a Lenten appeal, and \$2,800 from Vincentian International Mission Service (VIMS) donors.

Mission Statistics

21 Parishes served by Vincentians
(Approximately 16,800 families)

27 Seminarians

40 Jitegemee Project trainees
(Kenya small business)

60+ Parish Missions scheduled for '21-22
(More than 48,000 families receiving Christ's loving message)

62 Senior priests and brothers

988 Individuals served by food and medical programs in Kenya

30K+ Subscribers to The God Minute



DePaul Woodworking students
with tools provided from donations.

Thank you! Your generosity during these trying times has been a beacon of light for those in need, not only in the U.S. but in Kenya as well. We are so grateful for your prayers and material sacrifices. Our Vincentian priests and brothers will remember you and your loved ones in prayer.

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"The Kenyan mission is proof we can make a difference. The work of the Vincentians saves lives and gives hope to children that there is a better tomorrow. The development of spiritual leaders will have a positive impact for generations. We are inspired every day by the hard work and dedication of the Vincentian community to make a difference in the lives of the Kenyan people."

*Michael L. Beasley
Denver, Colorado*

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"I started donating to the Vincentians as a young adult because of my mother's first cousin, Father Patrick O'Brien, C.M. For years, Fr. Pat came to our house for dinner... At that time, he was teaching at DePaul University of Chicago. After his mother died and he was able to fulfill his lifetime dream of serving in Kenya as a missionary, we kept in touch and on his trips home he always came to my parents' home for dinner and to recount his experiences. He made the Church come alive in a very personal way. I feel that by donating I am continuing his work for him."

*Patricia Ann Riley
Chicago, Illinois*

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"My first experience with the Vincentians was at St John's Seminary (minor) in San Antonio, so I first knew them in their role as educators. After leaving the seminary, I lost touch with them until the advent of the internet enabled me to re-establish contact with several of the priests. Through them, I learned of their missionary work. I continue to support the mission, because I see the benefits of their efforts and also because I do feel a debt of gratitude for their guidance in my formative years and want to see them well cared for in their twilight years."

*Rob Bronson
Encinatas, California*

The rules have changed ...

A Vincentian reflection on the pandemic

I think of the gentleman who sweeps and cleans up the grounds on a regular basis. He empties the trash and has other guests assist him at times. I asked him why he does this and he says, "Because you feed and take care of us. It's the least we can do."

“ Because you feed and take care of us. It's the least we can do. ”

I think of the family who comes to the pantry and goes through their bags asking other people or families who can use the food items they may not need. They give to others out of their need. Or the folks at the clothing window who are sharing shoes and shirts. These are examples of people taking care of one another. It happens on a regular basis.

It is humbling to hear people thank you for the simple things we take for granted. The rules have changed since the pandemic has started. The needs are greater, and so must be our response. Our mission today is more imperative than at any time.

Fr. Dan Thiess, C.M.
St. Vincent's Parish, St. Louis, MO

(continued from p.3)

Since 1987 ...

Since 1987 the brothers have directed the Vincentian Parish Mission apostolate, headquartered in Independence, MO, and, more recently, in Leawood, KS. Parish or "popular" missions were, in the mind of St. Vincent, the first and originating work of the Vincentians. Vincentians are called to go out beyond urban centers and preach the gospel to people in rural areas.

Along with Fr. Bill Rhinehart, C.M., the Gielow brothers have given thousands of parish missions. They have traveled to preach at parishes across the United States and Canada, imitating the spirit of St. Vincent, who sent his followers to "go out" and proclaim the gospel with joy.

That the parish mission team is popular is an understatement. Although the Covid-19 pandemic brought in-person missions to a standstill for much of the last year, a robust schedule of parish missions is currently booked with a nearly two-year waiting list.

Learn more and enjoy the mission team's spiritual reflections posted at vpmc.org.



Fr. Dick and Fr. Bob Gielow, C.M., with a mission group at the Vincentian Motherhouse in Paris, where the body of St. Vincent de Paul lies.