



The Dream Continues

Since the opening of DePaul Centre in 2000, it has been a dream to grow the Congregation in Kenya in both size and apostolic activity. Regular readers of this newsletter know that the Region of Kenya became a Vice-Province this past summer with the declaration on May 31 by the Very Rev. Tomaž Mavrič, C.M., Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission. This marked a significant stage in the growth of the Congregation in Kenya.

On September 24, Fr. Mavrič journeyed from Rome to join the confreres at DePaul Centre in Nairobi for an outdoor Mass, celebrating the official inauguration of the Vice-Province. In attendance were all the confreres, seminarians and staff, Daughters of Charity, and other groups of the Vincentian Family in Kenya.

Also in attendance was Fr. Pat McDevitt, C.M., provincial of the Western Province, who stated, "This moment of formally recognizing the new Vice-Province of Kenya is the culmination of two decades of dedicated and loving service of confreres from Kenya, Uganda, the Western Province, and confreres from other provinces."

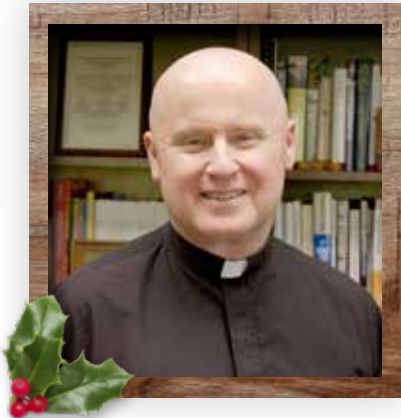
The official inauguration was marked by the reading of the decree of erection and the appointment letter of the first Visitor of the Vice-Province. After reading the letters, Fr. Tomaž blessed the first Visitor – Fr. Edwin Mugwe, C.M., and the Council members.

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Dear Friends,

Yesu Kristo Asi fi we! Praise be to Jesus Christ!

The last several months have been filled with the blessings and the wonders of God's actions in the life of our Congregation. After more than 20 years of missionary efforts, the mission in Kenya is now a Vice-Province. It was erected on May 31, 2022, and celebrations were held this September. As a Vice-Province, Kenya will continue to work closely with the Western Province but will now be self-governing and will enjoy all the responsibilities and benefits of being an independent province.

Our Assistant Provincial, Fr. Tom Esselman, C.M., and I traveled to Kenya in September with Superior General Fr. Tomaž Mavrič, C.M., and participated in many celebrations marking this historical new beginning of the Kenya Vice-Province, as well as the Feast of our Holy Founder, St. Vincent de Paul. These weeks of celebrations were filled with much love, joy, and gratitude. The Vincentian spirit and mission is so alive, beautiful, and vibrant in Kenya. Tumshukuru Mungu! Let us give thanks to God!

I want to acknowledge the dedication and the hard work of the many Vincentian priests and brothers who built the Kenya Mission and brought us to this moment. I also want to thank all of you—our dear friends, who have given so much of yourselves to support the Kenya Mission and Vice-Province. Thank you. We appreciate you, and we love you. Please be assured of our continued support and prayer.

Sincerely yours in St. Vincent de Paul,

Pat McDevitt

Fr. Pat McDevitt, C.M.
Provincial Superior



Fr. Kelly Finishes 24 Years at Catholic Charities

Fr. Gerard Kelly, C.M., wrapped up what he called the honor of his life after 24 years as chaplain of Catholic Charities of Chicago. He left the position earlier this year, pleased that he had fulfilled his role in the Vincentian tradition.

Fr. Gerry took the position after a recommendation from a colleague got him an interview with Msgr. Michael Boland in Chicago. The organization was far different than it would become by the time he left it.

“It was fairly small,” Fr. Gerry said. “It later expanded to about 3,000 employees. I’ve done much of what a parish priest does—hospital visits, wakes, and funerals for staff and clients. It has been a lot of things over the years. I became chaplain for the board, too.”

Fr. Gerry grew up in Chicago and says he never knew the extent of what Catholic Charities did until taking on the chaplain role. The position connected him with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, for which he has served as spiritual advisor since 1998, as well as the Missionaries of Charity in Chicago, for which he has also been celebrating the Eucharist for more than two decades.

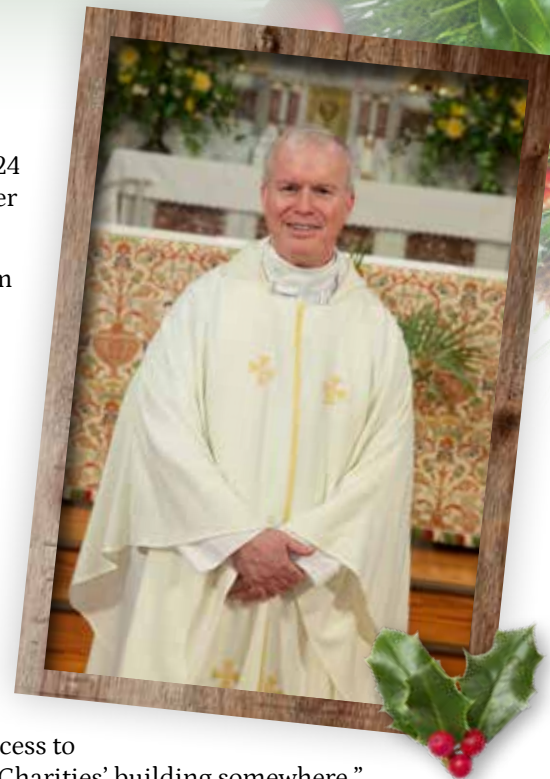
“Anything having to do with charity in Chicago—I have been able to have access to that,” Fr. Gerry said. “If someone needed help, the answer is in the Catholic Charities’ building somewhere.”

In addition to the growth of the organization, Fr. Gerry has seen changes in leadership. When Msgr. Boland retired, Kathy Donahue took the helm as its first female CEO.

“She is the epitome of a servant leader,” Fr. Gerry said.

He tells the story of a client who was an African-American Vietnam veteran, a former police officer, and, it would be discovered, a classical jazz pianist. When he died, they arranged for a military burial in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.

“When it came time to hand the flag to someone, they handed it to me,” Fr. Gerry said. “It was very meaningful. There is no part of the city that I don’t have a memory of doing something in the name of Catholic Charities. People knew I was a Vincentian doing this, which was important to me.”



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In his homily, Fr. Mavrič talked about the beauty of growing the mission and expanding the Vincentian charism. He hailed the transition by the Region of Kenya to a Vice-Province as an act of courage and growth and a sure sign of submission to Divine Providence. Fr. Mavrič also spoke about collaboration and encouraged all the Vincentian groups to partner with each other in fostering the Vincentian charism.

The Eucharist was celebrated in a true Kenyan fashion, with much lively music and dancing. On this formal and yet joyful occasion, some of the invited guests were asked to say a few words at the end of Mass, offering their words

of congratulations. The celebration continued with a festive meal served for everyone in attendance.

This was the first visit of the superior general to Kenya, so he was kept busy! He visited and celebrated Masses for the Daughters of Charity and the Vincentians. He also visited St. Vincent’s parish in Kamulu.

Fr. Edwin Mugwe, Visitor of the Vice-Province, noted, “We evidently had a gracious ‘Vincentian-Month.’ It is right to say that September of 2022 brought numerous moments of grace.”

When will these confreres become a full Province? The dream continues!

(Thanks to Fr. Edwin for his contribution to this article)

A New Farm in Kenya

On September 29, Fr. Pat McDevitt, C.M., and Fr. Edwin Mugwe, C.M. welcomed a large crowd of Vincentians, Daughters of Charity, and visiting dignitaries to the inauguration of the Mangogna Perryville Farm, located on the grounds of DePaul Centre in Nairobi.

The farm is a project named for the late Brother John Mangogna, CM, who was the last manager of the farm at St. Mary's of the Barrens in Perryville. The purpose of the farm is two-fold: to provide fresh food for the kitchen at DePaul Centre (thus helping to contain food costs), and to provide an opportunity for the seminarians to learn about small-farm operations, which they can later use in their parishes.

In attendance at the inauguration were members of the Mangogna family, who raised money to help fund this operation. Mr. Tom Mangogna (Bro. John's blood brother) stated afterwards: "It's inspiring to see what they've done with the funds we were able to raise."

According to Fr. McDevitt, the Mangogna Perryville Farm also honors the memory of all the brothers who worked on the farm at the Barrens since its inception in 1818. A plaque was unveiled that listed the names of those brothers who were known to have worked on the farm for the past 200 plus years.



Two Hundred Years of Growing

In 1818, a garden was started at St. Mary's of the Barrens by Brother Martin Blanka, C.M., one of the first missionaries from Italy. The confreres needed to be fed, and it was simply a matter of good economics to have a garden to provide for those needs. Soon the garden became a full-fledged farming operation.

Over time, more land was purchased or given to the Vincentians, which enabled the brothers to not only provide food for the seminary but also to grow crops and livestock for sale. The farm eventually included chickens, pigs, dairy cows, and cattle.

At some point in time the farm stopped growing crops for consumption and focused instead on growing feed for the growing livestock operations. When the number of brothers declined, the farm ceased most of the livestock husbandry, with the exception of the cattle operation, which itself closed down in 2018, exactly 200 years after Brother Martin's first garden!

Brother Harvey Goertz, C.M., one of the last brothers assigned to the Barrens farm, was asked to name some of the more valuable aspects of the farm, and he noted, "For those directly involved in the work, the witness to the local house of the Community's values of hard work, prayer, and living a simple life...a care, conservation, and stewardship for the resources of soil and water."

Donor Spotlight:

To Cultivate & Care

Mangogna family reflects on how the Vincentian spirit and ministry have changed their lives over the decades.

St. Louis native Tom Mangogna began his collegiate path in the direction of becoming a priest of the Congregation of the Mission. Ultimately, God had other plans.

“But I got a good formation with the Vincentians,” the 86-year-old nonprofit executive says. He pursued a career in social work and raised his family in St. Louis. Not long after Tom left the seminary, his youngest brother John made a surprise announcement that he planned to become a Vincentian brother.

“He was a very bright kid, everybody loved him,” Tom recalls. “Over the years, John became very committed to God, his Church, and his community; he spent 55 years managing the Vincentians’ farm in Perryville.”

As the need for that farm lessened, Fr. Pat McDevitt, C.M. saw an opportunity to grow the Vincentians’ agricultural ministry in Kenya. But Brother John was too ill to travel there to assist.

After Brother John’s passing two years ago, Fr. Pat invited Tom to come see the planned Kenyan farmland firsthand and help raise funds for its cultivation. In September, Tom and his daughter Danielle toured the new Mangogna Perryville Farm, named in memory of Brother John.

Both were deeply impressed by the Kenyan spirit of faith and joy amidst poverty — as well as the Vincentians’



relentless commitment to the Nairobians’ material and spiritual well-being.

“I fell in love with this beautiful country and its people,” Danielle says. “Watching the Vincentians work, seeing the impact they have on those in need, was life-changing. I made a commitment to carry home with me the joy, gratitude, and connection to other people that can only come by serving. I am so happy to support the Western Province going forward.”

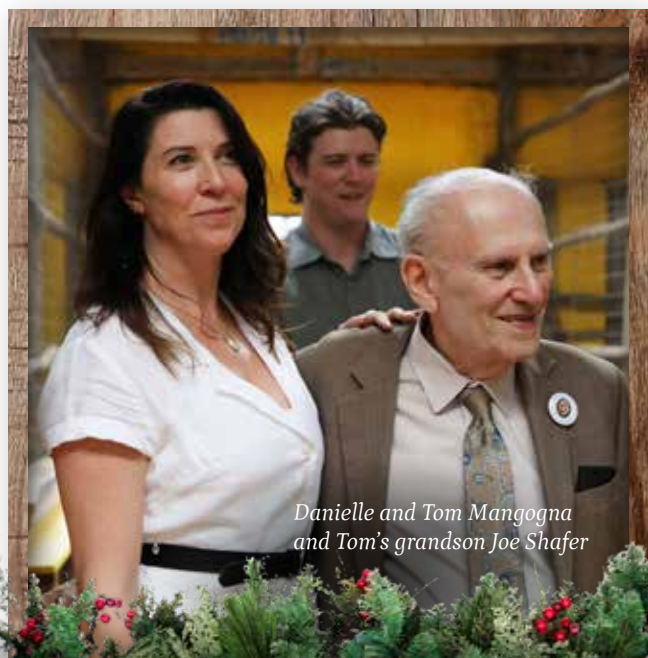
“ I made a commitment to carry home with me the joy, gratitude, and connection to other people that can only come by serving. I am so happy to support the Western Province going forward. ”

—Danielle Mangogna

Tom adds, “My time with the Vincentians made them an important part of my life. Now having gone to Kenya, we feel like part of their family. I hold them in much esteem and affection and want to assist their ministries. They are all about helping people, the poor in particular; that’s their mission, and they do it well.”

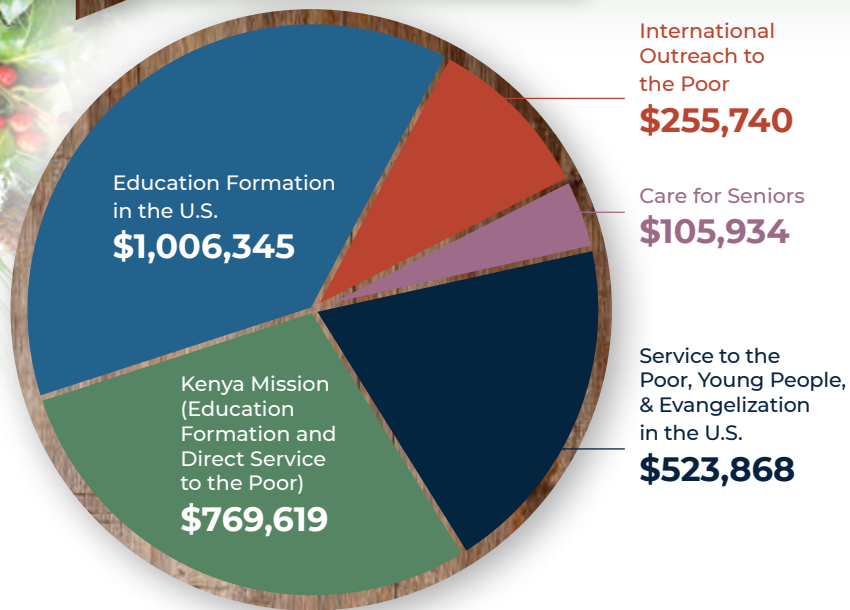
Tom Mangogna serves as CEO of Magdala House in St. Louis, which serves disadvantaged neighbors by providing them with housing stability and other resources to help them achieve their potential. Danielle Mangogna is an attorney with Orrice Herrington & Sutcliffe. Both look forward to seeing the Kenya farm become self-sustaining and realize its capacity to house 5,000 chickens and grow vegetables year-round.

Would you like to directly support the Mangogna Perryville Farm? Visit www.vincentian.org and click “Donate Now” to support the Vincentians’ work in Kenya.



Danielle and Tom Mangogna
and Tom's grandson Joe Shafer

How Donations Were Allocated



Your Gifts Support the Vincentian Mission

Donation Revenue for Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022)

Number of Gifts in FY22: 7,753

Total Amount Donated in FY22: \$2,661,506

82% of the Western Province's budget is allocated for mission and ministries with only 18% spent on administration and fundraising, which is well within the acceptable range for national and international organizations.

Benefitting Vincentian Works in Kenya and Ukraine

In February of this year, as the Congregation of the Mission Western Province was preparing to distribute its annual Kenya Appeal, news broke around the world that Russia had launched an invasion of its neighbor, Ukraine.



We all saw horrific images of war, cities on fire, and innocent victims caught in the crossfire. The Vincentians of DePaul International were already on the ground in Ukraine and well-positioned to do what Vincentians always do—go to the suffering

and fill a need. At the Western Province, a message was hastily prepared and sent out with the Kenya Appeal: the Province would match its Kenya donations with a donation to aid the Vincentian efforts in Ukraine, up to \$75,000.

The match was met, and with the help of our regular supporters and members of the God Minute community, the Western Province sent an additional \$247,553 to Ukraine. Thank you for helping those in need.



As the war grinds on, the Vincentians continue to provide food to 16,000 people a day, conduct thousands of weekly visits to the homebound, and transport needed medical supplies. They have provided enough food for more than 5 million meals, along with many other kinds of support.

DePaul Ukraine Chair Fr. Vitaliy Novak, C.M., said that, after six months, the staff and volunteers are exhausted but continue working.

"As always, we remain true to our Vincentian roots, ensuring that our work is aimed at supporting the most vulnerable," said Justine Trumper, Director of Fundraising for DePaul International.

A Christmas Season Reflection

By Fr. Derek Swanson, C.M.

The season of Christmas begins with the celebration of the Eucharist at the Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Eve) and concludes on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on January 9, 2023. During this season, we celebrate God becoming flesh and choosing to become human, Emmanuel (God-with-us), the prophesized Messiah and Savior who brought salvation for all. The Church encourages us to reflect on the gift of salvation in Christ and how we are called to participate in bringing about God's kingdom of peace and love and the light of Christ to all.

St. Vincent de Paul invites us to see the person of Christ in others and serve them in various ways. During this season of Christmas, when we see a Nativity scene or a Christmas tree and exchange gifts, may we be reminded of the gift of Christ in our life and how we, as Vincentians, are invited each day to share the light of Christ that is present in our lives with those around us by honoring the person of Christ present in people we encounter, especially the most poor and abandoned.

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests." —Luke 2:14

Holiday Programs Offer Cheer to the Less-Fortunate

In the spirit of charity that permeates the Vincentian charism, parishes throughout the Congregation of the Mission Western Province run Christmas programs to provide food, gifts, clothing, and other items to the poor and abandoned. The following is a small sampling.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Chicago holds a winter clothing drive for the homeless and a Christmas toy drive on Dec. 12 that last year distributed 600 toys through Marillac St. Vincent Family Services. The season concludes with a food drive on Jan. 7.

"We seek to inspire others to embrace the Vincentian charism by serving the poor in whom we see the face of Jesus," said Pastor Fr. Joseph Williams, C.M. "What better time to affirm this than during the holiday season!"

Holy Redeemer, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and St. Michael Parishes in San Antonio, TX, annually offer food giveaways at Thanksgiving and Christmas for approximately 150 families. At the Thanksgiving food giveaway, names are collected for a Christmas gift giveaway, and each parish collects gift cards that are given to families to shop for gifts. The St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry will be serving Tuesday through Friday, weekly.

As a thank you, Pastor Fr. Kevin Fausz, C.M., prepares a holiday meal for his annual Pastor's Appreciation Dinner and Dance, which serves 200 volunteers from all three parishes.

Volunteers and church staff come together to run Christmas programs for the poor in Vincentian parishes.

"There are many families that are in need, and we do all that we can to show the love of God by serving them," Fr. Kevin said. "The families and individuals are always grateful for what they receive."



St. Joseph Parish in New Orleans prepares and distributes to the homebound Christmas baskets filled with homemade treats, collects gifts, and presents them to residents of a temporary shelter for women and children and also to children at New Orleans Boys Town. Also, a Christmas lunch is offered for the homeless, at which guests receive socks, hats, and Christmas cards along with their meal.

"Isn't Christmas a celebration which invites us to all look more closely not only to our own lives," said Pastor Fr. Tom Stehlik, C.M., "but also to our brothers and sisters and see the goodness of God in them and share together our hope and joy of the presence of the Lord?"



CONGREGATION
of the **MISSION**

THE VINCENTIANS
WESTERN PROVINCE

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ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

2022 WINTER NEWSLETTER

Learn more about the Congregation of the Mission Western Province, join us in prayer, and offer your support. Visit us online at [vincentian.org](https://www.vincentian.org) and like us on Facebook at facebook.com/CMWesternProvince.

Nicholas and Carolyn Groves Installed as Affiliates



In the first week of October 2022, the Congregation of the Mission General Council in Rome approved Nicholas and Carolyn Groves as affiliates, which denotes people of exceptional and enduring commitment to the charism of St. Vincent de Paul.

They both taught for many years at DeAndreis Seminary in Lemont, IL, and also in Denver. For more than 40 years, they were involved in numerous ministries, some outside the Congregation, and fostered a deep connection to the Vincentian charism throughout. Carolyn passed away in May of 2022.

“After many years of working with the community, we are humbled and delighted to be received in this way,” said Nicholas. “Our vision for our ministry, not just with the Vincentians, has been very much that of St. Vincent de Paul, serving the poor and those in greatest need. I know Carolyn would thoroughly agree.”