



## Apostle of Charity Residence is Much More than a Retirement Facility

Fr. Jim Osendorf's office workspace bears all the markers of a busy schedule: a full bulletin board, sticky notes sprinkled across his computer, and neat stacks of paper arranged according to task and category.

As Superior at the Apostle of Charity Residence on the St. Mary's of the Barrens campus in Perryville, MO, he keeps busy. With a medical staff and varying levels of assistance for the residents, the facility is the retirement center for the Congregation of the Mission Western Province. It currently caters to approximately 30 residents, senior priests and brothers and one deacon who have "retired" from active ministry, though that word can be misleading where these Vincentians are concerned.

Many of the men here are still quite active. Fr. Paul Golden, C.M., served as president of Niagara University and is still involved in canon law cases. Fr. Jerry Herff, C.M., reads to preschool children once a week at the St. Vincent de Paul parish school in town. Fr. Larry Asma, C.M., visits prisoners at the county jail once a month. There are many more examples.

In addition, the priests are on rotation to say daily Mass in the chapel, and a smaller group handles Mass at the National Shrine of the Miraculous Medal on the campus. Others pick up Masses at the parish as needed and help out in other ways, such as hearing confessions or anointing the sick.

"Fr. Tom Hinni (C.M.) manages prayer ministry," Fr. Jim said. "They receive names to pray for on a regular basis. Mass intentions are also given to us by the Association of the Miraculous Medal. People come in for blessings or confession, or they might just want to talk to a priest. Whatever they can do, I try to empower as much as I can."

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Spring 2023 →

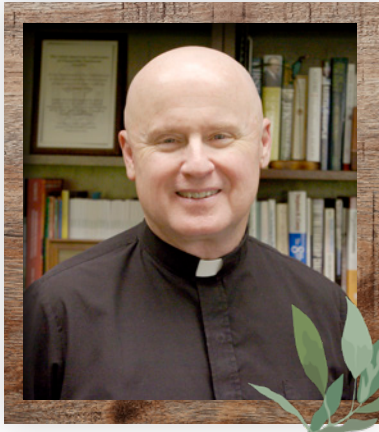
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## Dear Friends,

The Lenten liturgical season and nature's springtime reminds us of God's abundant blessings of transformation and renewal in our lives. In the Congregation of the Mission Western Province, we are going through our apostolic planning process, which is divided into distinct phases; currently, we are in the "Dream Phase."

This Dream Phase is a grace for the province to reflect and open ourselves to where God is calling us to mission. The voice of God—the call of God—is itself transformative and renewing and motivates us to change and grow as missionary disciples.

As we approach the great celebration of Easter, we renew our faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This gift of faith fortifies us in the Christian hope that God is breathing new life and new possibilities in our lives, in the province, in the Church, and in the entire world.

Have a blessed Lent and a glorious Easter!

In St. Vincent,

Fr. Patrick McDevitt, C.M.  
Provincial Superior

*(continued from cover)*

Fr. Jim has been in this role since 2019, prior to which he served as Vocations Director for the province for six years.

"Fr. Mike Joyce (C.M.) was superior before me," Fr. Jim said. "When he retired, Fr. Joe Williams (C.M., Assistant Provincial Superior at the time) asked me if I wanted to come do this. I'm a fairly organized person, so I'm good at putting together schedules and such. It's an enjoyable place to be, and I'm glad to be doing it."

The residence opened in 2006 on the site of the student and novitiate buildings of the former St. Mary's of the Barrens Seminary. Prior to that, retired priests lived for many years in another building on campus that

was repurposed for that role and has also since been demolished.

"They knew they needed to build a new place," Fr. Jim said. "We are lucky to have good medical care in the area. It's a good location in that respect."

Fr. Jim said the atmosphere is enjoyable and collegial, owing to the Vincentians who live at the facility.

"There is a lot of life experience here," Fr. Jim said. "I never use the word 'old' when referring to the confreres. I refer to them as the elders of the community, because they carry an awful lot of wisdom with them. When you get them to talk, they have a lot of great stuff to share. Sometimes, you have to initiate a conversation, but then they just come alive."







## Mary Comte says working with retired Vincentians is give-and-take

Tears come to Mary Comte's eyes when she talks about what she has received from the retired men she cares for as Director of Health Care at the Apostle of Charity Residence in Perryville, MO.

She has been in that role since 2005 and has seen many Vincentian priests and brothers come to the Residence in retirement. She's seen just as many take the short last trip to the Vincentian cemetery on the building's west side.

With the whole of her career in healthcare, she said it feels good to be able to use her expertise to help the men receive the healthcare they need. At the same time, she says they have given her and the other staff much in return.

"I wasn't aware of the community of the Vincentians," she said. "The family aspect is very touching. It can teach you how to interact with your own family—to be more spiritual, to have more patience."

*(continued, back cover)*

## Senior Vincentians appreciate the care they receive

Fr. Tom Croak, C.M., walks into the community room at the Apostle of Charity Residence and takes a seat next to Fr. Bill Hartenbach, C.M. Fr. Bill says, "How are you?" and Fr. Tom responds, "I'm on the right side of the grass."

The two laugh and admit that gallows humor is common among the Vincentians who live at the Apostle of Charity Residence in Perryville, MO. Fr. Bill, 85, and Fr. Tom, 84, have known each other for years, as most of the men at the residence have. In fact, when Fr. Bill was Provincial Superior for the Western Province from 1996 to 2002, Fr. Tom served as a member of the Provincial Council.

"This is one of the best investments the (Province) has ever made," said Fr. Tom. "I'm where I belong. I'm content and happy."

They speak fondly as well of the staff and the opportunity they have to live in community at the residence.

"The nursing staff is outstanding," Fr. Tom said. "I'm really fond of them. They take awfully good care of us. And to the donors that support us here, I want to thank them for their generosity. They have been great."



*Fr. Thomas Croak, C.M. (left), and Fr. William Hartenbach, C.M.*

Fr. Bill, who suffers from acute pneumonia, said the care they receive goes beyond meals and medical care.

"I remember when one of the confreres, George Weber, passed away," Fr. Bill said. "I was at his wake, and two of the staff were there. I said to one of them, 'It's good of you to be here.' She said, 'We're family.' To me, that sums it up."





## There is an app for that

*Fr. Ron Hoye, C.M., Reflects on the Evolution of The God Minute*



The God Minute office in the Vincentians' Lazarist Residence in St. Louis affords a glimpse into the workings of the popular prayer podcast and app called The God Minute. It has a recording studio off to one side and a desk and meeting table on

the other that is covered in notes and a stack of canvas tote bags and t-shirts with The God Minute logo.

Fr. Ron Hoye, C.M., who directs the apostolate, reflects on the early days of The God Minute, a daily online prayer that weaves together music, scripture, and a thoughtful reflection based on the Liturgy of the Hours of the Church. It now has about 47,000 subscribers and recently passed 1 million listens on YouTube.

"The God Minute began five years ago as a response to a need I kept hearing from people while leading parish missions: the desire for a simple, beautiful way to pray every day that fit into their busy lifestyle," Fr. Ron said. "What they wanted was a way to pray that was not too long, easily accessible, and beautiful."

Initially he searched the Internet and app stores for such a prayer but couldn't find one he liked. What he was looking for, he said, was something modest, focused, and accessible and simply about beautiful prayer.

"I got together with a friend with whom I have worked together on many retreats and asked him to join me in creating a daily prayer podcast that would be based on the Divine Office of the Church," he said. "We previously wrote a book together and used those reflections as a part of the prayer, incorporating scripture, blessing, and soft music."

They kept it to 10 minutes and uploaded it each day to podcast directories. The God Minute name was coined. Within a year it went from a couple of hundred listeners to thousands, mainly by word of mouth.

Three years ago, Fr. Ron expanded the podcast prayer to an app, making it even easier for people to pray on the go while also providing access to additional prayer resources and videos. More contributors were also added to reflect greater diversity and plurality, along with part-time staff to handle the growing demands.

"God wanted this to happen. There is no other way to explain it," Fr. Ron said. "It went from a little side project to a growing community of over 47,000 people around the world who pray with us each day."

The God Minute community takes their Vincentian roots seriously and puts that prayer into action on behalf of the poor.

"Two years ago we raised over a quarter million dollars to build classrooms for children in Kenya and last year an equal amount to help those devastated by loss and violence in Ukraine," he said.

In the coming months, The God Minute will expand into another element of their Vincentian identity, evangelization. A new video series of faith formation and leadership called, "Tuesday Conferences" will be offered, led by members of the Vincentian family around the world.

The God Minute is available on all podcast directories and your App Store.

[thegodminute.org](http://thegodminute.org)





Lauren Palm

## The Holy Spirit at Work

When Fr. Ron Hoye, C.M., determined he needed a social media coordinator for The God Minute, Lauren Palm was wholly unaware that the online prayer platform and its popular app even existed.

In the summer of 2020, Lauren, who lives in Dayton, OH, had left her prior job in business development and account management for an insurance company to be a stay-at-home mom.

“My former boss was a listener to The God Minute, and when Fr. Ron posted the job, she said she thought of me immediately and shared it with me,” Lauren said. “The timing was uncanny—the Holy Spirit at work. I sent in my resume, interviewed, and got the job.”

Initially, she coordinated The God Minute’s presence on a variety of social media platforms, creating content, posting, and interacting with users on the website. It has since grown into planning and direction for the podcast, including management of the Marian Saturdays feature, which is based on Marian-specific prayer. Over time, the role for Lauren has brought additional unexpected blessings.

“The biggest has been the community of prayer I get to experience on social media,” she said. “They are so engaged with each other, and it’s great to see people lift each other up. When I share something, it always catches me off guard, the ways it comes back to me. There are a couple of them that I would consider good friends. It is a beautiful aspect of the community that Fr. Ron has built.”



Scan with your phone to download the app.



Ruth Ann Burton

## ‘When you need it, it’s there’



When many people think of The God Minute’s typical user, most likely, they imagine someone from the Millennial or Z generations. Ruth Ann Burton, 78, of Huntsville, AL, would politely disagree.

Like many, especially in the first couple years of the podcast, Ruth Ann learned about The God Minute when director Fr. Ron Hoye, C.M., came to her community to conduct a parish mission.

“I’m an old traditionalist,” Ruth Ann said. “Growing up, we were always at church, every Sunday. We knew where our pew was.”

She says The God Minute has improved her prayer life. An active participant in Bible study, she is particularly fond of the segment “Breaking Open the Word.”

“It makes Mass even better for me, because I’ve heard another viewpoint on the Gospel,” she said. “As I get older, it helps me focus and get in the mood. With the app, they have added additional features beyond the daily prayer, and I’ve taken advantage.”

*(continued, back cover)*



# Meeting, Seeing, and Being Jesus:

## Vincentian Priest Inspires Donor's Faith Journey

In 2007, Dave Baranowski was approaching the height of a successful career at Anheuser-Busch. He enjoyed the blessings of good health, a loving family, lifelong friends, and a vibrant parish where he coached kids' sports and attended Sunday Mass.

"But something was missing," he recalls. "I started asking if this was all I was meant to do."

Attending a men's weekend retreat at his pastor's suggestion, Baranowski received an unmistakable answer. "I think I just met Jesus," he shared with newfound wonder in a brief call with his wife Sharon.

Returning with a vibrant, maturing faith, Baranowski joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society conference at St. Francis of Assisi. "I had assumed everybody living in our part of town was in good shape. But working in the food pantry and delivering furniture, I found out how many people really struggled."

The fulfillment of giving back led Baranowski to begin volunteering at the St. Vincent de Paul parish just south of Downtown St. Louis. "Fr. Ed Murphy was the first priest of the Congregation of the Mission I'd ever met."

Father Ed would often use the phrase, "**To see the face of Jesus, and be the face of Jesus.**" The words were to become for Dave his own spiritual mantra: "That really summed things up for me. I felt good being part of their parish's ministry. Soon, Sharon and our kids would join me, as well as some of the teams I coached and some of my friends, too."

"It was a great way to help our children realize that poverty doesn't go on just halfway around the world. We can help one another. And that's why God put us here."

In 2012, Baranowski left a nearly three-decade career at Anheuser-Bush/InBev and was named director of stewardship education with the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Other C.M. priests he has met continue to influence his faith.

"Fr. Milton Ryan and Fr. Dan Thiess come to mind," he said. "They're awesome and have made a positive difference in my life. Becoming more and more aware of all that these priests are doing opened my eyes to the order's worldwide impact, and I love being part of it. So many people only think of the lay parish Society when



“ But after my encounter with Jesus,  
we found that the more we gave,  
the more God blessed us. ”

—Dave Baranowski

they hear *St. Vincent de Paul* or *Vincentians*. The order of priests and brothers isn't as visible. But they're doing so much good."

Today, Dave serves on the Congregation's Development Advisory Board; he and Sharon make regular gifts to support its needs.

"Until my conversion, money was my absolute god; Sharon was more generous. But after my encounter with Jesus, we found that the more we gave, the more God blessed us. We continue to support the Congregation to help them build relationships with more people and deepen our relationship with Jesus."

In 2019, parishioners at St. Vincent de Paul celebrated the parish's 175th anniversary. Led by Vincentian priests throughout the generations, their service to vulnerable neighbors has benefited not only the poor, but countless souls like Dave's, who have grown in the spirit of charity.

"When you wake up with the disposition of, 'Lord, let me see your face in others and be your face for others,' you have more compassion for people. I'm grateful to try to live that out every day, aligning myself with what God wants instead of what I want."





*Fr. Bill Rhinehart, C.M.*

## Serving Rural Areas with Parish Missions

Ordained in 1979, Fr. Bill Rhinehart, C.M., was first assigned to serve the Vincentian mission in the Republic of China (ROC), also known as Taiwan. It was an assignment he had volunteered to undertake, and for the next eight years he served in two parishes there. In 1987 he returned to the United States and served in a succession of small country parishes, first in Colorado and then in Missouri. It was a ministry he felt reflected the Vincentian tradition of serving people in poor country places, where distances are long and resources for parish work are harder to come by.

After almost 30 years of parish work, Fr. Bill was ready for a new ministry, but one in which he could still carry out the Vincentian tradition of serving the people of the countryside. He discovered that ministry in the Vincentian Parish Missions, where his years of work in rural parish ministry was a valuable asset.

"I focus my mission work on smaller, rural parishes, which I know from experience don't have the resources for faith formation that are available in the cities," Fr. Bill said. "In this way, I feel I am continuing the work of St. Vincent. My goal is to give these people a shot in the arm, a boost for their faith."



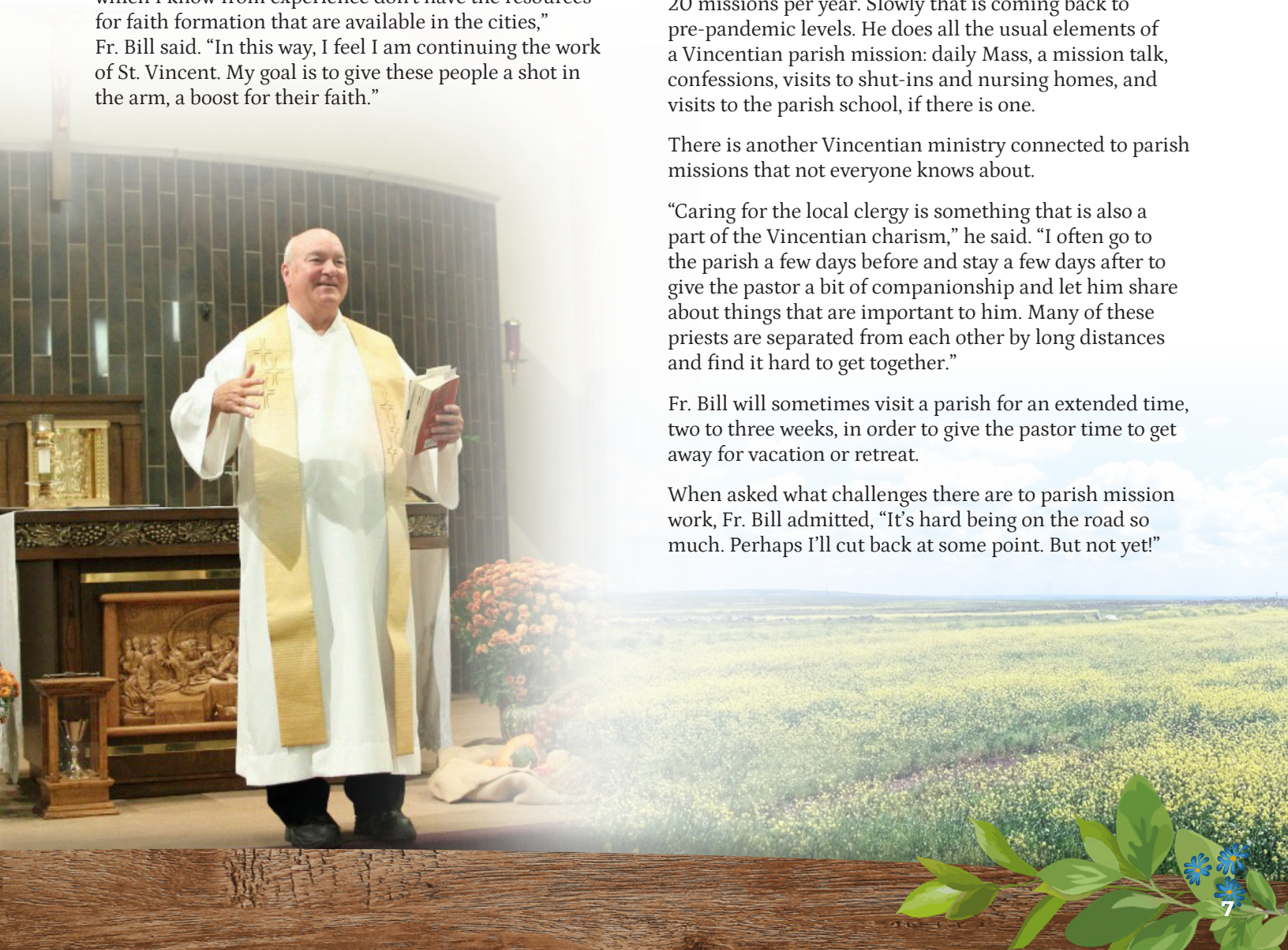
Fr. Bill estimates that before COVID he was doing about 20 missions per year. Slowly that is coming back to pre-pandemic levels. He does all the usual elements of a Vincentian parish mission: daily Mass, a mission talk, confessions, visits to shut-ins and nursing homes, and visits to the parish school, if there is one.

There is another Vincentian ministry connected to parish missions that not everyone knows about.

"Caring for the local clergy is something that is also a part of the Vincentian charism," he said. "I often go to the parish a few days before and stay a few days after to give the pastor a bit of companionship and let him share about things that are important to him. Many of these priests are separated from each other by long distances and find it hard to get together."

Fr. Bill will sometimes visit a parish for an extended time, two to three weeks, in order to give the pastor time to get away for vacation or retreat.

When asked what challenges there are to parish mission work, Fr. Bill admitted, "It's hard being on the road so much. Perhaps I'll cut back at some point. But not yet!"





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## 2023 SPRING NEWSLETTER

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She has also learned from the leadership styles exhibited by the residents, who have headed major institutions and the province itself, and she has developed friendships and a lifetime of memories.

“Over the years, I have met some really wonderful people,” she said. “I’ve learned a lot from them and remember things I’ve heard from them, even after they have been gone for many years. They have taught me a lot of lessons in life, and it has been very rewarding—very rewarding.”

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Ruth Ann admits her own listening habits probably run counter to many users.

“I’m not the one to listen to start my day,” she said. “I listen on my iPad at bedtime when I’m relaxing. It works for me. I’ve even listened in the middle of the night if I can’t sleep. When you need it, it’s there. You just click the button, and there it is. It’s just so convenient.”

