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Pilgrims of Hope

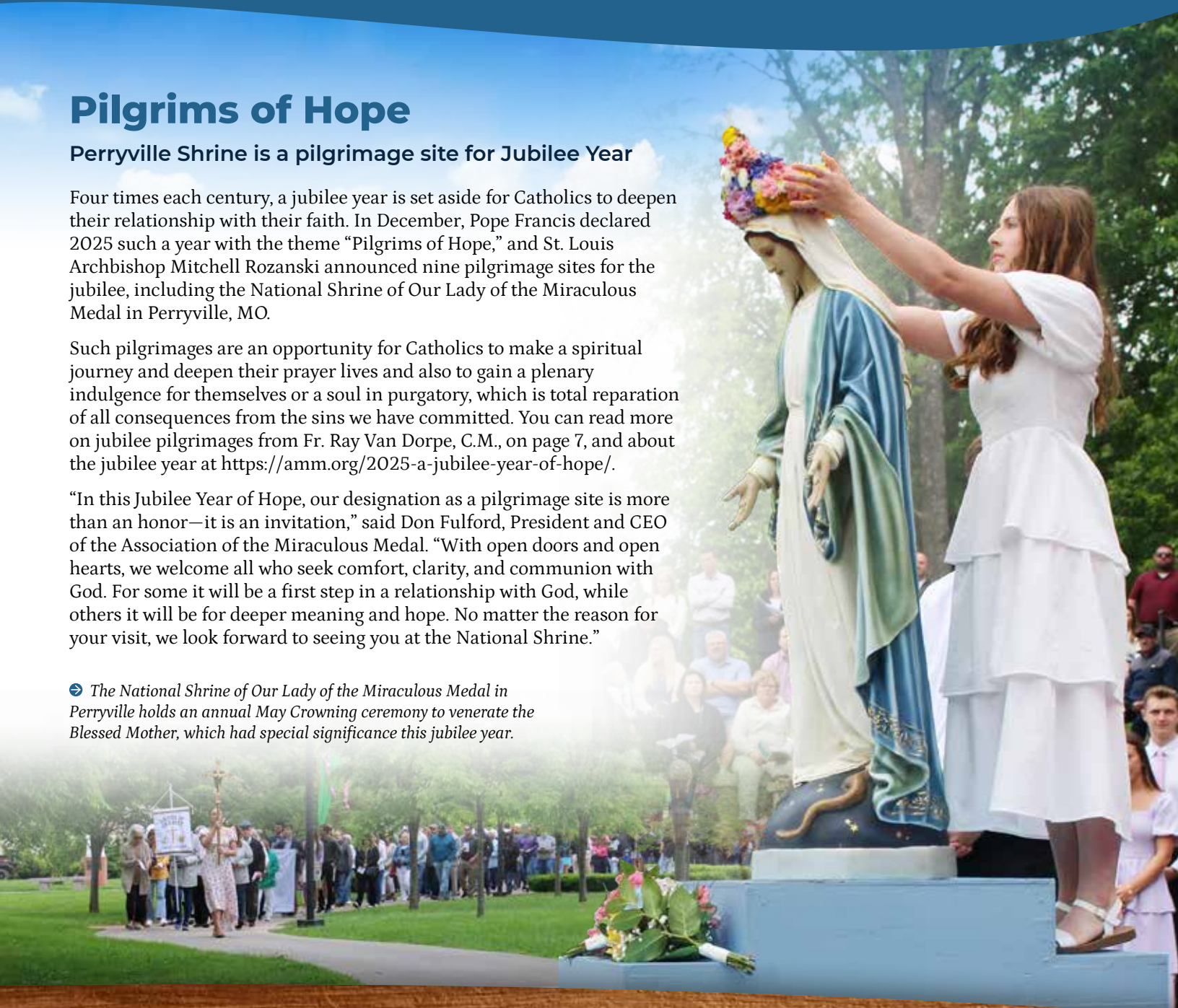
Perryville Shrine is a pilgrimage site for Jubilee Year

Four times each century, a jubilee year is set aside for Catholics to deepen their relationship with their faith. In December, Pope Francis declared 2025 such a year with the theme “Pilgrims of Hope,” and St. Louis Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski announced nine pilgrimage sites for the jubilee, including the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in Perryville, MO.

Such pilgrimages are an opportunity for Catholics to make a spiritual journey and deepen their prayer lives and also to gain a plenary indulgence for themselves or a soul in purgatory, which is total reparation of all consequences from the sins we have committed. You can read more on jubilee pilgrimages from Fr. Ray Van Dorpe, C.M., on page 7, and about the jubilee year at <https://amm.org/2025-a-jubilee-year-of-hope/>.

“In this Jubilee Year of Hope, our designation as a pilgrimage site is more than an honor—it is an invitation,” said Don Fulford, President and CEO of the Association of the Miraculous Medal. “With open doors and open hearts, we welcome all who seek comfort, clarity, and communion with God. For some it will be a first step in a relationship with God, while others it will be for deeper meaning and hope. No matter the reason for your visit, we look forward to seeing you at the National Shrine.”

➔ *The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in Perryville holds an annual May Crowning ceremony to venerate the Blessed Mother, which had special significance this jubilee year.*





Help Us Preserve Resources

If you would like to go paperless and receive *The Vincentian* online, scan this code and submit the form. As a reader of the online version of the newsletter, you can help preserve resources for printing and mailing, which we can use for St. Vincent's mission to evangelize the poor, educate the clergy and laity, and spread the gospel.



Dear friends,

I started writing this just a few days after the passing of our beloved Pope Francis, and while we are deeply saddened by his death, we can also give thanks for the gift of his time with us, as well as for the powerful reminder that he gave us of our Vincentian mission to serve the poor and abandoned.

Last month, I spent two weeks in Paris for our congregation's 400th anniversary celebrations and for a meeting of the International Provincials. I could not help but be inspired and energized by the beautiful celebration of our centuries-long heritage and by the passion and zeal for St. Vincent's mission by our Vincentian confreres around the world. Our mission and charism are truly alive and on fire.

During this time, we also learned of the selection of Pope Leo XIV as the new leader of the Catholic Church. His humility and lifelong commitment to charity for the poor and forgotten lent even greater excitement to our gathering. We hope you join us in praying for him and supporting him as he takes on this leadership role.

Have a great summer, and please pray for me as I do for you.

Sincerely in St. Vincent,

Rev. Joseph S. Williams cm

Fr. Joseph S. Williams, C.M.
Provincial Superior



Rooted, Raised in the Spirit of the Vincentians

Anne Godar Julius can't remember a time when she wasn't surrounded by priests of the Congregation of the Mission.

In 1958, Margaret and Charles Godar moved their growing family to a seven-acre property in south St. Louis County within walking distance of the Catholic school.

"St. Catherine Labouré was a Vincentian parish," says Anne, the fourth of seven children. "We were taught by the Daughters of Charity, and the spirit of service to others was ingrained in us at a very early age. We got an extra dose of it from my mom, who helped start the parish's Louisettes for middle-school girls."

Margaret didn't drive, so it wasn't uncommon for the parish priest to walk to the Godars' home and chat about some charitable project or another. "We'd look out the window, and there was Fr. Bruns talking to my mom about a food drive or a coat drive while she was hanging out laundry on the clothesline."

The Godars became good friends with the family a few doors up, the Muellers, including Gary Mueller, who later joined the Vincentians and currently serves as pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Los Angeles.

Anne recalls spending time at St. Vincent's parish in South St. Louis on Saturdays, securing Catholic supplies and religious articles to bring back to St. Catherine's for the parishioners after Sunday Masses.

"The Vincentians have just been a part of our family," Anne says.

After the Congregation of the Mission began its mission in Kenya, Margaret and Anne got on board to support the effort with a donation to sponsor a stained-glass window in the Damascus House chapel in Nairobi.

The Godar siblings are grateful for the example their mother set as they look fondly on being rooted in the spirit of Vincentian service and raised in the shadow of devoted priests whom they admire to this day.

From her deep desire to ensure the future vitality of the Vincentian community, Anne Julius has named the Congregation of the Mission in her estate plans.

"I feel grateful and blessed that they've been part of my whole life," she says. "And there's such a need, especially among their older priests in residence. If there is anything I can do to help, I want to do so."



↑ Jeanne Godar Kriss recently visited the stained-glass window her mother Margaret and sister Anne sponsored in the family's name. Mrs. Godar loved Mary and chose a rendering of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.

If We Just Open Our Hearts

Food pantry finds eager volunteers hungry for service



Dennis Furlong, 75, has volunteered at the Holy Trinity food pantry for about 30 years. He was baptized at the Dallas church and attended elementary school there. For him, volunteering at the pantry is about serving and connecting with others.

"This parish has always been open-armed and inviting to those in need," he said. "We've got so many fabulous people here."

Jenny Carol has volunteered for a little over a year. She lives across the street from the church and was looking for something after...

"I don't use the dirty word of 'retirement,'" she said.

Toby O'Brien started in April, having heard about it in the announcements, and has been there every week since.

Carleen Pieper started in September, having previously worked at a food pantry and soup kitchen in Seattle.

"This is my church, and this works out great," she said.

Steve Tankersley, a retired physician, describes himself as the "world's oldest acolyte," serving Mass the last 15 years, straight out of RCIA. The food pantry is a continuation of that ministry, he said, and an opportunity for service.

Caroline Crutcher and her husband, Buzz, have come every Tuesday since joining the volunteers in September. Both in their 80s, they have been parishioners since the 1960s; Buzz attended elementary school at the parish.

"I like doing something to help people," she said. "Helping the poor is big at Holy Trinity."

Mary George (pictured above), Food Pantry Coordinator at Holy Trinity since mid-2024, said the pantry has about 40 volunteers, who come during distribution, three hours each on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Customers come through the pantry with shopping carts as volunteers help them make selections.

"We serve about 90 clients in a given week," Mary said. "Most come in monthly; seniors come every two weeks. We see a lot of repeat customers, which helps build community."

Mary, who recently converted to Catholicism, found out about the job through her RCIA classes. She said she appreciates the service orientation of the parish.

"I love doing this," she said. "The Vincentian identity is very present. Sometimes, we are able to give them more than food. We will see refugees and immigrants and can direct them to other services. It feels good; you see how grateful people are."

Furlong, who was a successful business owner before selling it in 1998, agrees.

"Don't resist the feeling to do something for someone, because those feelings are coming straight from Christ," he said. "We can share God's love with everyone if we just open our hearts."



Building Connections

Holy Trinity staff serve in the model of St. Vincent



Fr. Milton Ryan, C.M., Pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Dallas, speaks proudly about his vibrant, growing, active, and generous parish, for which he takes no credit.

“We have a wonderful staff,” he said. “They do a great job serving the parishioners and keeping people engaged.”

Elizabeth Delgado (pictured right) and Elia Meyers, two of the parish’s 18 staff members, work on opposite ends of the parishioners’ lives—Elizabeth in marriage preparation and Elia in pastoral care for the sick, elderly, and dying.

For Elizabeth, who has worked for Holy Trinity since 2011, it’s a chance to help her clients cement a lasting relationship with the church.

“It’s the same as when I was teaching and saw the children completing the sacraments,” Elizabeth said. “Every role here has been meaningful to me.”

Pastoral Care Associate Elia has worked at Holy Trinity for 36 years. A licensed professional counselor, she does everything from grief counseling to coordinating communion for the homebound. She remembers being the first parish involved in care for HIV/AIDS patients in the ‘80s.

“I’m proud of that,” she said. “Now the parish is very young, and I am helping people with elder care issues for their parents. That is my mission, to keep people connected to this parish that has been such a support to so many.”

Both women spoke of that welcoming, open atmosphere, which they say has always been there because of the Vincentians.

“We are a team that supports each other and helps each other,” Elia said, “toward whatever St. Vincent asks of us for their material needs and their spiritual needs.”

The New Knights

Knights of Columbus chapter takes off at Holy Trinity



A few years ago, the Knights of Columbus chapter at Holy Trinity Parish in Dallas didn’t exist, and today, it has more than 120 members, many of them young men.

“Last year, we brought in 20 guys in their 20s,” said Mark Williamson, himself 28.

He and Alex Michaud, 25, (at the center of the left photo) were two of the first 10 people to sign up when the parent organization set out to get a chapter started at the parish. The chapter celebrated its charter in July 2023 with Grand Knight Larry Reding.

Mark moved to Dallas four years ago and started looking for ways to get involved at the parish, including teaching for RCIA and serving as a lector. Alex arrived from Chicago in 2022 and immediately took to Holy Trinity, playing violin with the

choir occasionally and teaching in the RCIA program, which is where he met Mark.

“When the Knights came along, there was more of an opportunity for service,” he said.

They have done everything from fish fries and tamale sales to landscaping on the parish grounds.

“This group is amazing,” said Fr. Milton Ryan,” Pastor at Holy Trinity. “I just have to ask for help with something, and they are there.”

“If you care about what you are working on,” Alex said, “you can accomplish a lot.”



Four Kenyan Men Ordained to Priesthood by St. Louis Archbishop

On May 3, 2025, St. Louis Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski ordained four new Vincentian priests at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Nairobi, Kenya.

"We are very grateful to Archbishop Rozanski for making the journey to Kenya and ordaining these men to the priesthood," said Fr. Joseph Williams, C.M., Provincial Superior. "We look forward to even more collaboration in the years to come."



Fr. Aba Zozmus Wakusimba, C.M., Fr. Alexander Mumo, C.M., Fr. Johnmary Muhumuza, C.M., and Fr. Geoffrey Wekesa, C.M., each entered the initiate program at the DePaul Center in Nairobi on Jan. 18, 2016, transitioned to the Internal Seminary at Damascus House on July 8, 2019, and completed their schooling at Consolata Institute and Tangaza University, graduating from the latter in 2024. They were ordained as deacons in May of last year.

"My discernment has been a journey of personal growth, enlightenment, and conversation with God. Sharing life with the less privileged, the sick, and the elderly has strengthened my desire to serve Christ."

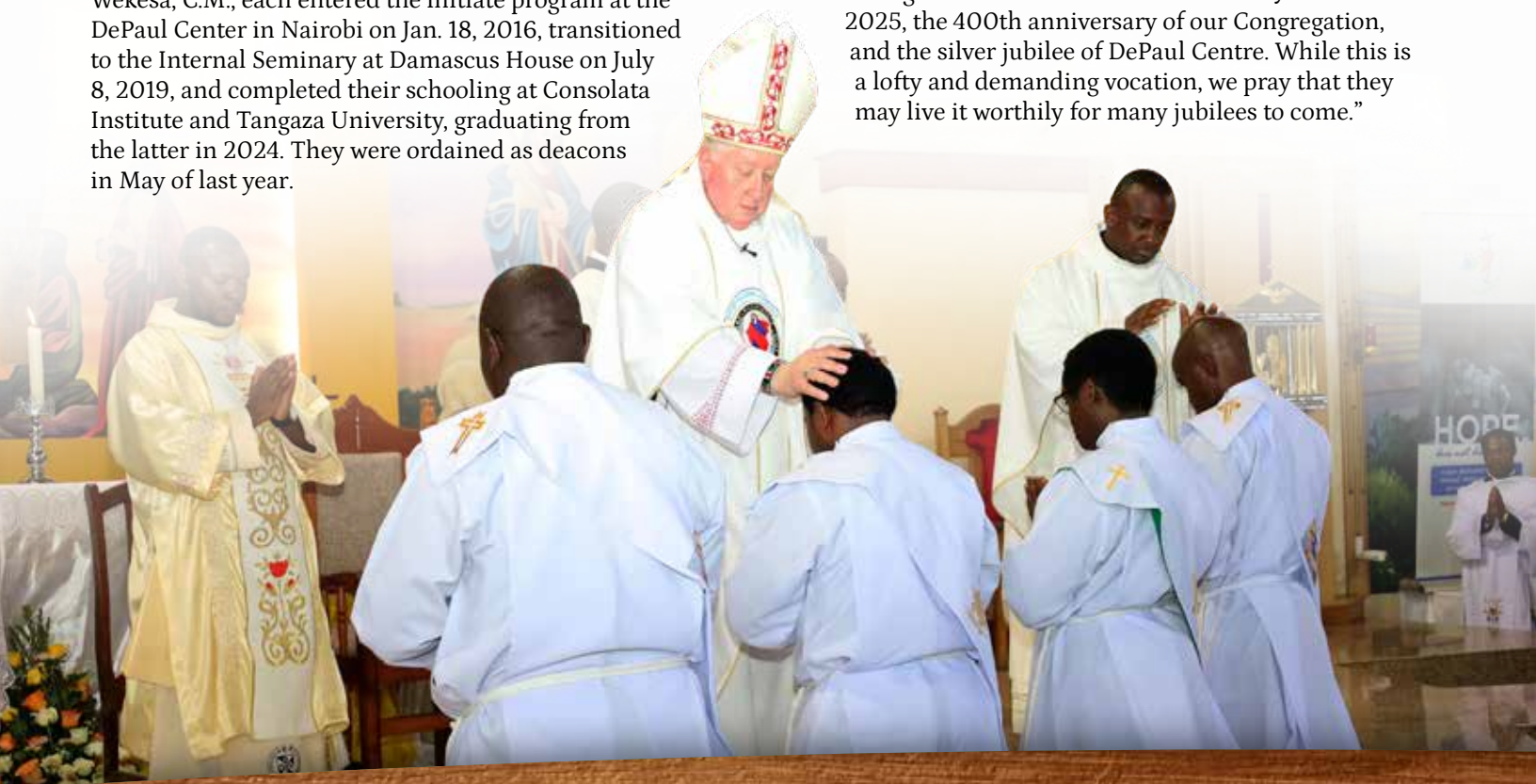
—Fr. Alexander Mumo, C.M.

The four come from different backgrounds, having worked in secular fields before pursuing the priesthood. They come from different parishes and dioceses, including in neighboring Uganda in Fr. Muhumuza's case. They share a common story, having been inspired by the Vincentians they met and their way of ministering, especially to the poor.

"My discernment has been a journey of personal growth, enlightenment, and conversation with God," said Fr. Mumo in comments that echoed in the sentiments of all four new priests. "Sharing life with the less privileged, the sick, and the elderly has strengthened my desire to serve Christ."

The seminary currently has more than 30 students studying to become Vincentian priests or brothers.

"Our four newly ordained confreres have earned the title of 'priests of the Jubilee,'" said Fr. Edwin Mugwe, C.M., Visitor for the Vice-Province. "Their ordination is a beautiful convergence with the Universal Church's Jubilee Year 2025, the 400th anniversary of our Congregation, and the silver jubilee of DePaul Centre. While this is a lofty and demanding vocation, we pray that they may live it worthily for many jubilees to come."



We Are a Pilgrim People!

Take a pilgrimage as part of 2025 Jubilee Year

On Christmas Eve, 2024, Pope Francis declared a Jubilee Year with the theme, “Pilgrims of Hope.” Pope Francis invited Catholics to renew their hope, encouraging a deeper faith and trust in God’s love and mercy.

The basis for a Jubilee year is found in the 25th chapter of the book of Leviticus. The Jewish people were to observe a Jubilee every 50 years. It was a year of rest and liberation, symbolizing God’s mercy and care for his people. The Catholic Church has adopted the concept of a Jubilee, traditionally observed every 25 years, to emphasize themes of mercy, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Jubilee years often involve physical pilgrimages, representing a return to God and a deepening of one’s faith. Many people will make pilgrimages to famous religious sites in Rome, Jerusalem, and other famous places. Closer to home, dioceses and archdioceses around the world have designated local churches and shrines as pilgrimage sites. The Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal at St. Mary’s of the Barrens in Perryville, Missouri, has been designated as one of nine pilgrimage sites for the Archdiocese of St. Louis. (Learn more by going to: amm.org)

Whether you are going near or far, making a pilgrimage is different than other kinds of travel, in that it is both a physical and spiritual journey. And just as one carefully prepares for recreational or business travel, a pilgrimage

also requires preparation on the part of the individual pilgrim. Consider the following if you are planning to go on a pilgrimage yourself:

1. Why you are going on this pilgrimage, and what you hope to gain from it. A pilgrimage begins before the start of the journey itself: the starting point is the decision to set out.
2. Increase your daily prayer time and consider adding specific prayer intentions when you reach the church or shrine.
3. Do some research. Learn about the historical and spiritual significance of the place you are planning to visit.
4. To fully engage yourself in the pilgrimage, try to leave behind other commitments like your work or social life.
5. Enjoy the journey. Expect new things to happen and plans to be changed along the way. This is a spiritual journey, not a vacation!

Whether your pilgrimage takes you halfway around the world or simply to the other side of your diocese, remember that you are setting out on a spiritual journey, one that will give you the opportunity to not only change your physical place but also to change yourself.

—Fr. Ray Van Dorpe, C.M.





**CONGREGATION
of the MISSION**

THE VINCENTIANS
WESTERN PROVINCE

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ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

2025 SUMMER 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 and like us on social media at facebook.com/CMWesternProvince and instagram.com/CMWesternProvince.

Vincentian campaigns provide assistance for Kenyan ministries

Several Vincentian ministries in Kenya will receive valuable assistance thanks to this year's God Minute Lenten Almsgiving campaign and the Western Province Kenya Appeal.

Subscribers to the popular online prayer app The God Minute, an apostolate of the Western Province, stepped up in a big way to support a project that will expand the facilities for DePaul Woodworking (pictured below), which has been teaching valuable trade skills to young Kenyan men and women for more than 20 years. The \$250,000 project will allow the two-year program to double its enrollment to approximately 60 students and will provide updated equipment, as well as bunk rooms, office space, and a dining area.

Additional funds from the campaign will benefit the St. Louise de Marillac program, run by the Vincentians in Nairobi to provide direct assistance to the poor, including food, medical assistance, and more.

This year's Western Province Kenya Appeal, conducted earlier this year, raised funds for education and formation programs for seminarians, healthcare assistance for the elderly, clean water and solar energy projects, and direct assistance for the poor.

"In a truly Vincentian way, these programs make real changes in people's lives, providing support they need today, as well as training and improvements that will benefit the community in the future," said Teresa Manna, Chief Development and Communications Officer for the Western Province. "We are so grateful for everyone who has contributed."

