



WESTERN PROVINCE

The Vincentian

2026 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Faith in Bloom

Easter brings renewal and new beginnings across the Western Province

Vincentian parishes across the Western Province celebrated Easter Triduum with services rich in ceremony and celebration and filled with baptisms, first communions, and confirmations.

The presence of the faithful, gathered in celebration of Christ's resurrection, is a powerful reminder of the potency of the Vincentian mission in parishes from New Orleans to Alaska.



*Holy Redeemer Parish—
San Antonio*



*St. Vincent de Paul
Parish—Los Angeles*



*St. Catherine Laboure
Parish—St. Louis*



Summer 2026

- 3 2026 Jubilarians
- 4-5 Leaving a Legacy
- 6-7 Formation and Vocations

SCAN THE CODE
for more Easter
Triduum photos



*St. Vincent de Paul
Parish—Chicago*

(continued from cover)



St. Vincent de Paul Parish—Los Angeles



Holy Trinity Parish—Dallas



St. Vincent de Paul Parish—Perryville, Missouri



Dear Friends,

Grace and Peace in the Lord Jesus!

The pictures on the front page and page 2 of this issue of *The Vincentian* offer a look at some of the Easter Triduum services in Vincentian parishes across the Western Province. These images are just a sample, and you can see a larger collection on our website.

They show a shared observance of Christ’s passion and exuberant celebrations of his resurrection across regions and cultures. Along with rituals like the washing of feet, the baptisms, the first communions, and the welcoming of new members to our Catholic family, the thing that I see in all these images is presence.

On this day, perhaps more than any other, our churches are filled to capacity, and the presence of the faithful is a large part of what makes these celebrations so joyful, along with the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

Presence is an important aspect of the Vincentian mission. The work that we do in education, evangelizing the poor, and sharing the Gospel relies on it. In your most challenging moments, consider the comfort that comes from having someone there with you.

I wish you much joy and abundant blessings as we move into the summer months. Please pray for me as I do for you.

Sincerely in St. Vincent,

Rev. Joseph S. Williams, C.M.

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



Scan the code to learn more.

WE ARE MOVING

On June 30, 2026, the Western Province Office will move to a new location at 1405 S. 9th Street, St. Louis, MO 63104.

50-Year Jubilee

In 2026, four Vincentians will celebrate their 50-year jubilees in the priesthood.

Join us in a prayer of gratitude for these faithful servants.

Rev. Daniel P. Borlik, C.M.

Fr. Dan was born in Baltimore, Maryland. He entered the Congregation in 1967 and was ordained in 1976. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from Catholic Theological Union. Fr. Dan has experienced many different ministerial roles, including seven years as a missionary in Guatemala and eight years in provincial leadership.

“My life and ministry went through a radical shift after volunteering...to minister to displaced Guatemalan farmers and their families,” he said. “Those were humbling years but continue to be my primary memory of experiencing God, the Holy Spirit, and Vincent de Paul’s own experience of the poor.”

Rev. James Cormack, C.M.

Fr. Jim is a native of Oak Park, Illinois. He entered the Congregation in 1967 and was ordained a priest in 1976. He holds a Master’s Degree in Urban Affairs from St. Louis University. Fr. Jim spent almost all of his priestly service in just two parishes in the St. Louis area: St. Vincent de Paul Parish and St. Catherine Labouré Parish. Currently, Fr. Jim is a senior priest in service, assisting at various parishes around the St. Louis area.

“I have received ever so much more than I have given as a Vincentian priest,” he said. “The sacraments give life, and I have been blessed to administer them. Love of the poor gives life...their love for me and mine for them is lifegiving.”

Rev. Michael Joyce, C.M.

A native of St. Louis, Missouri, Fr. Mike entered the Congregation in 1974 and was ordained in 1976. He earned a doctorate in canon law at Catholic University. He has spent most of his priestly ministry in seminary formation and serving as a judicial vicar, as well as administrative roles in the Western Province. He currently serves as superior at St. Mary’s of the Barrens.

“The ministry that has brought me the most joy (and challenges) is serving our senior Vincentians, lay brothers, and priests,” he said. “As I work with these ‘good and faithful servants,’ I thank God for their ministry, which has affected so many people.”

Rev. J. Patrick Murphy, C.M.

Fr. Pat grew up in Moline, Illinois. He entered the Congregation in 1965 and was ordained in 1976. After ordination, he earned a Doctorate in Educational Administration from Stanford University. Fr. Pat has spent most of his priestly ministry at DePaul University, most notably as the Director of the School of Public Service. Today he serves as Values Director for Depaul International, an organization which works with other partners to mitigate homelessness in 70 countries worldwide.



PLAN YOUR LEGACY

Life is a Journey

Frank Congata looks back on a lifetime with the Vincentians

“One Vincentian professor told me that life is a journey and that journey is directly related to our salvation history,” said Frank Cognata. “He said there will be different parts of growth in that journey, which really impacted me.”

Frank retired in May after more than 20 years working in development and planned giving for the Congregation of the Mission Western Province, though his history with the Vincentians goes back much further.

A native of North St. Louis County and one of five siblings, Frank attended cardinal Glennon College and Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis, both of which were run by the Vincentians as educators and administrators.

“That was my first connection with them, as professors and spiritual advisors,” he said.

Over time, they became more like family, especially after Frank’s father passed away when he was 18 and his mother moved out of St. Louis the following year.

“The Vincentians always made sure I had a home,” he said, “even in the summer when the other seminarians went home. They were also present for my father’s funeral.”

When he made the decision to move on from the seminary, the Vincentians were very supportive and, he says, have been with him ever since. He moved into the field of philanthropy, in which he has been helping nonprofits for the past 50 years. The Western Province

established a Development Office 21 years ago and invited Frank to help set it up; he has been working with Teresa Manna, Chief Development and Communications Officer, that entire time.

“The office was created under the provincial leadership of Fr. Jim Swift, C.M., who happened to be one of my professors,” Frank said. “It was an honor to be invited to help start up a new development ministry.”

Most recently, he has been working in the area of planned giving, helping people interested in including the Vincentians in their estate plans, which he has done himself.

“This has allowed me to reconnect with those confreres who were so very important to me,” he said. “It’s also my commitment to make sure the Vincentians are a part of my legacy.”

Frank looks at retirement as another piece of that life journey, and this part of the journey will be about enjoying his family, in particular his 5-month-old granddaughter, Violeta. That is not to say he is leaving the Vincentians behind.

“Overall, I have been with the Vincentians for 50 years,” he said. “Although I am officially retiring from my position, I am committed in the mission as a partner for the rest of my life.”

As Planned Giving Counsel, Frank Cognata (second from left) worked closely with Teresa Manna (left), Chief Development and Communications Officer, Josh McIntire, Manager of Annual Gifts, and Lisa Randazzo, Associate Director of Development.



CONTINUE THE MISSION

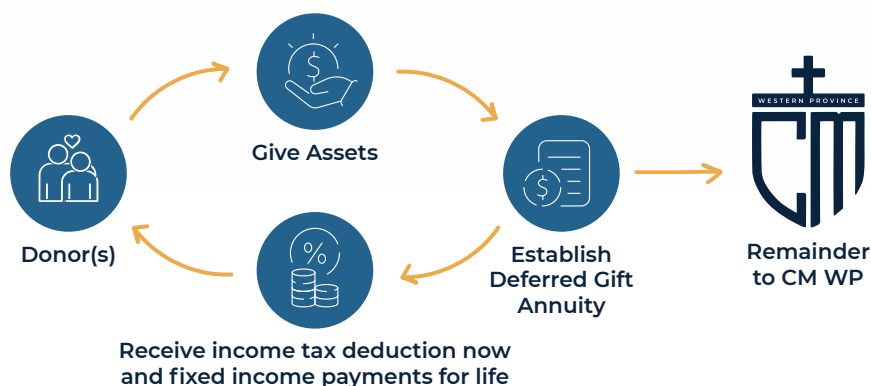
Simple Planning, Lasting Impact

The Advantages of a Deferred Gift Annuity

Are you planning for retirement? You may want to consider a deferred charitable gift annuity (DCGA.) This annuity is designed especially for younger donors in high-earnings years who are concerned about securing both current tax deductions and additional sources of cash flow in retirement.

HOW IT WORKS

1. You irrevocably transfer cash, securities, or other property to the Congregation of the Mission.
2. Beginning on a specified date in the future, the Congregation begins paying you, or up to two annuitants you name, fixed annuity payments for life.
3. The remainder passes to the Congregation when the contract ends.



FEATURES AND BENEFITS

- Deferral of payments permits a **higher annuity rate** and generates a larger charitable deduction.
- You can schedule your annuity payments to begin when you need **extra income**, such as retirement years.
- Payments are **guaranteed and fixed**, regardless of fluctuations in the market.
- The longer you elect to defer payments, the **higher your payment** will be.
- Earn an **immediate income tax charitable deduction** to the extent allowed by law in the year of your gift.

LET'S GET STARTED

Our staff can provide you with a free, no-obligation, confidential example of how a DCGA could benefit you and/or a loved one. We'll calculate your payments and tax benefits based on your beneficiary age(s), funding method, payment start date, and anticipated gift amount. Contact Josh McIntire, jmcintire@vincentian.org or (314) 373-8528, to get started today.

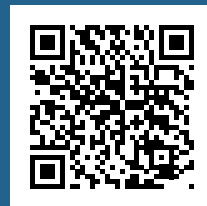


BECOME A FRIEND OF ST. VINCENT

If you want to join our Friends of St. Vincent Society, a group of generous supporters who have made a legacy gift to help those in need, we would be honored to discuss gift planning options that benefit you and those we serve. Contact Josh McIntire, jmcintire@vincentian.org or (314) 373-8528, to learn more about becoming a Friend of St. Vincent today.

To learn more about your gift planning options, scan this QR Code.

SCAN TO
LEARN
MORE



The materials provided in this article and the examples contained herein are for illustration purposes only and are not intended as legal or tax advice. We encourage you to consult your own legal and tax advisor.

A Ministry of Accompaniment

New Formation Directors Ready to Work with Seminarians



Fr. Rex Hays, C.M. (left) with his internal seminary class in 1987.

Fr. Tom Stehlik, C.M., and Fr. Rex Hays, C.M., both speak fondly of their year in Internal Seminary more than three decades ago as an important time in their priestly formation that has stayed with them.

“We were both products of a lot of Vincentian formation,” Fr. Tom said. “It’s humbling that we will be doing that as well. We had so many good examples.”

Fr. Tom and Fr. Rex will take over as Co-Formation Directors for the Congregation of the Mission Western Province on July 1 and will be responsible for the year-long Internal Seminary process for the province’s seminarians.

Two individuals are in the process of preparing for Internal Seminary and are slated to finish that program in June. From there, they would enter internal seminary in August at the Vincentian formation house in San Antonio.

Fr. Tom and Fr. Rex agreed about the importance of this time for their new charges.

“Like most formation today, it has numerous elements: human, spiritual, academic, and pastoral,” said Fr. Tom. “It is a time to deepen a relationship with Jesus in the spirit of St. Vincent. It’s a ministry of accompaniment. We will do a lot of organization, such as getting speakers and planning experiences for them.”

Fr. Rex added that sharing common life and prayer are essential components in the experience.

“I learned a lot about humanity living with nine brothers and two directors,” Fr. Rex said. “I remember the guys’ stories of how they connected to the Vincentian charism. Those things stay with you.”

Fr. James Swift, C.M., who served as most recent Formation Director, affirmed that Vincentian formation is a lifelong process.

“It begins with entrance into the Internal Seminary when candidates become admitted members of the Congregation and commit themselves to following Jesus Christ, evangelizer of the poor,” he said.

Fr. Rex said their meetings with Fr. Swift and others who taught them, like Fr. Tom Esselman, C.M., Fr. Dan Borlik, C.M., and Fr. Hugh O’Donnell, C.M., were encouraging and humbling.

“We have had so much support from people who were so important in my growth as a Vincentian,” he said. “It’s very touching.”

From Internal Seminary, candidates move through their studies toward becoming a brother or priest with that experience as a foundation.

“The challenge is to bring that vision and spirit of Vincent to our contemporary world and help these guys be agents of that,” Fr. Tom said. “We bring to this 60 years of working in parishes and communities of diverse people. From the very beginning, the community supported us. A year is a short period of time, but it can open your eyes. We all remember it. It was an incredible experience.”



Fr. Rex Hays, C.M. (left), and Fr. Tom Stehlik, C.M. (right), with Fr. Anthony Lee, pastor of St. Agatha Parish in Los Angeles.

Where There is Passion, There is a Call

New vocations director sees a current 'revolution of the Eucharist'

Fr. Bemnet (Ben) Melaku, C.M., sees something happening among young people and the church at this time, a "revolution of the Eucharist."

"Somehow, young people are drawn to the Eucharist in a passionate way," he said. "Young people also have a great love for the poor. They want to help."

All of this, he believes, has immense potential to bring more vocations to the priesthood, especially the Vincentians, which presents an opportunity to be close to the Eucharist and to work with the poor.

As the new Vocations Director for the Congregation of the Mission Western Province, this is very exciting for him.

A native of Ethiopia, Fr. Ben says he heard the call when he was 12 years old and witnessed a Franciscan priest giving bread to the beggars outside of the church as he and his family entered for Mass.

"I realized how hungry I was but that those beggars were hungry all the time," he said. "I thought there was nothing better than to be that priest."

The following year, he entered the minor seminary with the Franciscans and studied for 10 years before exiting the program when his family moved to the Netherlands and then the U.S. Later, while working as a case manager with Catholic Charities, he began exploring a return to the seminary and ultimately determined the Vincentians were the best fit for him.

"I had never been to Chicago and had never seen snow, which was kind of difficult, but when I stepped into that house, I felt at home," he said.

His vocation came into sharp focus as an Internal Seminary student during a pastoral ministry trip to Kenya. While making home visits, he met a woman with a small child and noticed the boy, sitting on the ground, chewing on a rock, and he confronted her.

She explained that she had corn at home for planting, which they were saving for the rainy season, and thus they could only eat every other day.

"She allowed her son to chew on the rock to trick him into thinking he had something to eat," he said. "At that moment, I was touched in a special way. I thought, 'That's baby Jesus.' I became determined that I had to do something about that, and it confirmed for me that I had to be a Vincentian."

He encourages anyone who feels that call to explore it and, regardless of the outcome, you will develop your faith in a meaningful way.

"Where there is passion, there is a call," he said. "God gives you the passion. If you have passion, give it a shot and you will see what God can do with your life."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

about Vincentian vocations, visit www.vincentian.org/vocations or contact Fr. Ben at vocations@vincentian.org.





CONGREGATION
of the **MISSION**

THE VINCENTIAN
WESTERN PROVINCE

3701 Forest Park Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63108



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

2026 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 Facebook at facebook.com/CMWesternProvince.

Vice-Province Ordains Rev. Mr. Peter Masila Kituku, C.M.

On May 22, 2026, Rev. Mr. Peter Masila Kituku, C.M., was ordained a deacon in the Congregation of the Mission Vice-Province of Kenya by Bishop Henry Juma Odonya, of the Catholic Diocese of Kitale.

The son of Michael Kituku Ngunu and Mary Munyiva Mumo, Deacon Peter is one of four siblings and hails from Makueni County in eastern Kenya. He came to the Vincentian seminary as a come-and-see candidate in 2016 and joined as an initiate in 2017.

He earned an undergraduate degree in philosophy from Consolata Institute of Philosophy and completed his studies in sacred theology from Tangaza University in 2025, followed by an internship at the Mission Advancement Office at St. Lazare Provincial House in Nairobi.

“From humble beginnings to this sacred calling, I stand not as one who has arrived, but as one still being formed,” Peter said, “I offer my life in service—ready to love, ready to serve, and ready to be sent, especially to the poor.”

Fr. Benson Odhiambo, C.M., Visitor for the Vice-Province, congratulated Deacon Peter. “It is a joy to witness this sacred step in ministry, and I offer my heartfelt congratulations to deacon Peter Masila, C.M.,” he said.

