On October 2, the Feast Day of Spiritan founder Claude Poullart des Places, several Lay Spiritans made a renewal of commitment at the Spiritan Center in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania.

During a special Mass celebrated by Fr. Bill Christy, C.S.Sp., Debbie Zugates made a permanent commitment as a Lay Spiritan, as Carol Serafin, Tom Berna, and Janet Berna renewed their commitment.

Lay Spiritans are a special group of people who feel a call to lead their whole life according to the Spiritan charism, and show this by a commitment within the Congregation.

These “inspired laity” are moved by the Holy Spirit to serve the poorest of the poor, those who are vulnerable and at risk of being excluded from society.

Alongside professed members of the Congregation, Lay Spiritans carry out the tradition of living open to the Holy Spirit, committing to authentic relationships, and walking with those on the margins.

After completing an initial formation program and discernment process, Lay Spiritans commit to 3-year terms, which can be renewed three times, at which point they may apply for permanent membership.

Two new members, Mercia O’Neil and John Niedenberger, both of Pittsburgh, have recently begun the Lay Spiritan formation program.

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Welcome

Christmas is many things to many people. It’s a season of hope, a season of celebration, a season of giving. It’s a chance to share blessings, inspired by an unseen energy that seems to transcend barriers and bring us all together in a spirit of generosity.

Whether it’s offering a meal to someone who is hungry, a gift to a child who might not otherwise receive one, or a listening ear to someone who is lonely, we’ve all seen countless examples of the unity of the Christmas season.

As Christians, we have a beautiful opportunity to lead by example and demonstrate to others how the magical energy of Christmas can go beyond just one day, or one season; and that this “energy” is really the Holy Spirit at work in our lives.

Over the past year, you—our friends and supporters—have done just that. We are blessed by your giving spirit—your generous donations, your willingness to lend a hand as a volunteer, and your prayerful support of the Spiritan mission.

Thank you for everything you do.

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Religious Vocation: A Gift from God
By Fr. Honest Munishi, C.S.Sp., Vocations Director

As we await the arrival of Jesus during the Advent season, the mood is one of quiet anticipation and preparation.

As Vocation Director, I can’t help but equate it with the feelings of expectancy one has when discerning a vocation.

It’s not uncommon to feel confused about where God is leading you.

During the quiet reflections of Advent, I invite you to find peace from the distractions of the world to discern God’s will, build a relationship with Christ, and learn more about the different types of religious vocation.

It’s a beautiful season to embrace the great plan God has for your life.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me at (412) 831-0302, or by email at joinus@spiritans.org.

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Lay Spiritans Renew Their Commitment
Continued from page 1

“We are blessed to have these women and men among us, embodying the spirit of selfless giving of their time and talents in pursuit of the Spiritan mission to share God’s word to the ends of the earth,” says Fr. Jeff Duaiame, C.S.Sp., Provincial.

“Our Congregation is a community in the true sense of the word, and we are grateful to have lay members as part of it.”

To learn more about Lay Spiritans and ways you can support the Spiritan mission, visit www.spiritans.org.
Dear Friends,

Our Congregation is more than 300 years old. Consequently, we have centuries of writings we are fortunate to look back on and learn from those who have come before us.

If you look back at some of our older publications, such as The Paraclete, one thing that is striking is that while some things have changed throughout history, others stand the test of time.

A great example of steadfast faithfulness is YOU — our dedicated army of supporters that spans multiple generations.

We are humbled by your unwavering generosity and dedication to our mission. Your selfless giving of your time, prayers, and financial support is truly inspiring.

Thanks to your generosity, Spiritans are able to go wherever we are needed — in parishes, schools, and missions, at home and abroad — immersing ourselves in the community and culture, and tackling the greatest needs head on.

From education and healthcare to energy and sustainability, there are few challenges Spiritan missionaries haven’t experienced and worked to overcome, while sharing God’s message of love and hope with those who haven’t heard it.

As Christmas approaches, please consider continuing this beautiful legacy, by blessing the Spiritans with your gift to help us help others in the New Year. A donation envelope has been included for your convenience.

May God’s holy light of Christmas fill you and your families now and throughout the coming year.

Keeping you in our prayers,

Mr. John Gillespie Fr. Mike Grey, C.S.Sp.

Save the Date

Please save the date for a special anniversary event in Houston, Texas, on October 21, 2020.

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Spiritan presence in Texas, the event will honor the Most Reverend Joseph A. Fiorenza, Archbishop Emeritus of Galveston-Houston, for his long-time friendship to the Spiritans and his legacy of service to the Galveston-Houston community.

More information will follow.
Man on a Mission

Father Cyr Ntadi, C.S.Sp., has been on mission in Taiwan for almost nine years.

Originally from Brazzaville in the Congo, Fr. Ntadi is one of the few African missionaries in Taiwan. He is an associate pastor in two parishes and has been given numerous responsibilities in the diocese.

Most people in Taiwan practice Taoism and Buddhism. Only 4 percent of the population is Christian, mostly Protestant.

The small Catholic community is spread out over seven dioceses. Its members consist of Filipinos, Indonesians and Vietnamese, along with a few Taiwanese.

“\textit{I decided that, later in my life, I would be like them: I would take the Gospel to other peoples, while integrating with other cultures.}”

Father Ntadi arrived in Taiwan in 2009, just after his ordination. He had only a basic knowledge of the Chinese language, which he had studied for three years in high school.

So as soon as the Congolese priest arrived, he had to learn two languages.

He was sent to the Philippines for eight months for English studies. And he then spent another two years learning Chinese.

He is associate pastor in the parishes of Saint John and of Our Lady of the Rosary, a university chaplain since 2012 and a youth chaplain from 2015 to 2017.

Father Ntadi’s presence has encouraged young Taiwanese to get to know Africa.

For the past few years, a group of young people from his diocese have been going to Tanzania and Kenya, where they deliver information technology equipment to students.

Among these young Taiwanese, there are also medical students who offer their services in health centers.

“I became part of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit because, when I was very young, the Spiritan missionaries in my parish, Holy-Martyrs of Uganda in Brazzaville, made a huge impression on me,” Father Ntadi said.

“I decided that, later in my life, I would be like them: I would take the Gospel to other peoples, while integrating with other cultures,” he explained.

Bringing the Eucharist to the World

The Synod for the Amazon took place in Rome October 6-27, 2019. Among other topics that were discussed, participants recommended solutions to ensure the availability of the Eucharist to the faithful, faced with a lack of priests in the region.

In many countries of the world, including North America, South America and Western Europe, there has been a decline in religious vocations. More than 150 years ago, those same regions were exporting religious missionaries to far-flung locations of the globe including sub-Saharan
Food Security Elusive in East Pokot

More than 2.5 million Kenyans are facing starvation as drought and the food security situation in the country continues to deteriorate, says the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA).

“The agency, in its latest report, has said that the number of people currently facing acute food shortage stands at 2.6 million people, an increase from the estimated 1.6 million people as of May 2019 during the mid-season assessment.

Those in need of relief assistance has more than doubled from 1.1 million in February 2019, the report shows, with a warning that the figures could rise to above three million people by October.

Especially hit hard is the region of East Pokot where Spiritans are on the ground.

First evangelization of the people has been ongoing for many years. There is a continuing need for food security.

Fortunately, thanks to your support, funds were provided in the spring and summer of 2019. THANK YOU for giving the gift of food security.

Fr. Alfonse Malinda Mutua, C.S.Sp., project coordinator, shared the following:

“Three hundred and fifty expectant and lactating mothers received food supply distributed in villages. As a result, these mothers were saved from pangs of hunger.

Another seven hundred schoolchildren received food supply. As a result, school attendance remained consistent with an increased attendance in some of the schools.

Two hundred fifty elderly men and women were fed, giving them some hope and relief from the pains of both hunger and ill health.

Finally, hundreds of parents were relieved of the daily toiling in search of food for their schoolchildren. As a result, they allowed them to remain in school instead of helping in housekeeping activities at home while they are away in search of food.”

Africa and Asia. Those religious were sent out to bring the good news of the Gospel to those who had not yet heard it.

Over the past decades, the seeds planted by these courageous missionaries have resulted in an abundance of vocations, particularly from Africa and Asia, and the Church is moving many of the ordained to the U.S., Canada and other countries in need of priests.

There are more than 2,500 professed and lay Spiritans drawn from all continents of the world. There are 1,019 men in various stages of formation to become Spiritan priests, with 93% coming from Africa, and 6% from Asia.

At present, there are 70 men in religious formation in Tanzania. The annual cost for each, depending on what stage they are in, runs from $2,000 - $4,500.

There are 45 men in formation in Vietnam, and the cost of their education is $1,200 annually.

In the Philippines, 24 are moving towards ordination which costs $4,780 a year; while 22 men are being formed in the Democratic Republic of Congo at an annual cost of $3,000.

Most of these men come from lesser means, and receiving a scholarship would relieve a financial burden for them.

You can support one or more of these men, knowing your gift will ensure that the Eucharist continues to be provided to the faithful in the United States and in many other parts of the world.

Every penny adds up for these men of faith, and no gift is too small.

To support a seminarian, please return the enclosed envelope with your gift and designate “Seminary.”

You can also donate online at www.Spiritans.org/Donate.

Please call 713-522-2882 with any questions. Thank you for your support!
Ways to Contribute

Online
Now you can support the work of the U.S. Spiritans when you shop at Amazon! Visit www.amazon.com and select “Sharelink-Spiritans Worldwide Aid Foundation Inc.” as your charity of choice.

You can also visit www.Spiritans.org and click on the “Donate” button. Use the drop down menu to direct your donation to a category of projects, or dedicate your generous gift to a specific project.

Check / Money Order
Please make you check payable to: Congregation of the Holy Spirit, 1700 West Alabama St., Houston, TX 77098. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Questions? Please call 713-522-2882.

THANK YOU!

Live the Spiritan Mission as an Advocate!

Volunteers are the lifeblood of any fundraising organization. They bridge the gap between an organization’s mission and the resources available to carry it out.

The Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement (SOMA) is the fundraising arm of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit here in the United States. Our mission is to financially support the missionary, educational, pastoral, humanitarian and charitable projects of the Congregation, both in the U.S. and internationally.

Like most nonprofits, we operate on a limited budget and depend on the generosity of people like you!

We are fortunate to have a network of enthusiastic volunteers, called the Advocates, who assist us with various clerical, administrative, and event planning activities.

Although based in Houston, Texas, this network is unique because many of our volunteer activities can be done from the comfort of your own home!

So whether you’re in the Houston area, or across the country, we invite you to join us as part of our Advocate volunteer team.

You might not think making phone calls or addressing letters can make a difference. But when you’ve taken the first step toward rallying support for a Spiritan project, you’re making an impact.

With the help of volunteers, funds we generate go to projects like providing sewing machines to widows in Nigeria so they can earn a living wage after the death of their husband; purchasing beds for prisoners in Ethiopia so they can stay healthy and maintain their dignity as they come to know Jesus; and administering critical life-saving vaccines at a missionary health center in Tanzania.

As the 50th Anniversary of Spiritan presence in Houston approaches in 2020, we are seeking extra volunteers to help plan a fundraising event to support important projects like these at home and abroad.

The work will be fun and rewarding as we band together to support our missionary priests, brothers and lay associates.

The Venerable Francis Libermann

On February 2, we celebrate the Feast Day of Spiritan “second founder,” Ven. Francis Libermann, C.S.Sp.

Venerable Francis Libermann had a most remarkable journey of faith. He was born into an orthodox Jewish family in the Alsace region of France in 1802, and given the name Jacob.

Jacob Libermann’s father was a rabbi, and Jacob was preparing to become a rabbi himself when his studies led him to the New Testament and to Christianity.

He was baptized Francis Mary Paul, in 1826, at Christmas. Soon he was studying for the Catholic priesthood, but violent attacks of epilepsy put his vocation on hold. It was fifteen years before he was finally ordained.

In 1841, Francis Libermann founded the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary, encouraged by the Pope to serve as missionaries to the slaves and former slaves in the French colonies of the Caribbean, Indian Ocean, and Africa.

In 1848, because of their similar purpose, charism, and works, the Church merged the original Spiritan community (founded in 1703 by Claude Poullart des Places) and the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary.

Libermann’s approach of “practical union with God” helped him, and others, find the divine in the everyday and to face life with confidence and faith.

He recruited and educated missionaries, both lay and clerical. He negotiated with Rome and with the French government over the placement and support of his personnel.

Francis Libermann was a pioneer of strategies now recognized as a blueprint for modern missionary activity. He urged the Spiritans to “become one with the people” so that each group received and understood the Gospel in the context of their own traditions.

Surprisingly, Fr. Libermann himself never went overseas. Yet he inspired and empowered literally thousands of missionaries around the globe. He died on February 2, 1852, before his 50th birthday.

Libermann was a visionary, a missionary, a profoundly spiritual man who has affected the course of history in the last 150 years. He faced incredible obstacles, yet patiently accepted his trials and tribulations with great inner peace and tranquility.

May God bless the Spiritan Congregation, and all of us, through the intercession of Venerable Francis Libermann. And may his spiritual teaching of Practical Union with God through the Holy Spirit bring us closer to the path of holiness in our daily lives.

Now the Work of Christmas Begins

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with the flocks, then the work of Christmas begins: To find the lost, to heal those broken in spirit, to feed the hungry, to release the oppressed, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among all peoples, to make a little music with the heart. And to radiate the Light of Christ, every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say. Then the work of Christmas begins.

-Howard Thurman
“Ask and it will be given you; Seek, and you will find; Knock, and it will be open to you.” - Matthew 7:7

From the
Spiritan Archives

The December 1965 issue of the Paraclete provides readers with an update on an unexpected Christmas gift of $1,000 for a new chapel at Usa River in Tanzania.

Inside this issue: For centuries, the Spiritans have relied on the generosity of the faithful to support our mission to go where others are reluctant to go, and share God's word to those who haven't heard it.

See how your gifts of time, prayer, and financial donations have made a difference throughout generations.