

# VICE-PROVINCE OF KENYA

Dear Friends...

E-Newsletter

June Issue | 2025

## *All Things New!!!*



*Congratulations*  
ON YOUR APPOINTMENT AS  
Visitor, Vice-Province of Kenya

## CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

Vice-Province of Kenya

## MEET THE NEW VISITOR FOR THE VICE – PROVINCE OF KENYA

**W**e are delighted to announce an important leadership transition within our Congregation. The Superior General has appointed Fr. Benson Thaddeaus Odhiambo, C.M., as the new Visitor of the Vice Province of Kenya. He succeeds Fr. Edwin Mugwe, C.M., whose term has just concluded.

Fr. Benson brings a wealth of experience from his ministerial priesthood, having served in various capacities. He was an assistant parish priest at Holy Cross Parish Thigio and St. Vincent DePaul Kamulu, and served as the Vocations Director of the Congregation in Kenya. Following his work in vocation promotion, he became a spiritual director and teacher at Christ the King Major Seminary in Nyeri, a position he currently holds. Additionally, Fr. Benson has been a valued member of the Council and a Trustee of the Congregation.

Known for his calm nature, profound love for the poor, and steady charisma, Fr. Benson's extensive experience in leadership, vocation promotion, and formation will be invaluable in his new role. As he begins his leadership in July, we invite you to join us in offering him our heartfelt prayers and unwavering support.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to Fr. Edwin for his dedicated service, initially as a Regional Superior and subsequently as the first Visitor of our Vice Province. His commitment and leadership were instrumental in the Region's growth into a Vice Province with expanded apostolates, and it was under his guidance that the Congregation established its first mission in Uganda.

We celebrate this leadership transition with immense joy and profound gratitude to God. May Fr. Benson's leadership be blessed with success, all to the glory of God's name.

We pray that Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal will intercede and bless his new mission.



### Congratulations, Fr. Benson!



# The Prominent Place of the Blessed Mother Mary in Our Vice Province



In the Vice Province of Kenya, this devotion takes on a uniquely profound character. Mondays and Saturdays have been specially dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. On these days, confreres and seminarians come together in prayer to reflect on Mary's role in their lives and to seek her maternal intercession. This weekly rhythm of Marian devotion nurtures a deeper spiritual intimacy and reinforces her place as a spiritual cornerstone within our community.

We look back to the month of May – a month traditionally dedicated to Mary – and recognize its enduring significance within our Vice Province. Since May 2005, when the first group of four confreres was ordained during the final weekend of the month, May has become a symbolic time for priestly ordinations. It has evolved into a season of renewal, thanksgiving, and Marian celebration.



As of this year, 40 confreres – exclusively from the Vice Province of Kenya – celebrate special anniversaries during the month of May.

This remarkable number of jubilees reflects both the longevity of priestly service and a shared Marian devotion that has sustained these vocations through the years. As we celebrate them, we are reminded of the power of entrusting our lives to her maternal care and encouraged to whisper our own prayers through her with faith and hope.

Mary's maternal presence continues to accompany our missionaries as they go forth to serve. Whether in Kenya, Uganda, or beyond, confreres walk with the confidence that they are covered by her mantle of love. Her intercession is a source of courage, serenity, and spiritual vitality.

Indeed, our mission in Uganda stands as a living testament to answered prayers through the Blessed Mother. The expansion of the Vice Province's apostolate across the border has been dedicated to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, recognizing her unseen hand guiding and sustaining our efforts.

May Our Blessed Mother intercede for Fr. Benson as he takes up his new role as the Visitor.

**Q. Do you spend sometime each day to honor our Blessed Mother with a prayer of the rosary?**

**Q. Do you pray the Novena to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal?**

*Oh Mary Conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.*



**Fr. Edwin Mugwe, C.M**

**T**he Congregation of the Mission has consistently sought the intercession of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, whose divine apparition was revealed through St. Catherine Labouré, a Daughter of Charity of St. Vincent dePaul. This devotion has remained steadfast within the Vincentian family, tracing its roots to the teachings of our Holy Founder, who affectionately reminded us that “the Blessed Virgin Mary is our Mother.” This unbreakable bond between the Vincentian community and the Blessed Virgin has blossomed into a vibrant tradition of prayer and reverence, emphasizing her role as a guiding light and protector of the faithful.

Inspired by the example of St. Vincent dePaul, our Congregation has always embraced popular devotions that honour the Blessed Virgin Mary. Among these cherished practices are the daily rosary, the litany of Our Lady, and the novena dedicated to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. These prayers echo the deep faith of countless Vincentians who, day after day, turn to Mary as a source of comfort, strength, and intercession.



# Vincentian Vocations in Focus

## Answering the Master's Call: Nurturing Vocations in the Spirit of St. Vincent



***“Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.”***

~ Psalm 40:8-9 ~

**A**s we gratefully and joyfully mark **400 years** since the foundation of the **Congregation of the Mission**, the call to nurture vocations remains as urgent and sacred as ever. In the words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

***“The harvest is abundant, but the labourers are few; so ask the Master of the harvest to send out labourers for His harvest.” - Luke 10:2***

From the very beginning, Christ sent out His disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all corners of the world (Mark 16:15). This missionary spirit is still very much alive in our Congregation, which continues to bear fruit through annual **diaconate and priestly ordinations**, preparing confreres to be sent out to serve in parishes, seminaries, and among the poor - those who remain at the heart of our Vincentian mission.

Yet, the need persists - not only for more priests but also for **Vincentian brothers**. Every year, we open our doors and hearts to young men discerning their call to serve God through the Vincentian way of life. These candidates are invited into a journey of discovery - learning about our **charism, community life**, and **Vincentian spirituality** through structured programs such as Come and See experiences, spiritual direction, and formation resources.

As the **Vocation Director for Kenya and Uganda**, I am privileged to accompany these young men on their path of discernment. Many reach out with genuine desire to serve. My mission is to help them listen to the voice of God, understand His will, and respond with courage and faith.

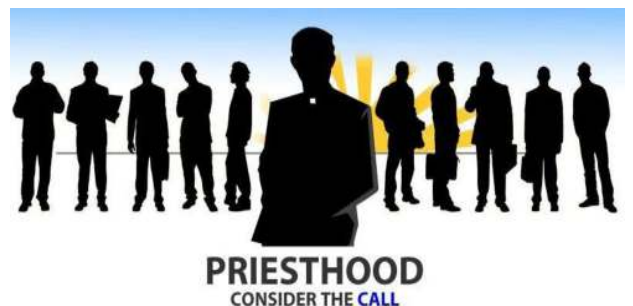
Through the loving intercession of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, we continue to pray for holy and dedicated vocations - men who are ready to serve as priests and brothers in the Vineyard of the Lord.

Let us never tire of inviting, mentoring, and praying for those whom God is calling. The mission continues - and the Master of the harvest is still sending.

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Saint Vincent de Paul (1581 - 1660)



Fr. David Mwaura, C.M  
**Vocational Director**



## **“A Divine Gift to Be Shared”: A Q & A with Fr. Wafula Wekesa, C.M. on His First Month of Priesthood**



*Interview conducted with Fr. Wafula Wekesa, C.M., reflecting on his early priestly journey, the influence of Vincentian formation, and the sacred responsibility of ministry.*

### **Q: How would you describe the journey of your vocation and preparation for priesthood?**

The search for meaning and purpose is something we all undertake in life. It can be dangerous when we become too fixated on the end goal and forget to savor the journey. But in my own formation – whether remote, proximate, or immediate – I truly savored the process. Every stage was filled with moments of grace. I’m deeply grateful to God for the experiences and people who helped shape my path.

### **Q: How was your first month as a priest?**

It’s been deeply moving – filled with learning, emotion, reflection, and awe. To me, priesthood is a Divine Gift. It was given during a moment of Divine Visitation and is meant to be received, used, and guarded in a sacred way. I see myself as a vessel through whom God desires to reach His people. While the call feels personal, I believe it’s really a communal gift. My role is to share it generously with those I’m sent to serve. I’m grateful to God for trusting me with this lifelong vocation, and I continue to rely on His help to dispense the graces entrusted to me.

### **Q: Describe your experience celebrating Holy Mass during this first month?**

I’ve so far celebrated 27 Masses and concelebrated several others (by the time I fielded this interview). Each time is profoundly sacred. There have been moments when I trembled, sweated, or felt intense emotion during the Eucharist. It’s not something to take lightly. The Mass is a holy and spotless sacrifice offered for God’s people. That realization always urges me to prepare deeply – spiritually and mentally – before approaching the altar. These are Sacred Mysteries, and that sacredness must be preserved in every moment of celebration.

### **Q: How has your Vincentian formation shaped your identity and ministry as a new priest?**

The Vincentian spirit is a cornerstone of my ministry. Our formation pillars, especially the emphasis on Vincentian identity, have molded my Christian life and priestly outlook. Being part of the Vincentian family has taught me to ask: What needs to be done? How do we respond ‘Vincentianly?’ Who are we serving – and are they truly the poor, in every sense of the word? St. Vincent dePaul constantly draws us back to the poor. He teaches that “the poor are your portion” and that “love is inventive unto infinity.” These words guide everything I do. I pray daily for the grace to live out this noble call, bearing fruits in the Vincentian way and inspiring others to follow this path.



### **Q: What does St. Vincent dePaul mean to you personally?**

Though he lived in the 17th century, St. Vincent is absolutely a man for the 21st century. Following in his footsteps calls me to understand what he did, embrace how he lived, and love what he loved – especially in the context of today’s world. As a priest and minister of the sacraments, I pray for continued grace to serve faithfully in the vineyard of the Lord. I am an inspired Vincentian, a joyful priest, and above all, grateful for this Divine Gift and God’s constant visitation in my life.







# Reflections on My 2025 Sabbatical Experience at Mwangaza Jesuit Spirituality Centre



Rev. Fr. Ignatius Mukanzi, C.M

## 1. What is a sabbatical, and why is it important in the life of a priest?

A sabbatical has its origins in the Hebrew biblical concept of Sabbath. The word *sabat* in Hebrew means Sabbath; in Latin, it is *sabbaticus*; in Greek, *sabbatikos*, as Bruce (1978) affirms. It involves rest or a break from work, worship, play, and reflection. From a contemporary perspective, a sabbatical is an extended time off and away from pastoral duties and responsibilities. It is a period for reflection, refreshment, renewal, and “rekindling of the fire.” Different institutions offer a variety of sabbatical programs, and the choice depends both on the participant and on the host institution’s charism. For a priest, it is a sacred pause—an opportunity to reconnect deeply with God, self, and mission.

## 2. Where did you spend your sabbatical, and which aspects of the experience did you find most helpful or enriching?

I undertook my sabbatical at **Mwangaza Jesuit Spirituality Centre**. Since 2020, the Jesuits have offered a structured three-month program designed for holistic renewal. The program at Mwangaza has four key components: human, spiritual, psychological, and intellectual growth.

- For **human growth**, the program emphasizes silence, meditative prayer in nature, exercise, community life, rest, recreation, and healthy living.
- For **spiritual growth**, it includes a 30-day directed retreat, two 8-day retreats, daily Mass, Adoration, personal and shared prayer, and guidance by a spiritual director throughout the period.

- For **psychological growth**, I participated in counseling sessions and engaged with mental wellness resources.
- For **intellectual growth**, courses included Scripture, African Spirituality, Discernment, Human Sexuality, *Laudato Si'*, and Social Justice, among others.

In addition to the Mwangaza program, I also resided at the Vincentian residence in Mabanga, Bungoma. There, I offered spiritual accompaniment to seminarians, presided at Masses, engaged in personal study, visited patients, and participated in service to the poor. As a pilgrim in the Jubilee Year of Hope, I also visited Marian shrines in Namugongo, Subukia, and Kibeho.



Mwangaza Retreat Centre-Jesuit

## 3. In your view, how can a well-lived sabbatical contribute to the renewal of a confrere’s Vincentian identity and mission?

The sabbatical allowed me to reconnect deeply with my Vincentian identity. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35), my heart is now “on fire” and I feel re-energized to follow Christ the Evangelizer of the Poor with renewed vigor.

The time away gave me clarity and rekindled the core of my calling—to serve the poor, form seminarians and clergy, and walk with God’s people in love and humility. The love of Christ urges me on (2 Cor 5:14), and I return with deeper conviction and purpose.

I am sincerely grateful to the Visitor, Fr. Edwin Irungu Mugwe, CM, and his Council, to the Jesuits of Mwangaza, my spiritual director, the Daughters of Charity, and all who supported me on this journey.

**My wise counsel is this:** do not wait to be told to go for a sabbatical. Take the initiative, choose a good program that resonates with you, and you will discover its enrichment in more ways than you can imagine.



### Serving with Faith and Joy in Uganda

#### Interview with Kituku Peter Masila, C.M

**Q: Where were you sent for your pastoral work?**

I was assigned to Our Lady Queen of Peace and Matia Mulumba Shrine Parish Kyebando, is a vibrant rural parish in the Diocese of Jinja, Uganda. It's marked by deep-rooted faith and a welcoming spirit. The community thrives amid modest means, yet overflows with spiritual wealth and resilience. The parish landscape is dotted with chapels, schools, and homes that echo the life of the Church among the people. Here, faith is lived, not merely spoken.

**Q: What has struck you most in your pastoral experience?**

During this Jubilee Year, one of the most striking moments during my apostolate has been witnessing the flow of pilgrims passing by on their way to Namugongo National Shrine to honour the Ugandan Martyrs. These humble men, women, and children, many barefoot and singing hymns carry the weight of prayerful intentions and joyful suffering. Their faith stirs the soul. Equally moving is the community of Vincentians here: communal, generous, and marked by selfless availability. They embody a ministry of presence, and their fraternity is a grace.

**Q: How has this experience deepened your understanding of the Vincentian vocation?**

These experiences have profoundly deepened my understanding of the Vincentian vocation. To be a Vincentian is to accompany, to listen, and to lift hidden burdens. In Kyebando, the poor are not statistics – they are Christ among us. Here, I have encountered the Vincentian call not as a mission to do, but a call to become.



### Faith in Simplicity: A Pastoral Journey in Kinango

#### Interview with Alphonse Ombati

*"Tumsifu Yesu Kristu! - Milele na Milele Amina."*

*- The daily greeting that echoes through the hearts of believers in Kinango.*

**Q. Where did you undertake your pastoral experience, and what were your main responsibilities?**

I was assigned to St. Joseph Kinango Parish, located in a semi-rural and semi-arid area of the Archdiocese of Mombasa. The parish comprises ten vibrant outstations, organized into two zones. My responsibilities included assisting with liturgy, training Mass servers, and conducting catechism classes for both children and adults.

In all my roles, I strived not only to teach the "how" but to convey the deeper "why" behind each liturgical act.

**Q. What key lessons or moments impacted you most during your time there - spiritually, pastorally, or personally?**

What touched me most was the unity of spirit among the faithful, regardless of material wealth. Their faith is active, visible, and vocal – especially in their deep desire to grow in their understanding of the Sacrament of Penance and the Word of God. Their participation in Small Christian Communities (Jumuiya) reflects a real hunger for the Gospel. I was also moved by the strong presence of youth and children at Mass. As Saint John Paul II once said, "Youth are the future of the Church."

**Q. How has this experience helped you grow in your Vincentian identity and readiness for future ministry?**

Kinango has taught me to embrace the Vincentian call to serve humbly, love generously, and labor patiently. The region's strong interreligious coexistence, even within families, challenged me to witness Christ quietly but powerfully through action. This mission deepened my conviction that, as St. Vincent de Paul teaches, "The poor are your portion," and "Love is inventive unto infinity."

*May this experience continue forming me into a faithful servant of Christ in the spirit of St. Vincent.*





# Looking Back on May – The Month of Mary

May is never just another month. It remains, year after year, a sacred time in our Vincentian calendar – a month wholly dedicated to Mary, Mother of the Church, and filled with milestones that touch the heart of our mission.

This past May 2025, we were especially mindful of the many ordination anniversaries celebrated by our confreres, most notably in the final days of the month – under the gentle and watchful gaze of our Blessed Mother. Her presence was deeply felt in the liturgies, the memories, and the quiet graces of our shared vocation.

As we carry the blessings of May into the rest of the year, may Mary continue to wrap us in her maternal mantle. May she intercede for us, walk beside us, and strengthen us with peace, love, and courage for the mission ahead.







# Strengthening the Vincentian Marian Youth in Kenya



## The Vice Province Welcomes New National Advisors and Prepares for International Collaboration

The Vice Province of Kenya is pleased to announce the appointment of **Fr. Alex Odie, C.M.** and **Sr. Susan Tanui, D.C.** as the new National Advisors for the Vincentian Marian Youth (VMY) in Kenya. Both bring with them a wealth of pastoral experience and a deep commitment to the Vincentian charism, particularly in accompanying young people on their journey of faith and service.



**Fr. Alex Odie, C.M.**



**Sr. Susan Tanui, D.C.**

With great enthusiasm, they have embraced this mission and are already working to revitalize and strengthen the presence and impact of VMY across the country. Their leadership marks a new chapter for VMY Kenya - one grounded in simplicity, missionary zeal, and Marian devotion.

As part of this renewed effort, the Vice Province is preparing to host a delegation of VMY volunteers from the United States in July, led by Fr. Fred. This visit will include engagement with various apostolates, particularly those that empower young

people at the grassroots level. The delegation will collaborate with local VMY groups to exchange best practices, develop leadership skills, and explore innovative strategies for youth evangelization and outreach.

This initiative aligns with the global mission of the VMY: to form young Christians who live their faith deeply, emulate the humility of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and serve the poor with a missionary spirit. Through experiences of shared prayer, formation, and service, the movement inspires young people to become agents of change in both the Church and society.

The Vice Province's commitment to this effort reflects its broader vision for a vibrant and dynamic youth ministry, rooted in Vincentian values. By nurturing these international and local connections, we hope to foster a network of young leaders who are spiritually grounded, socially aware, and passionate about service.

We invite all our confreres, the Daughters of Charity, collaborators, and friends of the Vincentian Family to pray for this mission, support the advisors, and accompany the youth with love and hope. May this journey bear lasting fruit for the Church and the world.

*"With Mary, we journey in faith."*



# Uganda Mission:

## *A Fruit of Marian Intercession*

The Vincentian Marian Youth Group at the grotto of the Blessed Virgin Mary



### Pope Leo XIV Message for Africa on X account

*"Bara la Afrika linatoa ushuhuda mkubwa kwa ulimwengu mzima. Asante kwa kuishi imani yenu katika Yesu Kristo. Ni jinsi gani ilivyo muhimu kwamba kila mbatizwa ajisikie kuitwa na Mungu kuwa ishara ya matumaini katika Ulimwengu wa leo."*

### Translation from Swahili

"The African continent is giving a great witness to the whole world. Thank you for living your faith in Jesus Christ. How important it is that every baptized person feels called by God to be a sign of hope in today's world."

*Leo PP. XIV  
8 maggio 2025*





# THANK YOU!

## Welcome to Kenya

The Vincentian Lay Missionaries (VLM) group from Ireland arrived in Kenya on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2025 for their two weeks service program. The 2025 VLM to Kenya are made up of 10 students from St. Paul's College and 12 students and two teachers from Castleknock College. The team from Castleknock College are volunteering at St. Vincent DePaul Academy in Matisi while the team from St. Paul's College are volunteering at St. Vincent DePaul Primary in Thigio.



## Upcoming Events

- ▶ **20<sup>th</sup> June, 2025**  
A new class of Six (6) seminarians begin their Internal Seminary
- ▶ **21<sup>st</sup> June, 2025**  
Six (6) seminarians take Good Purpose after one year at the Internal Seminary - Damascus House, Kamulu
- ▶ **1<sup>st</sup> July, 2025**  
Inauguration of the New Visitor



Script: Charles  
Designer: Barack  
Producer: Fr. Edwin, C.M

 [www.cmkenya.org](http://www.cmkenya.org)



CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION  
VICE-PROVINCE OF KENYA



## DO YOU FEEL CALLED?

*Is God calling you to serve?*

If you feel His divine invitation, we invite you to join Congregation of the Mission (The Vincencians) and share His love with the world.

Step forward in faith and become part of a community dedicated to spreading the gospel and serving those in need.

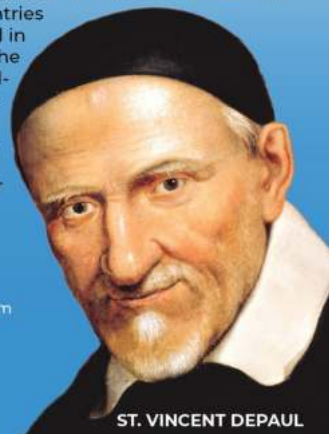
The congregation of the Mission (commonly known as the "the Vincentian") is a worldwide order of 4000 Roman Catholic priests and brothers in 86 countries founded by St. Vincent De Paul in 1625 for the evangelization of the poor and the formation and education of the diocesan clergy. The men in our congregation pronounce the vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience to God for the whole time of their lives.

### For more information

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ST. VINCENT DEPAUL

**Congregation of the Mission**  
Vice-Province of Kenya