

We Won an Emmy®—No really, we did!

On Saturday, September 19, The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences awarded the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal (CAMM) an Emmy® Award for its video, *A New Way of Thinking*. This video was a part of a yearlong series by CAMM to capture the history and ministries of the Vincentians of the Eastern Province as they celebrated 170 years in Philadelphia.

Presented during the virtual broadcast of the 63rd Annual Mid-Atlantic Emmy® Awards, the recognition is a first for CAMM. Under the category of “Public / Current / Community Affairs / Program Feature / Segment,” the video was chosen “...for excellence in a program, series or special on general public interest or concern, especially those dealing with current community, social or political issues.”

The video focuses on the work of the Vincentian Priests and Brothers in prison ministry, including the programs, counseling, and support they provide for incarcerated people and returning citizens. This ministry was very dear to St. Vincent, who believed we are obliged to attend to the salvation of others where the need is the greatest. *A New Way of Thinking* captures the emotion, honesty, and truth encountered by the Vincentians and those they serve.

To watch this video and other CAMM videos, visit [vincentiansusa.org/videos/](https://www.vincentiansusa.org/videos/)



Image: Pond5

Summer Novena of Hope



While the Summer Novena of Hope was different this year due to the pandemic, The Miraculous Medal Shrine still hosted it via livestream for nine Mondays from June 1 through July 27. This year's theme was “The Many Faces of the Blessed Virgin Mary within the Shrine.” The numerous shrines that reflect the various faces of the Blessed Mother serve as a source for prayer and reflection, and highlight the many cultural interpretations of Our Lady.

Join our livestream nine-day Solemn Novena, Nov. 16-24. This year's theme is Men on a Mission: Nine Young Vincentians Go to China, 1921.

For full details, visit: [miraculousmedal.org/events/solemn-novena-events-2020](https://www.miraculousmedal.org/events/solemn-novena-events-2020)

A Crown on Her Head and a Light at Her Feet

It all started back in 1943. Like thousands of other young men, two brothers, Nicholas and Anthony Massaro, were fighting in the South Pacific. With the horrors of World War II raging on, thousands of Philadelphians flocked to The Miraculous Medal Shrine.

Filomena Angelone was one of the 15,000 people who visited the Shrine every Monday for the Novena Masses and prayers. She asked Mary to bring her nephews, Nicholas and Anthony, home safely, and she promised Our Blessed Mother a gold crown for her statue in the Shrine when they returned.

With joyful hearts, the family greeted the two men when they arrived home after the war, and Filomena gratefully fulfilled her promise. She approached Fr. Joseph Skelly, CM, the founder and director of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal, who helped her in getting the golden crown made and dedicated to Mary. Fifty years later on November 27, 1997, the Feast of the Miraculous Medal, the Massaro and Angelone families assisted the priests in crowning Mary with her refurbished crown at the Shrine. Since then, on Mary's feast days during May and October, we honor her statue with the glorious resplendence of this beautiful crown.

Regardless of the tumult of our current pandemic, and in keeping with the tradition of honoring Mary in May and October, the priests placed the crown on Mary's head and lit a vigil lamp at the foot of her statue, which will remain lit until the pandemic ends.

We continue to place your intentions at Mary's altar. To submit your prayer requests, mail intentions to CAMM, 475 East Cheltenham Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19144, or visit [miraculousmedal.org/worship-and-prayer/prayer-requests](https://www.miraculousmedal.org/worship-and-prayer/prayer-requests).





If you are interested in joining the Knock campaign, contact Shelia O'Hagan McGirl at SMcGill@cammonline.org or 215.848.1010, x.212.



If you are interested in learning more about Shrine preservation efforts, contact Shelia O'Hagan McGirl at SMcGill@cammonline.org or 215.848.1010, x.212.



Fr. Richard Gibbon, the rector of the Knock Shrine in Ireland, offered a greeting and prayer.

Devotion to Mary Links Across the Ocean

On Sunday, August 16, the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal (CAMM) along with the Mayo County Council, and the Mayo Society of Philadelphia celebrated the feast day of Our Lady of Knock and the launch of a collaboration to build an outdoor shrine to Our Lady of Knock.

The livestreamed event included a prerecorded broadcast from County Mayo, Ireland, the site of the apparition of Our Lady of Knock. Fr. Richard Gibbon, the rector of the Knock Shrine, offered a greeting, and Irish Tenor Cathal Gavin

gave a moving performance. We continued with a livestreamed Mass and celebration at The Miraculous Medal Shrine followed by a virtual reception, including wonderful songs by Andy Cooney and his son, Ryan, bagpipers and Irish step dancers from the Rince Ri Irish Step Dancing School.

CAMM continues its efforts to build the shrine, which will be adorned with the culture and customs of Ireland, including Our Lady, St. John the Teacher, St. Joseph, and the Lamb of God.

As a gesture of gratitude and unity, Fr. Gibbons blessed a County Mayo flag to

be displayed at the Shrine until the Knock Shrine is completed. In addition, CAMM was gifted a stone (relic) from the gable wall where the apparition took place.

The shrine will be located in an outdoor space surrounded by a Rosary Walk and Meditation Garden.



Want to get a special Irish keepsake for yourself or someone special? Our Claddagh Ornament is a true symbol of Irish heritage. Visit our Gift Shop and click on the Specialty Items category. giftshop.miraculousmedal.org



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Miraculous Medal Shrine

Gift Shop

giftshop.miraculousmedal.org

Shrine Window Dates Back to 1875

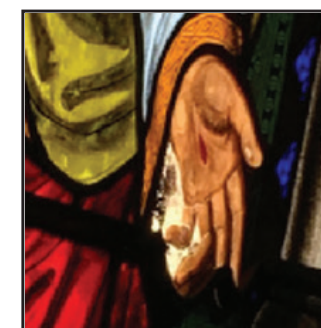
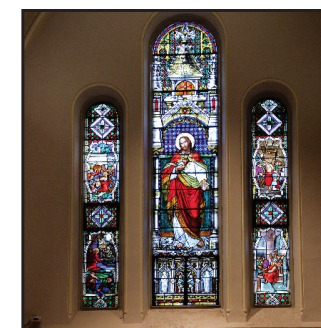
The Sacred Heart stained-glass window in our Holy Agony Shrine is one the oldest windows in The Miraculous Medal Shrine. It was installed in 1875, when the church was the Immaculate Conception Chapel.

The Holy Agony Shrine, which commemorates the passion of Our Lord, lies within the eastern transept of the Shrine. Its focal point is the Sacred Heart stained glass window. The famous Studio of F.X. Zettler (Francis Xaver Zettler) in Munich, Bavaria, produced the beautiful artwork.

The stained-glass window depicts Jesus pointing to His Sacred Heart, which is surrounded by thorns and burning with

love. His left arm extends outward, a gesture of sharing His Divine Life with us. To the left and right of the window are four panels (two on each side) depicting the sorrowful mysteries.

For the past 145 years, moisture has damaged this exquisite work of religious art. This moving image, which has inspired generations of devoted Catholics to reflect on the sorrowful mysteries, is in dire need of major restoration. While there is evidence of the window having been “worked on” over the years, it appears that the window hasn’t been removed since the day it was installed. If you would like to help restore this work of art, please contact us (see above).



Retreats Going Virtual

Teaching has taken on a new challenge due to the pandemic crisis, and it can be a greater challenge to prepare meaningful retreat experiences for students and young adults. To continue helping schools, churches, and youth ministries learn and grow their faith in an engaging way, our Office of Youth and Young Adults has developed a virtual program for sacramental, youth, and young adult retreats.

These unique, online retreats complement your sacramental/religious instruction and can be tailored to your needs. The retreats include exciting interactive presentations, virtual tours, a personal and spiritual journey with St. Catherine Labouré, and other fun group activities. We offer this programming virtually, in-person, or in a safe-environment classroom onsite at the Shrine.



To learn more, contact Carolina Soares Nemo by emailing csoares@cammonline.org.



Bells Ring to Honor Frontline Workers

A consortium of mayors from throughout Pennsylvania asked state churches and houses of worship throughout to ring their bells for three minutes that at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 3. Known as “Bells across Pennsylvania Day,” the ringing of the bells was a symbol of gratitude and honor to all who put themselves at risk by working on the front line during the COVID19 health crisis. The Miraculous Medal Shrine gladly participated and played their carillon bells to show their appreciation to the area’s brave hometown heroes.

Four Men Pronounce Good Purposes

On Friday, July 31, four young men made Good Purposes as they concluded the Internal Seminary (Novitiate) in the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians). The Mass and making of Good Purposes were held virtually in compliance with pandemic restrictions. While contained to a small audience, Noe Garcia, Milton Lara, Wilbur Mejia, and Jose Alexander Palacios (pictured) “declared their intention of faithfully dedicating themselves in the Congregation of the Mission, for the whole time of their lives (Stability), to the evangelization of the poor, after the example of Christ evangelizing” (*taken from the Formula for Good Purposes*). They committed themselves, with the help of God’s grace, to continue to live chastity, poverty, and obedience and grow in the Vincentian charism. They will take the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience in the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) during the time of their Theological studies (becoming incorporated members of the



Pictured left to right are Noe Garcia, Milton Lara, Wilbur Mejia, and Jose Alex Palacios during the Good Purposes ceremony held in The Miraculous Medal Shrine.

Congregation of the Mission), making their commitment permanent.

All four men are May 2019 graduates of St. John’s University with degrees in Philosophy. They served in Vincentian ministries in New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Alabama.

In August, they began a four-year program of theological studies at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Philadelphia, while residing at De Andreis House of Studies in Manayunk, Pennsylvania.

During the Mass, the Congregation admitted and received Vy Tuan Nguyen, Juan Carlos Perez, and Peter Dai Tran into the Internal Seminary (Novitiate) and the community as they begin the Internal Seminary.

The Vincentians of the Eastern Province are fortunate to have these young men, who are committed to following Jesus Christ in the way of St. Vincent de Paul.

Learn more about Vincentian vocations at menonamission.net.

Fr. Luis Romero, CM, New Director of Vocations



The Vincentians of the Eastern Province have assigned Fr. Luis Romero, CM, as their new Vocation Director, replacing Fr. John Maher, CM, who finished his extended term overseeing the office. Fr. Luis was ordained in June 2019 and served a year ministering in Southampton, Long Island, New York.

New Website Focused on Vincentian Values



Fr. John Freund, CM, recently launched his new website, “Vincentian Mindwalk.” He encourages conversations among people seeking to follow Christ the Evangelizer of the Poor in daily life. Posts offer thoughts that invite further reflection and discussion.

To visit or subscribe, go to johnfreund.net.

Sr. Françoise Petit, DC, New Superior General, Daughters of Charity



Sr. Françoise Petit, DC, the Assistant General, of the Daughters of Charity, has assumed the role of Superior General after the death of Sr. Kathleen Appler, DC, the former Superior General. She will continue to serve in this capacity until the next General Assembly, which is scheduled for 2021. The new Assistant General is Sr. Iliana Suárez, DC.

Fr. Tomaž Mavrič, CM, Superior General, Congregation of the Mission, stated in his April 1 letter to the Daughters of Charity:

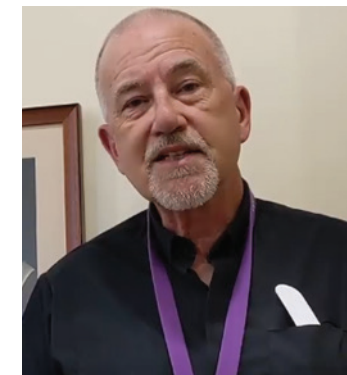
“The death of Sr. Kathleen leaves us all saddened. I trust you will give Sr. Françoise the same support and prayer that you accorded to Sr. Kathleen. She had been a wonderful assistance to Sr. Kathleen, especially throughout the latter’s illness, and will count on your help.”

Take a Minute and a Word

Fr. Aidan Rooney, CM, Vice President for Mission Integration at Niagara University, shares reflections every Thursday on how to live the Christian life and respond to the Gospel in his short video, “A Vincentian Minute.” On Sunday’s, Fr. Rooney presents “The Word: A Journey from Outside In,” a weekly reflection on the Sunday scriptures from the Roman Catholic lectionary.



To follow Fr. Rooney’s videos, visit vincentiansusa.org/reflections/vincentian-minute and vincentiansusa.org/reflections/the-word.



Vincentian Confraternity of Lay Advisors for Vincentian Family

As reported by famvin.org, on Saturday, June 20, branches of the Vincentian family met online to consolidate the creation of the Confraternity of Lay Advisors for the Vincentian Family. The meeting was part of a community process, which arose in FAVILA (The Latin American Vincentian Family) to unite members of the Vincentian Family who share the same trade or profession in order to

communicate their knowledge of their professional skills, thereby strengthening the Vincentian charism. Vincentians from Latin America, the United States and Spain attended the first virtual gathering.

If you are interested in participating in the confraternity, contact Alejandra Chacón at alexache33@hotmail.com.

VINCENTIAN NEWSLETTER



On June 16, *Vincentian Voices* premiered as the new monthly, digital newsletter of the Vincentians of the Eastern Province. This newsletter is published the third Tuesday of every month and features reflections, news, profiles, video, social posts, trivia, and much more. Its content is centered on the Eastern Province family—both religious and laity.

Vincentian Voices is replacing *Around the Province*, which concluded at the end of May. Yet, many of the authors you’ve come to love in *Around the Province* still have content published in *Vincentian Voices*.

If you would to subscribe to *Vincentian Voices* or have content suggestions, contact Christopher Grosso, at cgrosso@cammonline.org.

IN MEMORIAM

Fr. Robert J. Stone, CM
May 5

Fr. Michael D. Whalen, CM
June 2

Fr. Henry M. Bradbury, CM
June 13

Fr. Joseph V. Daly, CM
June 14

Fr. John W. Carven, CM
September 11

Br. Joseph Zurowski, CM
September 12

Eastern Province Parishes Respond to COVID-19

NOTES FROM QUARANTINE Churches are empty. Parish halls are idle. Parish schools are quiet.

This is the current reality for parishes around the world during this pandemic. Yet, ministry continues, and pastoral life lives on in new ways. Traditional activities in Vincentian parishes, like other faith communities, are adjusting. Here’s how some of the Vincentian Priests have adapted and learned to cope with the situation.

At St. Celia Church in Baltimore, Maryland, Fr. Gene Sheridan, CM, pastor, wrote, “We are in the same situation as others. We’re fortunate to be a small community [house], having Mass and prayer each day. I had one funeral, which had to be a private Mass and limited in number, but worked out well.” He goes on to report, “The Daughters of Charity called the Vicar to see if they could have Sunday Mass in their private chapel. The Vicar told them the priest had to be under 50, and so Gemechu [Fr. Gemechu Raga, CM, Parochial Vicar] went, and will continue each weekend.”

Fr. G. Gregorio Gay, CM, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Charlotte, North Carolina, reported that they, too,

made modifications to align better with the new reality: “Sunday, we exposed the Blessed Sacrament and allowed 10 people at a time to pray for 10 minutes. We had 336 visits. We have begun to celebrate Sunday and weekday Masses online.”

The situation, Fr. Gay noted, keeps evolving. “As of tomorrow, we are asked to stay home for three weeks. We will continue to celebrate the Mass online. Noe Garcia, our seminarian, together with the young adults and youth group leaders, are coordinating a Way of the Cross online. We have cancelled all activities in the Church up until and including April 4.”

Fr. Sylvester Peterka, CM, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, described ministry during the pandemic: “It’s like trying to learn ministry all over again in a new, surreal realm!”

However, ministry most go on. Fr. Peterka reported that they phoned as many parishioners as possible and learned how to use Zoom with parishioners and livestream Mass. He also goes to the local Daughter of Charity’s residence each Sunday to celebrate Mass.

While the food pantry is closed at St. Vincent de Paul parish because many volunteers are in the high-risk age group, several parish young adults, Fr. Jack Timlin, CM, and Fr. Tom McKenna, CM, joined together to prepare food packages and safely delivered

them to parishioners by calling ahead and leaving the packages on the doorstep.

Through it all, Fr. Peterka remains steadfast in using the most powerful tool we all share: “At home in the rectory, the pandemic encourages the Confreres [Vincentians] to pray more with a greater sense of urgency.”

Fr. Astor Rodriguez, CM, pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in Brooklyn, New York, reported that on March 24, thirty people received help from the parish’s food pantry. Recipients waited outside while the groceries were placed in bags and safely handed out. This call-to-action was just one example of Fr. Rodriguez’s response to his congregants’ needs. Going virtual, he created a Zoom-to-Facebook Live (pictured bottom left) Pentecost Mission for three nights from June 1-3. For a parish community that is predominantly Latino and Caribbean-American, he had one night’s mission in English, one in Spanish, and one that was bilingual. Catherine Reed-Grant (St. Louis, Missouri) and Denise Lebron (Brooklyn, New York) led the group in praise and worship. Fr. Joe Agostino, CM (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), preached all three nights on the theme of “Our Life in the Spirit of the Risen Lord,” and Fr. Rodriguez led prayer each night.

“It was certainly a unique experience—praying, singing and preaching via Zoom onto a Facebook Live feed,” reported Fr. Rodriguez. “And it was a beautiful experience—sharing that moment with each other and more than 1,000 other people (the average number of viewers of the Pentecost Mission for each evening). In the end, more people participated through this virtual experience than they would have with only an in-church event.

Special Thank You

Fourth-grade students at St. Gregory the Great Catholic School, Virginia Beach, Virginia, participated in a special lesson plan about Our Lady and her Miraculous Medal. Barb Mytych, an instructor at the school, has a strong devotion to Mary and her powerful Medal and teaches a class on that subject. During the pandemic, she reached out to us, and our Youth Ministry program gladly contributed to her curriculum materials.

We sent 80 Miraculous Medals, investiture certificates, coloring pages, and books about the Miraculous Medal and St. Catherine Labouré to Mytych. The students enjoyed learning about our Blessed Mother and her Medal, and after their class, wrote their prayer intentions



and mailed them to us. St. Catherine Labouré (performed by Victoria Rose Bonito pictured above) carried their petitions to the foot of Our Lady’s altar at the Shrine. We created a special video of this moment, during which she thanked the students for their petitions.

“I just watched this most beautiful video

and tribute to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal...WOW!” said Mytych. “It was like receiving a huge hug from our Blessed Mother. The children will be so happy to see and hear their names/petitions being placed at the foot of Our Lady’s Altar. Being able to share this with others and to help them grow in their faith is a gift, and if we can pass it on, it’s a gift that keeps on giving.”

Vincentian Mission to Read

To promote the summer book-reading pastime, the Eastern Province developed a new series, “Vincentian Mission to Read.” Each week from May through June, a different Vincentian Priest or Brother recommended a book reviewing and explaining how it had influenced them.

Reviews included novels, biographies, short story compilations, and (of course) spiritual books.

The book reviews were published via social media and e-blast outlets and listed by (book reviewed in parenthesis): Fr. Patrick J. Griffin, CM (*Jesus: A Pilgrimage, A Memoir* by James Martin, SJ); Fr. Dennis Holtschneider, CM (*The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance during the Blitz* by Erik Larson); Fr. Sylvester Peterka, CM (*The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren); Fr. Bruce Krause, CM (*Deep Down Dark: The Untold Stories of 33 Men Buried in a Chilean*

Mine, and the Miracle That Set Them Free by Héctor Tobar); Fr. Tom McKenna, CM (*Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin); and Fr. John Maher, CM (*He Leadeth Me* by Fr. Walter Ciszek, SJ, as told to Fr. Daniel Flaherty, SJ).

To view the recommendations, visit vincentiansusa.org/vincentian-mission-to-read.



Image courtesy of Fr. Astor Rodriguez, CM





Birthday Greetings Launch 150th Anniversary Celebration

September 5 marked the 150th anniversary of the opening of St. John's University. The sesquicentennial commemoration, "Faithful to the Mission," will take place the entire school year. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic forced the university to think creatively about what events, programs, and activities will look like during this milestone

occasion. Therefore, the celebration was launched with the debut of a birthday greetings compilation video (view at stjohns.edu/150th-anniversary/events-and-initiatives/photo-and-video-gallery). All members of the St. John's family—past, present, and future—are invited to be part of this special celebration that has been 150 years in the making.

Through Service and Research, Class of 2020's Ozanam Scholar Explores Issues of Social Justice

St. John's Ozanam Scholars Program is a highly selective, academic initiative that combines service, research, and global learning. Through the program, scholars examine and seek solutions to real-world social justice issues, travel around the world to serve those in need, and complete a capstone project during their senior year.

For J'mi Worthen (pictured), a biology major in St. John's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, with minors in social justice and international studies, the aspiration to become an Ozanam Scholar came from a deep desire to explore social justice at a higher level.

The Ozanam Scholars Program provided J'mi with that space, while inspiration for her capstone project came from an unexpected place.

"My brother, Jalen, and I were watching a baseball game and when it went to commercial, I asked him if he had seen any black people in any of the ads," she recalls. "He told me that he had not seen any since we started watching the game."

That initial observation was a catalyst for



further exploration—which revealed a dearth of black female roles in the media and countless racial stereotypes—and became the cornerstone of her capstone project, "The Portrayal of Black Women in the Media."

J'mi explored that question through intensive investigation, which included two focus groups. Her original plan was to collaborate with different campus organizations and host an annual event about her research. However, her faculty advisor encouraged her to think bigger and

turn her findings into a college course.

While J'mi's research focused on media in this country, her service work took her around the world. Closer to home, she volunteered at Project ID at St. John's Bread & Life in Brooklyn, New York, where she assisted clients in the retrieval of documents such as birth certificates, death certificates, and non-driver identification cards. She also worked with Homes for the Homeless Youth after-school program in Queens and GEAR UP, where she created a college prep program for juniors at Long Island City High School.

Image and photo courtesy of St. John's University

Niagara University Student's Service to the Needy

Niagara University's Vincentian Scholar, Valerie Garcia-Batiz (pictured), a biology major from Williamsville, New York, has been a volunteer at Heart, Love and Soul for almost three years. Although the coronavirus has changed the way the food pantry and dining room serves its guests, Garcia-Batiz is still a vital part of the team who serves those in need.

The global pandemic has been challenging for the nonprofit in other ways, as well, including the fact that there has been an increased need for food since its onset. "We have already started seeing some new guests come," Garcia-Batiz said. "I think we'll eventually become very busy, as unemployment rises."

The additional safety precautions haven't changed the guests' appreciation for the services they receive—"They have been awesome!"—nor the community's commitment to support the organization. "It's been extremely helpful and encouraging seeing so many people come together to help fill our pantry shelves," says Garcia-Batiz.



Photos courtesy of Niagara University

Unique Student Project

As part of her capstone course, Projects in Public Health, Niagara University senior Joy O'Brien decided to install Little Free Libraries throughout the city of Niagara Falls, New York, to increase and promote children's literacy. Working with her course professor and community partner, Brian Archie from Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative, O'Brien was well on her way to construct six libraries, which serve as neighborhood book exchanges and operate on a "take a book, leave a book" basis. Then the coronavirus pandemic forced her to leave the Niagara University campus and return to her home in Blairstown, New Jersey.



While not sure how she would be able to complete the project before the semester ended, O'Brien was able to continue working to identify locations and obtain the necessary materials to install the libraries. She also secured funding for building supplies and six library charters from the Niagara University chapter of the Lions Club.

When she returned to campus to gather her belongings from her residence hall, O'Brien stayed in Western New York to help with the actual installation of the libraries she worked so hard to create.



Cartoon by Fr. Al Pehrsson, CM, a resident of St. Catherine's Infirmary, Philadelphia