

Congregation of the Sacred Hearts United States Province

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"If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." (Jn 13: 14-15)

June 2023

Dear friend,

On May 10, 2023, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of St. Damien's arrival in Kalaupapa, Molokai. He was the first of four SS.CC. priests who volunteered to take turns visiting and assisting the "lepers" in their distress. In August of 1873 he wrote to the Superior General saying that the "lepers" had petitioned for him to remain with them.

Six months after his arrival he wrote to his parents and brothers: *"My occupation comes down to my daily service and funerals. I make the coffins of those who are poorer. Sisters send me a lot of clothes which I distribute to the sick. In summary, I look after my poor creatures in relation to their spiritual and material needs. ... This is a great happiness from God to care for his poor children sick and excluded by other people."*

In our mission to live and announce the love of God made flesh in the heart of Jesus, our SS.CC. members continue St. Damien's legacy, looking after the spiritual and material needs of God's excluded children.



As a high school student, Father William Petrie read a biography of St. Damien in school. *"That book inspired me so much that I decided I was going to become a priest and work with leprosy patients,"* he said. Ordained in 1969, Fr. Bill left for Kolkata, India in 1975 to work with Mother Teresa and stayed for 25 years. He is the founder of our mission in India where he served for 25 years. He followed in Damien's footsteps of service to those with leprosy.



In 1979 Fr. Bill arrived in Bhubaneswar, Odisha and began to work among the leprosy patients in various leprosy colonies. The focus of his mission was: training of doctors on leprosy and public awareness programs, treatment of leprosy patients and their rehabilitation through housing projects in various leprosy colonies in different districts in Odisha.

He established an institute in Bhubaneswar in 1987. It continues its mission under the direction of the India Region of the United States Province through:

- The developmental works among the urban and rural village people aiming at community development through women and children empowerment.
- Non-formal Education of poor children in urban slums, villages and of children of cured leprosy patients in different leprosy colonies in and around Bhubaneswar.
- The rehabilitation of cured leprosy patients and their children in leprosy colonies.
- Free medical treatment of ulcer patients and free distribution of medicines in different leprosy colonies through Damien Clinics and Damien Dispensaries.
- The management of a hostel where young college going students from poor families are accommodated with food and lodging so that they can pursue in their higher education.

Our Mission: To contemplate, live and proclaim God's love in the world



Fr. Michael Barry, ss.cc., is a member of the USA West Region of our province, who also exemplifies the legacy of Damien. Fr. Mike was born and raised in Ireland. He joined the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts and was ordained in 1964. He has worked in education and in the charismatic renewal in Southern California and is known for his healing ministries.

Committed to the Gospel's teaching "*Blessed are the poor*" (Mt. 5:3), Fr. Michael founded a ministry of outreach to the poor and less fortunate in 1987. The ministry began to serve the poor in local communities, working first in local parks with supplies of food and money to cover utility bills. The ministry has developed into an organization that provides much needed homeless services in San Bernardino, California.

It is currently organized into three main services

- Its original program provides a hot nutritious meal six days a week, as well as clothing and personal hygiene items.
- A transitional housing program provides a home for adult pregnant women and their children as a healthy alternative to abortion, domestic violence, substance abuse and/or homelessness. The goal is to enable the individual woman to integrate into society and live with a renewed sense of her own worth and dignity.
- The newest service is a 12-24 month transitional living program for unhoused men. The "village" is a therapeutic community that helps residents develop personal, social and emotional skills required to live a healthy and productive life.

"Our mission urges us to evangelizing action by which we enter into the interior dynamism of Christ's love for his Father and for the world, especially for the poor, the afflicted, the marginalized and those who have not heard the Good News." (SS.CC Congregation's Constitutions, Art. 6). **Fr. Bill and Fr. Mike are prime examples of this "evangelizing action". We need your help in order to free and prepare members to take up the mantle of Fr. Mike or develop future outreach ministries. This is only possible for us with your prayerful and financial support.**

I would like to invite you to consider becoming a "sustainer" of our mission and ministry, with a monthly gift of \$20, \$50, \$100 or more. A steady income helps in meeting the expenses of members, mission, retirement and education in these inflationary times. Of course any and every contribution you make truly makes a difference. Please be as generous as you can.

You are remembered in the daily prayers of our brothers throughout the province. May our Good God abundantly bless you and keep you safe and healthy.

Yours in the hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Rev. Edward Popish, ss.cc.
Development Director