VII.
WORKS OF DEVOTION,
EVANGELIZATION AND SERVICE

by
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This chapter sets out to gather together those works of the American provinces which do not readily fit into other classifications according to apostolate. Some of these works were specific to the Eastern Province and others to the Western, and now to one or other of the five provinces. Frequently both provinces carried on the same works. They are the Miraculous Medal Associations and the works connected with them; publications such as The Vincentian and works associated with it: the Vincentian Press and the Vincentian Foreign Mission Society; the Motor Missions and its offshoots: the Confraternity Home Study Service and the Religious Information Bureau; retreat work; works in collaboration with the Daughters of Charity; military chaplaincies, and other works.

Miraculous Medal Association

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin runs deep among American Vincentians. The name of the first American foundation, Saint Mary's Seminary, attests to this, as do the regular invocation of Mary in Vincentian prayers and activities throughout the Vincentian community, the number of institutions bearing her titles, and the Marian grottoes characteristic of many houses.

The promotion of devotion to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal was confided to the worldwide Vincentian community from an early period. The first medals appeared in 1832, and some twelve million were distributed by 1836. Father John Mary Odin, on a trip to Paris in 1833, heard of the apparitions to Sister Catherine
Laboure directly from her young confessor, Father Jean-Marie Aladel. When he returned to America, he enthusiastically promoted the spread of the Medal. Testimonies to its use and promotion by confreres in the United States exist from 1835 on, and within ten years, dealers were offering the “Medals of the Immaculate Conception” for sale in the United States. In fact, Pierre-Jean De Smet, the Jesuit missioner, made it his practice to distribute them to his Indian converts as early as 1844. By mid-century, the Daughters of Charity had founded many groups of the Children of Mary in their American schools. This organization for children in Daughter of Charity schools in France, adopted as their badge the Medal hung on a blue cord. By 1908 some 400,000 members had enrolled in their American schools and parishes. In keeping with such continued growth, the Holy See approved a proper mass and office for 27 November in honor of “The Manifestation of the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary of the Holy Medal” in 1894. In 1909 Pope Pius X approved statutes for The Association of the Miraculous Medal, whose members enjoyed the same spiritual benefits as the Children of Mary. The titular head of the Association is the Vincentian superior general. The Eastern Province began such an association affiliated with that of Paris in 1915, and the Western Province followed in 1917.

Father James MacGill, first provincial of the Eastern Province (1888-1909), made it his habit to distribute the medal widely. His devotion inspired, among others, the mother of Father Joseph Skelly, whose name is linked with the foundation and development of the Miraculous Medal Association in the East. In 1914, recalling the medals that his mother had placed on her ten children, Skelly enclosed a Miraculous Medal with his fundraising letters for the minor seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. The response being so positive, provincial authorities the next year determined to found an Association of the Miraculous Medal out of gratitude to the Blessed Mother. The purposes of this association, as well as the one in the Western Province, were to propagate devotion to the Blessed Virgin under the title of the Miraculous Medal, and also to help in the formation of Vincentian students for the priesthood. In a few years a third purpose was added: to contribute to the evangelization of the poor in the foreign missions and in the United States. In later years a fourth purpose followed: to care for the aging and infirm members of the Community.
Skelly’s Central Association quickly experienced great growth and provided the province with the resources to build four major establishments: the Princeton seminary, Mary Immaculate Seminary in Northampton, the Central Shrine Chapel in Germantown, Philadelphia, consecrated in 1926, and Saint Vincent de Paul Seminary in Boynton Beach, Florida. Together with the Western Province and the Daughters of Charity, the Association financed the construction of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal (1963) in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

At the time of its establishment in the United States, the association celebrated a novena in honor of the Miraculous Medal four times yearly. Beginning with the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1930, (commemorating the centenary of the first apparitions to Saint Catherine Laboure in Paris), the novena took place every Monday and thereby received the title “Perpetual Novena.” The novena followed the form of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, prayer, a sermon, Benediction, and imposition of the Medal on those who wished. By 1935 the Germantown shrine celebrated twelve novenas each Monday, accommodating upwards of 20,000 people. This service became so popular that diocesan priests asked permission to celebrate the novena in their parishes (the first took place in 1932). From that time the Miraculous Medal Novena spread widely in the United States and Canada, other English-speaking countries, and elsewhere. This happened especially during the second World War, when both those at home and in military camps prayed the novena for peace. “Mary’s Kneeling Army of Prayer” enlisted at least ten million people, by some estimates, to pray for the protection of America’s defenders. The novena reached thousands more over 200 radio stations during wartime. By 1950, Skelly’s golden jubilee of priesthood, the association had distributed over 50 million medals. (The member most frequently chosen for enrollment and prayers in that year was Joseph Stalin—members enrolled him a dozen times a month.) Although attendance has declined somewhat, the confreres at Germantown still celebrate ten different services each Monday at the Central Shrine, and have developed other activities in keeping with the goals of the association.

The Provincial Council of the Western Province approved the founding of a similar association 1917, and it began to function formally in May 1918. The first directors of the association were the
superiors of Saint Mary's Seminary, Perryville. Father Joseph Finney directed the association from 1926 until his death in 1962. As in the Eastern Province, membership in the Miraculous Medal Association involved obligations of prayer and devotion, principally that of wearing the Miraculous Medal. Benefits included participation in masses celebrated by Vincentians and the prayers of the students, and the works of the community. To carry on the work of propagating the Miraculous Medal, the two associations relied principally on their Promoters—persons who would recruit other members. These Promoters would receive premiums for each new member—religious goods and other spiritual benefits. These included membership in a Union of Masses offered at the altar of the Miraculous Medal at the seminary church in Perryville, as well as in Germantown.

Both associations published magazines which contained accounts of the associations and spiritual graces and favors received, and set out to secure the support for priesthood candidates and to arouse interest in the China missions. The Miraculous Medal, planned as early as 1916, began in Philadelphia in 1928 and continues in publication. In the West The Vincentian was, from 1923 on, the chief means of publicity. When this latter ceased in 1963, The Miraculous Medal Bulletin, a newsletter, took its place. The Almanac of the Miraculous Medal (1924-1934) published other accounts of the work of the association.

As in the East, the Miraculous Medal Association in the West took the leadership in raising funds for new buildings and furnishings for Saint Mary's Seminary at Perryville: the novitiate, the scholasticate, and the library-classroom building. By far the most important construction was the “National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal,” a chapel built at the seminary church in Perryville to replace an existing shrine. Work on the Shrine began in 1928 and finished in 1930.

The Perpetual Novena appeared in the West first at Saint Joseph's in New Orleans. It began soon after at Perryville, where the people still celebrate it, and spread to many Vincentian, diocesan and religious parishes. The associations continue to do their work primarily through direct mail appeals, and through sponsoring other Marian activities, including pilgrimages to the “Central Shrine” in Germantown and the “National Shrine” Perryville. A significant ministry has arisen of giving counsel, reassurance, instruction and direction on a personal basis, as a result of letters
received. The confreres of the Polish Vice-Province promoted the spread of the Miraculous Medal, but did not have an Association, strictly so called.

A similar though unrelated activity is the work of "Our Lady of Angels Novenas" at Niagara University. In April of 1918, Father Martin Blake inaugurated these novenas to spread devotion to the Blessed Mother. He began by sending out letters announcing a novena of masses for the intention of benefactors of the Seminary and College of Our Lady of Angels. These benefactors helped significantly in the building and renovating of the institution, and have continued their support of the University.

**Miraculous Medal Novena Band**

In the 1920s and 1930s, the celebration of novenas had grown enormously in the United States. An article in *The Vincentian*, for example, remarked with wonder at the nearly 70,000 persons who on a single day attended the novena to Our Lady of Sorrows sponsored by the Servite community in Chicago, a service begun in 1937. By that same year the Eastern Province had established a Novena Band—confreres whose apostolate it was to preach at special celebrations of the Miraculous Medal Novena. The work grew quickly, from two priests at the beginning, to nine in 1941, and fourteen in 1945. This work also undertook a monthly publication, the "Bulletin of the Miraculous Medal Novena Band," consisting primarily of aids for continuing the novena.

In 1942 and again in 1944, Father Joseph Finney, director of the Miraculous Medal Association in Perryville, requested provincial permission to establish such a novena band in the West. Encouragement for doing so came from the East, but the Provincial allowed its establishment in the West only as an apostolate distinct from the association.

At its beginning in 1945, two confreres from the West lived and worked with their Eastern counterparts to learn their novena methods. In 1946, Father Marshall Winne, the provincial, appointed the first director, Father Preston Murphy. He made his headquarters in Saint Louis, and by the next year, he had an additional three men assigned to the work. By 1950, seven men were preaching the novenas throughout the western half of the country, but received criticism that their preaching did not always concen-
trate on the essentials of the faith. Probably because of some confusion with the traditional Vincentian parish missions, and certainly because of a need to deploy the confreres into educational institutions, the Novena Band in the Western Province ceased in 1950.

Pressure to reestablish the Miraculous Medal Band grew so much that by 1955 two confreres again went East to learn the methods and spirit of the work. In 1958, a joint team of Eastern and Western confreres formed the Novena Band. This unique cooperative effort, nearly the only one in the long history of the two provinces, lasted only until 1963, when a separate Western Province group formed.

In both provinces, decline set in practically at that same time, owing to the changes in the life of the Church brought about by the Council, and to a lesser extent by a reluctance to attend Church services in the evenings. This held particularly true in the inner city parishes where the novenas had been the most popular. Because of these changes, the missioners revised the texts of the novena to reflect the Church’s liturgical life more closely, and gradually the vernacular celebration of the Eucharist supplanted functionally the celebration of the vernacular novena. Both the Eucharist and the Perpetual Novena, however, were often held jointly. By 1968, Father James Fischer, the Western provincial, had to ask that the Novena Band members update their sermons to reflect modern theology and outlook. By 1970, only five members remained on the Western band, and by the end of the decade, the apostolate faded out. In the East, however, the Novena Band still functions. The Polish Vice-Province never formed a specific Novena Band. It should be noted, however, that the Mission Band concept spread to other overseas Vincentian provinces. As is evident from Chapter III, a renewed attention to parish missions has arisen in place of the Marian novenas.

Publications

Under the heading Publications appear items produced by American Vincentians reflecting the outlook of the confreres in the United States. Omitted here are the many translations of official Vincentian writings or books of devotions.
The *Annals of the Congregation of the Mission*, mainly a translation of the official *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* begun during the generalate of Father Jean-Baptiste Nozo in 1834, was the most significant of these publications. The early issues of the French publication modeled themselves after those of missionary aid societies and other congregations, as the subtitle suggests: "Recueil de lettres edifiantes écrites par les prêtres de cette congrégation employés dans les missions étrangères" (A collection of edifying letters written by the priests of this congregation employed in the foreign missions.) Beginning in 1845, in response to the wishes of the delegates to the general assembly of 1843, the editors regularly included news from the American missions in addition to the original letters from China and the middle east. After 1862 a subtitle reflected the participation of the Daughters of Charity, and after 1874 the subtitle notice about the foreign missions disappeared, and the journal gradually became the official publication of the two communities. It ceased with the volume for 1963, devoted entirely to a history of the Community in China.

In his circular letter of 1 January 1894, Father Antoine Fiat urged translations of the French *Annales*, especially since the Spanish confreres had already begun an edition in their own language. Within a short time editions appeared in Italian, Polish, German, Dutch and English. The Daughters of Charity in Emmitsburg, who for many years did the printing for English-speaking provinces around the world, published the English *Annals*. This publication contained principally translations from the French, although the English version omitted some pieces, and it ran from 1894 to 1925. An official publication destined for the Daughters alone, *The Echo from (or, of) the Mother House*, took its place beginning in January 1926, and was also published at Emmitsburg. Doubtless the reasons for the cessation of the English *Annals* included the high cost of translation and publication, and a lack of interest. In any case, the Vincentians did not continue the work that the Daughters had been doing for them.

Individual Vincentian bishops promoted publications in their own dioceses, and these contributions should be acknowledged even though they did not specifically form part of the Community's apostolate. Bishop Joseph Rosati's *Shepherd of the Valley* (1832-1836) was the first Catholic newspaper published west of the Mississippi. Bishop John Timon founded the *Catholic Sentinel* in Buffalo (1853-1864), and his successor there, Stephen V. Ryan,
began the long-lived and liberal Catholic Union in 1872.

Institutional publications have also appeared at various times. The titles include usually ephemeral items from parishes (like The Marian from Opelika, 1910-1914), and items from larger educational institutions. The colleges and universities all had their own in-house newspapers, many of these developing into alumni publications. Some offer important historical information about the institutions themselves, as well as about the confreres who labored there. The oldest continuing publication is the Niagara Index (begun in 1868). The College Message from Saint Vincent's College in Cape Girardeau ran from 1874 to 1892, and the College revived it several times.

Seminaries, too, published regularly. The Evangelist (beginning 1939), from Saint John's Seminary, Camarillo, California; and The Ambassador (under various titles, beginning 1930) from Saint Thomas Seminary, Denver, Colorado. Both had fairly a wide readership. Other apostolates had their own publications, such as the Bulletin of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Agony, printed at Emmitsburg from 1912. Other efforts, such as those of the Miraculous Medal Association, receive mention elsewhere in this chapter.

Two publications from Vincentian scholastics served to inform and unify the two American provinces: the Heri-Hodie (1928-1970, from the Eastern Province) and The DeAndrein (1928-1965, from the Western Province). Both began under the auspices of the student mission organization, the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, and sought to keep the missionaries in China informed about provincial life. The Heri-Hodie (recalling Hebrews 13:8) looked, as its name suggests, for 50% history ("Heri", yesterday) and 50% current news ("Hodie", today). The editors continued both aims throughout its life. The DeAndrein paralleled the interests of its sister publication, but later broadened its scope to include provincial appointments and news about the Daughters of Charity. Both publications retain value as sources of biographical information, the history of houses and works, and the spirit of the provinces. In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, with the abandonment of much that had gone before, the two publications ceased. Provincial and local newsletters took their places.

Vincentian Heritage began in 1980 as an official publication of the Vincentian Studies Institute (VSI), a joint effort of the five Vincentian provinces, with the cooperation of the five provinces of the Daughters of Charity. This journal, taking its goals from the
aims of the VSI, sought to present materials on the two communities: their founders, heritage, and history in the United States in particular, and also on other groups associated with the two founders.

The publications of individual confreres or institutions should also receive recognition here. Many confreres have contributed to learned journals in the fields of their own expertise, to magazines for priests, or to publications sponsored by Vincentian institutions. Noteworthy are the *Saint Louis Catholic Historical Review* (1918-1923, beginning under the editorship of Father Charles Souvay), the *Journal of Religious Instruction* (later *Catholic Educator*) sponsored by DePaul University from 1931 to 1942; its *DePaul Law Review* (1951-present); also *The Catholic Lawyer*, sponsored by the Saint John’s University School of Law, beginning in 1955, its other law publication, *Saint John’s Law Review*, beginning in 1926; and *Thought Patterns*, beginning in 1950.

**The Family Treasure (Skarb Rodziny)**

In addition to in-house publications from Saint John Kanty Prep, the vice-province of Poland published the monthly *The Family Treasure* beginning in May 1917. Designed to enhance the results of missions in the family home, the scope of the publication included both religious and social areas, with examples from life, Polish culture, novels, news, science, and a children’s corner. At first making use of outside printers, the confreres gradually developed a complete printing establishment. The first issue from the new printing house went out in January 1933 to 25,000 subscribers. An English language version joined the Polish original in 1945.

After World War II, the number of subscribers decreased because of rising prices and postage, competition from the American press, and a lack of interest in Polish publications. The magazine was reduced to a quarterly in October 1956, and in 1965 it ceased altogether. Small job printing continued until 1969.

**The Vincentian and related organizations**

*The Vincentian* has a special place since it was a semi-official publication of the Western Province. (A similar publication in the
East, The Miraculous Medal mirrors its style and development in many ways, although its purposes differ.) In 1923, when the Western province began to send its men to the China mission, a group of confreres began a publishing venture, The Vincentian, a popular magazine destined to run for more than 40 years. Although sources are lacking, it appears that the publishers envisioned their magazine as a means of alleviating the perilous financial condition in the West in the 1920s, nearly bankrupt as a result of adversity and poor management. As a result The Vincentian stressed several money-making projects in addition to its more general goals of making Saint Vincent better known, and of publicizing the works of the confreres and Daughters of Charity, the Miraculous Medal and Holy Agony devotions, and of providing general entertainment and edification. The publication of The Vincentian led eventually to the foundation or the further development of other provincial works, principally the Vincentian Press, the Vincentian Seminary Auxiliary, and the Vincentian Foreign Mission Society (VFMS).

The Vincentian published its first monthly issue in January 1923. Its first editors were Fathers Robert Power, Joseph Lilly, Joseph Finney and Leo Foley. Father Power served as either chief or associate editor until his death in 1961. In its first period the magazine struggled to find a suitable mixture of articles and stories to meet its stated purposes. The new China missions captured the serious and continuing attention of the editors, and the Miraculous Medal Association received full coverage. In the main, however, the articles presented a vaguely popular and Catholic outlook, but Vincentian emphasis remained minimal, as did official support from the province. Fundraising for the support of the seminaries quickly became a leading theme.

The period 1935-1948 marked the mature years of The Vincentian, with consistent styles of publication and regular features. In that era of Catholic Action The Vincentian carried many supporting articles on social justice, the developing liturgical movement, and exhibited a more ecumenical and open tone. Few confreres wrote articles for The Vincentian but those who did wrote on biblical and historical topics, theology and devotion, and the life of the Vincentians and Daughters of Charity. These included students who contributed articles and book reviews.

By the end of the war, the magazine had developed into a full-fledged publication of a traditionally Catholic type. Yet the post-war period, 1948-1953, saw many changes in American and
Catholic life. Rising costs for printing and mailing, in particular, brought about the magazine's demise. The articles of this period continued the general tone of the mature years to 1948: articles on the creed, the bible, as well as Catholic fiction and popular poetry. Following the Chinese revolution, the stand-by articles on the foreign missions disappeared briefly. The work showed little Vincentian character, apart from the continuing columns on the Miraculous Medal, appeals for vocations, and for burses to educate Vincentian seminarians. Early in 1952 the Vincentian Foreign Mission Society assumed control of *The Vincentian*, but the unexpected death in September of Father Paul Lloyd, its energetic director, hastened the magazine's decline. His successor, Father Vincent Kaiser, continued this arrangement until December, 1953, when monthly publication ceased.

*The Vincentian* reappeared the next year as a quarterly, much reduced in size and quality, with Robert Power once again its editor in chief. Its tone remained quiet and unexciting. Jokes and anecdotes filled its pages until 1963, its 41st year, when Father Power died at age 82. At his death *The Vincentian* ceased definitively.

The Vincentian Seminary Auxiliary, beginning about 1927, sought to raise funds to support the minor seminarians in Cape Girardeau. Later, it broadened its appeal to include students at all levels. Its Saint Louis branch, the only one now remaining, took the name C.M. Seminary Auxiliary in 1947, and continues its charitable and spiritual activities.

The Vincentian Press still operates as a direct outgrowth of *The Vincentian*. Beginning in Perryville in 1923, the Press handled special awards ("premiums") offered to its agents and subscribers, and little by little developed into a much larger organization. Its successes paralleled those of the parent magazine. For a few years it offered books and pamphlets written by Vincentians and others, and printed under its own name. The Press now operates by direct and mail-order sales of religious goods, and supports provincial works with its profits.

The Vincentian Foreign Mission Society, although distinct from *The Vincentian*, paralleled its existence for many years. When the Western Province began sending missionaries to China, the Perryville student members of the local chapter of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, a national organization, determined to work for the spiritual and financial support of their confreres and Daughters of Charity in China. By mid-1923, at the urging of the
provincial, the students had organized the Vincentian Foreign Mission Society. Since interest in the missions ran high among American Catholics, the directors of the VFMS regularly published mission information in The Vincentian beginning with the first volume. The editors originally limited the news to letters or extracts from letters of the missionaries. Eventually the VFMS published pictures and analyses of conditions in China.

To support the missions financially, the VFMS had recourse to several methods, directed principally to younger people. The Baby Ransom League captured popular interest, continuing an endeavor founded in 1843. For several decades, the confreres in China had promoted, through the “Work of the Holy Childhood” in France, the care of abandoned children, mainly girls, sold by their indigent parents. Daughters of Charity and others baptized the children and raised them as orphans, thereby saving them from death, slavery or exploitation. Occasional essay contests and competitions among schools also promoted the missions. The VFMS offered religious goods for sale through the Vincentian Press. Scholastics entered the business of sorting cancelled stamps sent in by subscribers, and selling them to dealers. This service lasted until at least the 1960s, with individual confreres continuing the work up to the present. China Clippings, a newsletter originally designed for school children, also featured mission news. Its youth focus eventually diminished since its readership also included adults, and the newsletter endeavored to publish general mission news. It ran from 1936 to 1945.

The province gradually came to need a more formal organization in its mission efforts. Paul Lloyd returned to the United States on vacation in 1938 and in 1939, with Father Stephen Dunker, reorganized the VFMS, and became its director. Bishop Paul Misner, C.M., Bishop Edward Sheehan’s successor in China, had encouraged attention to the worsening financial condition of the Vincentian missions on his recent visit home. The reason for the decline was that the previous source of funds, Vincentian properties and funds in Shanghai, proved insufficient owing to inflation and greater needs. From 1939 until his death in 1952, Father Lloyd promoted the VFMS through amateur magic shows and magic lessons for clergy (“Magic For Padres”) and similar means. Despite the changes in China and the new Taiwan mission, he also continued many of the directions begun years before.
“The Wings of Mercy” was one such effort. Founded by Father Paul Schulte, an Oblate Father of the Central United State Province in the spring of 1945, it set out to provide priests and bishops with airplanes for their missions, and the experience to fly them. Three Vincentians, Lloyd, Thomas Mahoney and Joseph McIntyre, joined members of other missionary communities in this new endeavor, headquartered in Belleville, Illinois. Regrettably, misunderstandings between Schulte and other better established mission groups led to its disbanding by the hierarchy in September 1946. Also, official suspicion of Schulte, a German-born priest, during and after World War II, undoubtedly contributed to the demise of Wings of Mercy.

The Motor Missions

Traditionally in Vincentian life the needs of the moment dictated the establishment of new directions in the apostolate. This has proven true in what came to be called popularly the Motor Missions. In the 1920s and 1930s several movements in the church in America attested to the need for modern methods of evangelization of the unchurched or neglected. For example, the Narberth Movement of Catholic information through the publication and distribution of pamphlets (taking its name from Saint Margaret’s parish in Narberth, Pennsylvania), grew in reputation. The Catholic Evidence Guild, originally a British work, was established in several places in the United States, particularly in Oklahoma. Finally, direct street preaching by a priest in Indiana who traveled to small towns in that state aroused the curiosity of Fathers Lester Fallon, Joseph Phoenix and Joseph McIntyre. During their student days at Perryville, they had agreed to sign a contract among themselves to devote their efforts to works of evangelization. The time now seemed ripe, and Lester Fallon began.

Taking a cue from Harold Pierce and Paul Brown, two of his students from Oklahoma at Kenrick Seminary, where he worked as a faculty member, Fallon spent a week with Father Stephen Leven, an Oklahoma priest and later bishop of San Angelo, Texas. Fallon and Leven, together with an associate, (and another future bishop), Victor Reed, joined in a series of preaching assignments in small Oklahoma towns, based on the Catholic Evidence method in which Leven had received training in England. They set out simply to
witness to and explain the Catholic faith in areas where the Church remained unknown at first hand. After this experience of the summer of 1934, Fathers Fallon and McIntyre began the Catholic Motor Missions in Lutesville, Missouri on their own.

The purpose and methods of the Vincentian Motor Missions hardly changed from the Oklahoma experience. The priests, joined often by seminarians, and with the permission of the local bishop, pastor and town officials, would announce the upcoming Motor Missions in town. Then, on the appointed evening, they would begin by playing recorded music to assemble the crowd, and then deliver prepared talks on aspects of Catholic faith and practice. Questions and answers followed, generally taken from question boxes placed nearby. Beginning in 1937 the missionaries showed a film on the mass and gave explanations. Lastly, someone from the team would walk through the crowd, distributing literature, Miraculous Medals, and making human contacts. Although they designed this method at first for non-Catholics, the missionaries quickly discovered that lax Catholics often took part and profited from a more thorough explanation of their faith than they had ever received.

The period 1937-1945, the years of major development, saw the expansion of the Motor Mission idea beyond Missouri, and even beyond the confines of Vincentians alone. Cooperation between the confreres and diocesan students and priests proved to be a key staffing element. The Trailer Chapels, house trailers fitted up as movable chapels and speaking platforms, also formed part of the Motor Missions in these years. These chapels offered the team members more flexibility and aroused greater attention where they were available. During this period also, the provincial administration finally gave its official support, and offered some financial help for the missionaries during the summers. Previously the members carried on their Motor Mission work as a sideline to their regular educational or parochial apostolates. The confreres of the Western Province gave widespread support, as articles in The Vincentian and The DeAndrein testify. The missionaries experienced the people in rural areas as interested, courteous and receptive, so much so that a certain number of Catholic communities grew up in formerly neglected areas. The success of the Motor Missions apparently influenced similar works in such areas as rural Tennessee and Georgia, beginning in the late 1930s.
Because of shortages of fuel and spare parts for vehicles during the second World War, the work of the Motor Missions waned. After the war, however, the missionaries began again in earnest. Yet this period of expansion lasted only briefly, since other pressures took people away from leisurely summer evenings of listening to traveling Catholic missionaries. Better means of transportation, more recreational activities such as movies and eventually television, along with air conditioned homes, gradually diminished the crowds. Yet before the end, the work expanded into street preaching in cities such as Saint Louis, and year-round rural missions. The team members hoped thereby to support rural Catholics living in isolated areas. The Saint Louis Archdiocesan Rural Life and Home Mission Conference ran the work with the help of seminarians, Vincentian and others, in 1963 and 1964. They employed efforts related to the old Mission work, such as appearances at county fairs to explain Catholic life and teachings, and more home visitations, but these eventually came to a halt. Vincentian Motor Missions in the Western Province ceased definitively in May 1965, owing to pressures to staff educational institutions and other works. At that point, the diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau assumed responsibility for it. Similar work done jointly by Western Province members in the Eastern Province areas of Alabama ceased in the following couple of years. On balance, the Motor Missions attained some success in their original purpose: to witness to and explain the Catholic faith. As a result, prejudice decreased, many joined the Church, and rural Catholics grew in number. The very establishment of the diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau attests in a small way to the success of the Vincentian Motor Missions.

**Home Study Service**

A major work of evangelization developed from the Motor Missions and continues in operation—the Confraternity Home Study Service (CHSS), with the accompanying Religious Information Bureau (RIB) in Saint Louis. As mentioned above, Catholics in the 1930s paid great attention to “Catholic Evidence,” bringing the faith to others. Beginning in 1935 the Perryville members of the Catholic Students’ Mission Crusade sought to reach out to prospective converts. For this, they followed the methods of the Narberth Movement, in which parishioners distributed simple pamphlets to
interested non-Catholics and also to other parishes and individuals with active inquiry programs. Lester Fallon probably picked up on the Perryville student initiative to supplement his Motor Mission work during the summer of 1936. Yet experience quickly showed him that simply distributing pamphlets could not handle the questions people had.

In the following year Father Fallon borrowed the currently popular method of home study of the Catholic faith by correspondence courses, and drew up his own courses for home study (on fundamentals, the Mass, and Christian marriage.) He revised Bishop John Noll’s popular guide, *Father Smith Instructs Jackson*, as his text for the course on fundamentals. Seminarians at Kenrick Seminary agreed to serve as teachers for this new venture, supervised by their seminary professors. Students for the course came from those who heard the Motor Mission presentations.

At the end of each evening’s talks the missioners would distribute pamphlets containing an invitation to pursue further work by correspondence, with the organization covering the postage and other costs. *The Vincentian* and a newsletter, *Good News* (also published by Fallon) solicited further names. In the first sixteen months, 1200 people from over forty states, as well as Alaska, Hawaii, Canada and Cuba entered the program. By 1939 military chaplains began to realize the possibilities of evangelizing their recruits by this means, and a great increase in applicants resulted. To support this, the Daughters of Isabella, a national Catholic women’s organization acting principally through its Missouri chapters, undertook to finance the work for army and navy students beginning in 1941. By the following year Fallon had to organize the work more thoroughly, since it had spread from the two Vincentian seminaries to include ten seminaries and several religious houses (for example Capuchins, Jesuits, Paulists and the Sisters of Social Service in Los Angeles.) The resulting “Associated Catholic Correspondence Courses” joined the Kenrick Correspondence Courses and the Crusade Correspondence Courses (at Perryville) in a national organization. In addition increasing enrollments led Fallon to rent new headquarters in Saint Louis and to hire staff to handle the automatic typewriters purchased by the Daughters of Isabella. Fallon titled the resulting organization the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Home Study Service, later the Confraternity Home Study Service.
At the same time another initiative began that would greatly develop the CHSS. Charles J. Kelly Jr., a Missouri advertising executive and a member of the Knights of Columbus, began to plan for an evangelization effort through a Catholic radio station sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. Since Archbishop John Glennon of Saint Louis declined to support the radio station proposal, the idea took form as paid newspaper advertisements. Glennon urged Kelly and the Missouri Knights to make use of the organization already in place under Lester Fallon’s leadership, and so the Religious Information Bureau came to be. The purposes of the Catholic Advertising Program of the Knights essentially matched those of the Motor Missions, as well as of the Narberth Movement: information, not attack. Kelly himself, and later his brother Virgil, prepared the copy for the now familiar Knights of Columbus advertisements. These began in Saint Louis in June 1944. The notices urged readers to request from the Religious Information Bureau pamphlets on the topics covered; these pamphlets often derived from the Narberth materials. Those who received the RIB pamphlets also received an invitation to write to the CHSS if they wished to pursue their investigation of Catholicism further by mail.

Inquiries poured in to the RIB, reaching hundreds and then thousands each week. By 1948 for example, some 60,000 persons had enrolled for the CHSS courses, and by 1953, 164,817 had enrolled out of the million or so who had written for pamphlets. The success of the work prompted Luke E. Hart, Supreme Advocate of the Knights of Columbus and later Supreme Knight, to secure significant funding for a national advertising campaign. The fund-raising took place in 1948 and by 1953-1954 the CHSS/RIB had a staff of three Vincentians full-time, plus many lay persons at their Saint Louis offices.

Concurrent with other changes in church and society, interest in religion by mail also changed. During the early 1960s participation by the seminarians in their own correspondence course programs gradually ceased, and they referred prospective students to the CHSS. Hart, a resident of Missouri, had insisted that the RIB remain in Saint Louis. But after his death in 1964, his successor, John McDevitt, wished to centralize the program in New Haven, Connecticut, where the Knights were erecting a new Supreme Headquarters. They completed construction in 1971 and invited the Saint Louis Vincentians to transfer to New Haven. Since they were unwilling to move, the provincial authorities agreed to continue the
work of the Confraternity Home Study Service in Saint Louis. The CHSS/RIB continues to function through its trust fund, support from the American Board of Catholic Missions, the Missouri Knights of Columbus (who wished to continue the work independently of the Supreme Council) and local groups of the Daughters of Isabella. Since 1971 the CHSS has concentrated on giving the Basic Course of Instruction. Over the years twelve to fifteen thousand students have enrolled annually. And since that time too, the RIB has continued to place its advertising in Missouri publications.

Although it is difficult or even impossible, to gauge the effect of Catholic information efforts, it is certain that between 1958 and 1983 nearly 16,000 people reported that they had received baptism or had made a profession of faith. Further, a great many lax or poorly instructed Catholics have profited by the pioneering work of Fallon and his successors.

Vincentian Studies Institute

In 1977, Father James Richardson, the superior general, remarked on the successes of the Vincentian Weeks being held in Spain and elsewhere. This led him to call for renewed attention to the sources of Vincentian life. The 1980 general assembly repeated the call for the entire community, particularly by the international group GIEV, “Groupe International d’Etudes Vincentiennes,” now SIEV (for Secretariat.) In the United States, members of the five provinces met to formulate goals and by-laws for an American counterpart. This group, the Vincentian Studies Institute, held its first regular meeting in 1980. The members also determined to publish a journal, Vincentian Heritage, to sponsor the present history of the Vincentian community in the United States, (with a companion work on the Daughters of Charity), and to offer workshops on Vincentian topics. The five provinces of the Daughters of Charity also participate in the work of the Institute.

Retreat Work

From early days in the United States, the confreres offered spiritual retreats to those who asked—principally to priests, to the Daughters of Charity and to seminarians. Retreats conducted by
the confreres for the laity in Community parishes appear occasion­ally to have characterized parish life in the nineteenth century. With the development of retreat movements for laity in the present century, confreres on the various mission bands also took on the preaching of retreats as time allowed, particularly during summers.

The first formal institution set apart for retreats was the Saint Lazare Retreat House in Spring Lake, Michigan, opening in 1952. So successful was the work that the facility doubled in size soon after its opening. Confreres from the Eastern Province staff the house on a rotating basis to provide the retreatants the benefit of new retreat masters. For a few years, the former seminary in Albany, New York, served as a retreat facility. In the Midwest Province, the former minor seminary, Saint Vincent’s College, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, became the Center for Evangelization. The confreres assigned there do several works, but principally provide either the space for retreats, or staff to conduct retreats and other services elsewhere. This work began in 1979.

In the Province of the West, the former novitiate in Santa Barbara, California, Saint Mary's Seminary, now serves also as a retreat house. The confreres of the house maintain the facility and conduct retreats.

Daughters of Charity

From the first days of the association of Mother Seton's daughters with the Daughters of Charity, Vincentians have had some hand in their direction, as mandated in the constitutions of the Daughters. Father Mariano Maller, the first provincial director, moved to Emmitsburg, and oversaw the formation of the sisters in the Vincentian tradition. Since then the superiors general appointed confreres from the American provinces to act as their representa­tives to the individual provinces of the Daughters. Also, Vincentians gave them annual retreats when possible, and acted as their confes­sors. The Midwest Province supplied one confrere to serve as the provincial director in Japan, 1964-1980, maintaining a Vincentian presence there begun in 1949. This work now continues with the help of the Philippine province.

Vincentians have served as chaplains in the hospitals and other health-care facilities under the direction of the Daughters of Charity, although this apostolate was not mandated by rule. At first
these chaplains mainly served the houses of the sisters, by celebrating Mass and other sacraments in their chapels. They also visited the sick, demonstrating their zeal especially during times of epidemics, such as the cholera years of 1832, 1849, and 1866. Among the earliest institutions where the confreres and the Daughters cooperated were Saint Louis Hospital in Saint Louis, Charity Hospital in New Orleans, and Mount Hope Hospital in Baltimore. As the drive toward professional credentials developed, the Vincentian chaplains took their places as members of the pastoral care departments of modern hospitals, whether under the sponsorship of the Daughters or elsewhere.

Eastern Province Vincentians took leadership in promoting the cause of Elizabeth Ann Seton, in particular from the early 1940s. A biography by Father Joseph Dirvin, and the work of the Mother Seton Guild greatly assisted in the process of her canonization as the first American-born saint.

Military Chaplaincies

Unusual as it may be to associate Vincentians with military service, Saint Vincent himself answered the call of King Louis XIII in 1636 to provide chaplains for his armies. In the United States, statistics on the work of priests as military chaplains before the first World War are practically nonexistent. Records do show that Father Charles Boglioli served Confederate troops during the Civil War, though perhaps only unofficially. Between 1860 and 1862, while stationed in Donaldsonville, Louisiana, Boglioli accompanied to battle cannoneers recruited there. Other confreres very likely answered the call of their own parishioners at that time to accompany them to battle, though government records show no official Vincentian assignments until the first World War.

During that war a dozen or so confreres served as regular or reserve military chaplains. Beginning in 1942 the provincials of the Eastern and Western Provinces and the Polish Vice-Province received requests from the Military Ordinariate to assign confreres to this work. About thirty men from those regions served in different branches of the military through the second World War. The provinces also supplied confreres, though in lesser numbers, to serve at the time of the Korean conflict and in Vietnam, either as reserve chaplains on active duty or as full-time military personnel. A few Vincentians continue in both roles.
A Week of Open-Air Lectures on the Catholic Church by a Catholic Priest
WILLOW SPRINGS Location - Main Street
July 12th to 17th
Your Questions Invited Question Box Provided
Free Every Night 8 p.m.

Motor Mission Poster, Willow Springs, Missouri, about 1938
Recent Developments

A special work of the Eastern Province is the Vincentian Migrant Mission with its headquarters at Hartford in the diocese of Kalamazoo, Michigan. The confreres and others in this work follow the migrants, chiefly Spanish-speaking, during the agricultural year, from Texas north to Michigan. Winter headquarters are in the diocese of Brownsville, Texas, where the confreres collaborate with Bishop John Fitzpatrick, a Niagara alumnus.

Another work located in Brownsville by the Southern Province is the Vincentian Evangelization Team (Misión Vicentina), a non-parochial work based in neighborhoods. Its goal focuses on the Spanish-speaking in this region of Texas.

In 1983 the Eastern Province began the Vincentian Service Corps, groups of men and women "who are desirous of living and working in the Spirit of St. Vincent de Paul by committing themselves to a minimum of a year of service." The members of the VSC, married or single, work in several types of ministry for the poor: community organization, pastoral and youth ministry, social work, hospice and soup kitchen work.

Other Works of Service

It is nearly impossible to catalogue the contributions made by American confreres whether working outside the established apostolates of their provinces or pioneering other works. Some confreres have served in the general curia of the congregation in various capacities, such as English language secretary, assistant superior general, or procurator general (Mariano Maller, Patrick McHale, John Zimmerman, William Sheldon, Robert Maloney.) It should be noted that two superiors general were American born, William Slattery and James Richardson, and one became an American citizen before returning to his native France, Charles Souvay. Some confreres have served as provincials in other provinces: Raymond Ruiz and Robert Schwane in Chile (Western Province, 1964-1969, 1969-1979), and Robert Doherty in Ecuador (Eastern Province, 1965-1969), while others have been on loan to other provinces to assist them in their apostolates.

Others have worked at individual apostolates, principally at the request of their superiors or the bishops of their respective
dioceses—pastors of mission parishes, members of seminary faculties at home (including rectors at the Josephinum, and Mount Saint Mary's) and overseas, chaplains in hospitals, prisons or asylums, or missionaries on loan to other provinces. Father Joseph Donovan of the Western Province brought the Legion of Mary to the United States in 1931 after visiting its founder and inspecting its activities in Dublin. He continued to promote its work throughout his life, particularly in the Saint Louis area. Father Frederick McGuire, a former China missionary, used his experience in directing the Mission Secretariat, an office established by the American bishops in 1950. In addition the American provinces have profited from the ministry of confreres from other provinces who came to work in the United States temporarily or permanently. Persecution or disruption in the home country accounted for the principal reason for such transfers: the Spanish revolution, the French anti-clerical period, persecutions in Mexico, the aftermaths of two world wars, and revolutionary governments in eastern Europe, China, Cuba and elsewhere.

Conclusion

This catalogue of works demonstrates the readiness of the provinces and individual confreres to engage in apostolates of whatever sort for the general purposes of devotion, evangelization, and service. As they look to the life and example of Saint Vincent de Paul, they recognize his adaptibility to changing circumstances, particularly to calls from bishops, and seek to persevere in that same spirit.