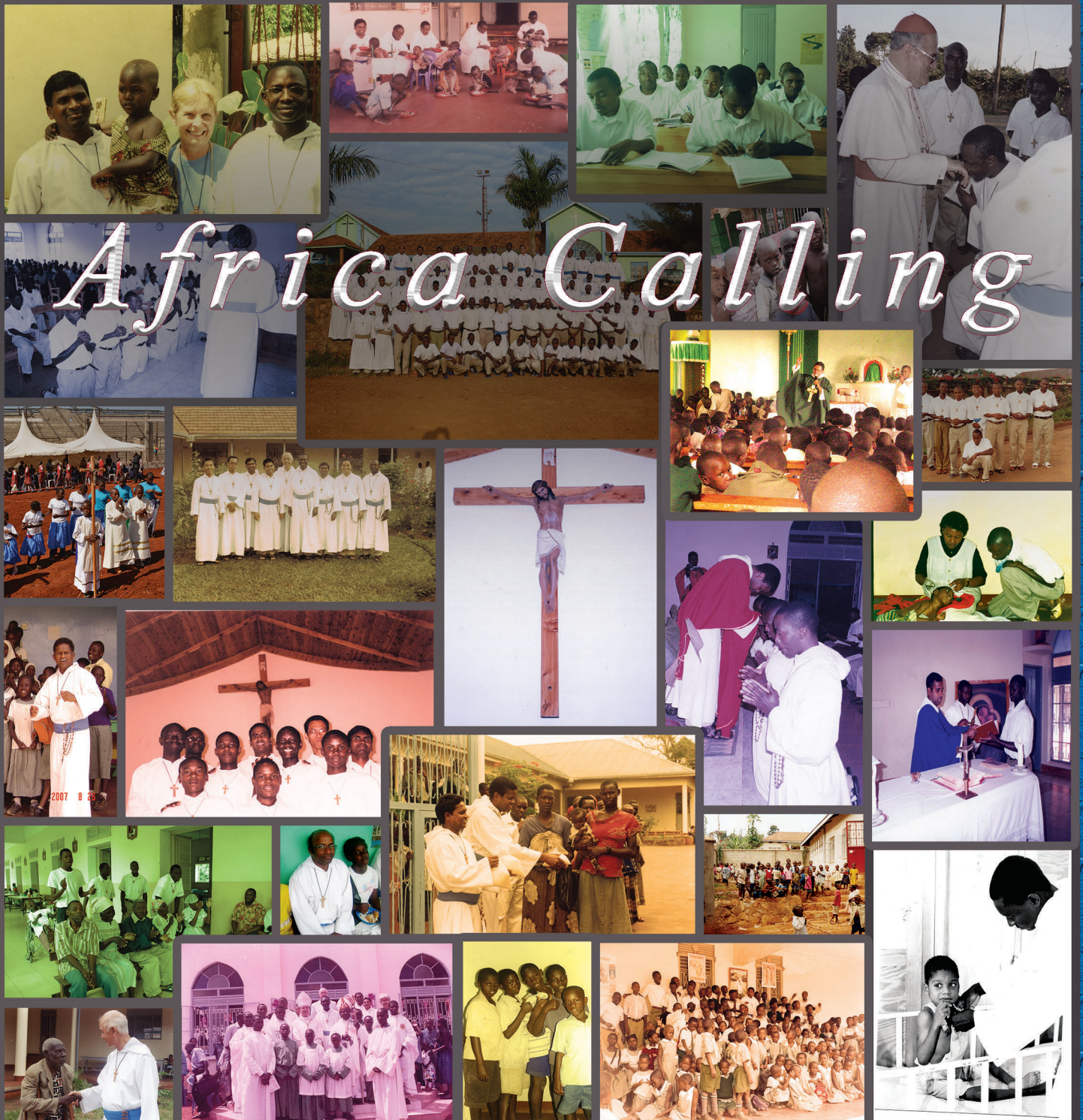


MISSIONARIES OF THE POOR



Newsletter Summer 2025



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Newsletter 2025

Silver Jubilee in Uganda

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Missionaries of the Poor in the East African country of Uganda.

It was back in September 1999 when Joseph Ssali Mugerwa became the first African to join MOP. Father Founder was so happy with Br Joseph's missionary zeal that he thought - *why can't we get more men from Africa?*

And so, in the early months of 2000, Fr Ambrose Kulandairaj and Br Murray Goodman became the first MOPs to set foot on the African continent, landing in Uganda's capital, Kampala. They were warmly welcomed by Cardinal-Archbishop Emmanuel Wamala, who eagerly supported our desire to set up a permanent presence in the *Pearl of Africa*.



Thus, on September 29th 2000, Fr Philip Rayappan and Br Marc Maurice pioneered our first MOP mission in Africa.

They were exciting, eventful years of innovation and discovery - a montage of memorable moments etched forever in my mind and heart!

I myself have very fond memories of my time (2003 to 2011) in the Uganda Mission, regarding it among the most wonderful years of my religious life.

The Uganda Mission has been an engaging encounter with a humble, gentle people whose lives are echoes of their spiritual forebears: the self-sacrificing European missionaries who seeded the faith, and the heroic, holy Martyrs of Namugongo whose blood has watered its mystical landscape.
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As Missionaries of the Poor joins the universal Church in celebrating the Holy Year with this important milestone of Uganda's silver jubilee, I would like us to pause and ponder two spiritual points on this mission accomplished - *reflection, and, prophecy.*

First, reflection: to look back on the past, not with wistful nostalgia, but with profound gratitude at what marvels the Lord Jesus has done through us – the multitudes of the poor served with his beatitudes, the

thousands of lives touched by our witness, the countless souls saved by the sweat and tears of hundreds of MOP Brothers who have passed through the gates of Our Lady of Good Counsel monastery at Mutundwe. Indeed, the kingdom of God was upon us!

Second, prophecy: to look beyond, and behold a future that's unfolding, with total trust in the power and providence of God, confident that what the Lord has already done, he will do even greater and go ever farther with us in the years



ahead. All we need do is to keep faith, nurture hope, and live love!

It is my prayer that the good and merciful Lord continue to shine his radiant light upon all the Brothers and the poor in our Uganda Mission as we celebrate this unique Holy Year of grace - *Jubilate Deo Omnis Terra!*

Fr Hayden Augustine, MOP
Our Lady of Visitation Monastery
Ruai-Chokaa, Nairobi, Kenya



Last September 17th 2024, was the 40th anniversary of Faith Centre. Established on Fr Founder's 45th birthday, it is the first apostolate of Missionaries of the Poor. After ministering to the poor of Eventide Home in MOP's earliest years, Fr Ho Lung felt that it was time to have our own

shelter for the homeless, where we can realize our unique charism, vision, and mission of service to the least of our brothers and sisters with Christ's beatitudes and works of mercy.

The first residents were all former inmates of Eventide Home

- men and women, boys and girls - whom Fr Founder selected and settled into one big yard nestled in the gritty *Southside* community in inner-city Kingston. At Faith Centre, he envisaged the poor helping the poor, living together in peace and harmony in the name of Jesus who rescued them from destitution and abandonment.

Added to this Faith Centre yard of 32 residents, were 20 single mothers in a project weaving floor and table mats; 12 young male adults in a shoemaking project; and 18 teenage boys who became the first students of St. Ephrem's Boys School. And what a noisy, playful, joyful yard was Faith Centre!

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Faith Centre is the template for all MOP apostolates worldwide. Firmly imbedded in a community notorious for gangs and drugs, it has been a haven of Christ's mercy and love for thousands of homeless persons over these past 41 years.

Though the boys' school and employment projects are no more, Faith Centre at present houses 68 (with a waiting list of 70) adult male residents with various mental and physical disabilities,

and is still a yard full of joyful play and laughter. And while thousands of visitors and volunteers have brought the good news of Christ's care for the poor, they have also been ministered to by the simple faith, hope, and love of its residents living in profound unity and love in the heart of the Kingston ghetto.

Capably supervised by veteran MOP builder Fr Maximo Medina, Faith Centre has been recently undergoing much needed renovation works to the kitchen,

pantry, medical dispensary, Brothers' dining and changing rooms, and the construction of three additional dorms.

MOP is most grateful to the Mayor of Kingston and its municipal offices (KSAMC) for literally "paving the way" by cementing the entire compound last year. We are also thankful to the *Sandals Foundation* who kicked off this renovation phase with a generous financial gift.

Mention must also be made of Timothy Benjamin Davies, head of the Atlanta Builders Group which has been coming annually to Jamaica to build for MOP for 30 years! This year they did all the roofing work at Faith Centre.

We also appreciate Stefan and Andre, Sasha and Bobby, Rague Duncan and his team, who have all made major contributions to building construction in the MOP Jamaica Mission over the years, including this project.

As MOP continues to bring Christ's beatitudes to countless homeless persons in all our missions, we commend Fr Founder for his inspiration in planting this first seed of God's mercy not only in the heart of *Southside*, Kingston, but into the lives of thousands of Christ's little ones the world over.

Br Saroj Kumar Lakra, MOP Brother-in-Charge of Faith Centre Kingston, Jamaica



44th Foundation Anniversary of the Missionaries of the Poor



Greetings in Christ Dear Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters!

Today the Missionaries of the Poor have arrived at the forty-fourth anniversary of their foundation. Forty-four years of service to the poor is no mean feat, for it speaks of many years of fidelity to the voice of the Spirit calling us to be true disciples and imitators of the Lord Jesus. It speaks of a God who in spite of our weaknesses calls us to a heart filled with imitation of the Lord Jesus.

Therefore, we thank God today for the call made to Father Founder 44 years ago and his obedience to that call. We also thank God for the hundreds of other young men who also heard that call and followed the founder to establish this religious community which we all love, and through which we have been faithful to the commandment to love as Christ has loved us.

Fidelity to the call however, demands of us that we listen very carefully to the voice of the Spirit which calls us to dream of ways in which we can be more faithful to the call. The history of salvation tells us that God very often calls us to dream new dreams as the world in which we live changes. If we stop dreaming, we become stagnant, and then we die. May the Spirit protect us from stagnation so that our Institute may see many more anniversaries, and help many others to become true imitators of the Lord Jesus.

Thank you, and may God's blessings be upon us all!

Most Rev. Joseph E. Harris, C.S.Sp.
Pontifical Commissary
Campagnano di Roma, ITALIA

Updates of Renovation of Faith Center and Bethlehem Chapel Complex



On 15 June 2025, six deacons of Missionaries of the Poor were ordained to the priesthood in parrocchia di San Giovanni Battista, Campagnano Di Roma, Italia, by Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu.



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