

Mission Connections

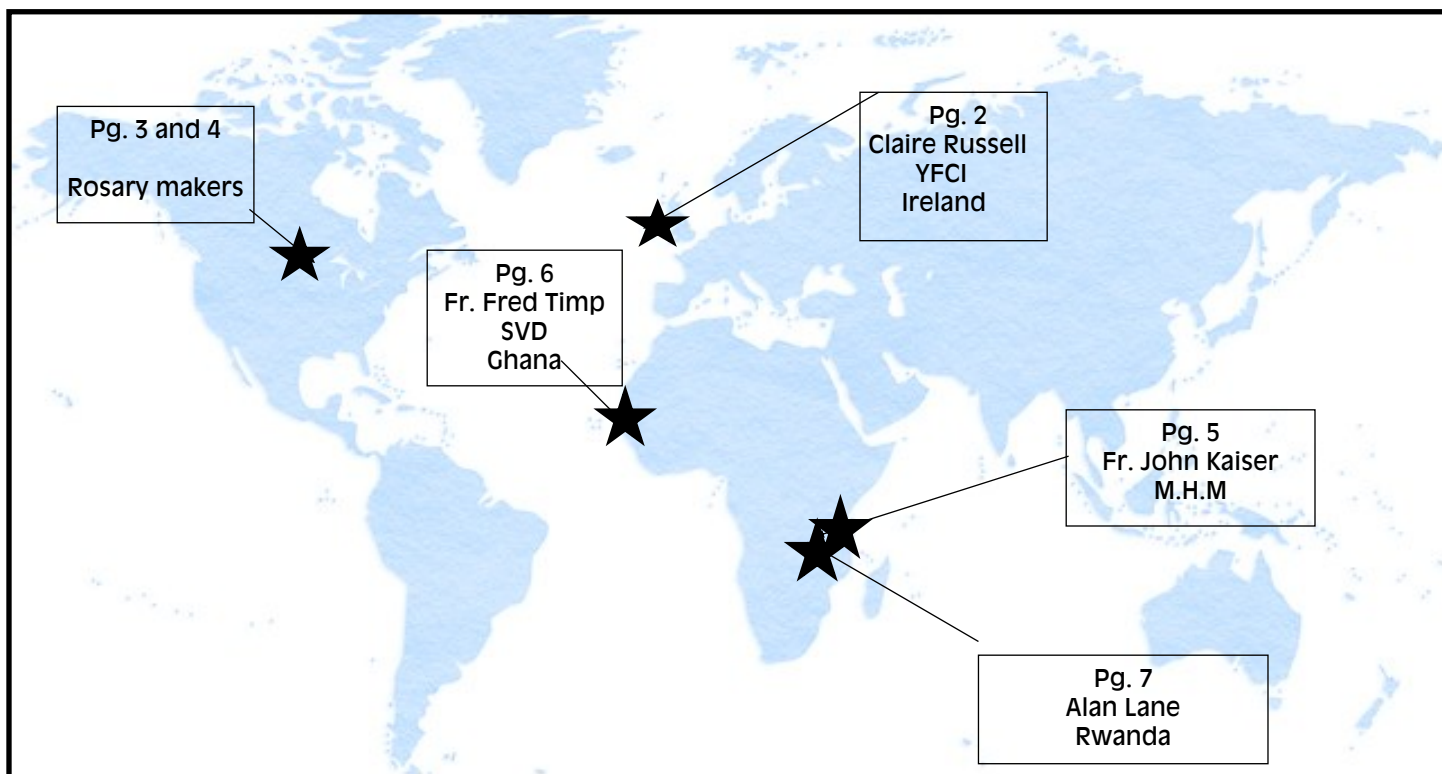
Volume #84

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"Pray for us that we may be a sign of the love of Christ for our people."

Blessed Stanley Rother



From Whom and Where in the World do our stories come from?

Meet Our New Missioner!

Hello Friends; my name is Claire Russell and while my family currently lives in Cold Spring, I'm originally from Litchfield. I am the oldest of four and I have been a missionary for Youth for Christ International in Ireland since 2019. Missionary work runs in the blood, you might say. My uncle was a missionary to the Indigenous People in northern Canada and later to the Philippines.

It was his influence in my life that enabled me to hear my own call that the Lord had placed on mine. I remember going with him on one of his travels when I was young, and that ignited my passion for ministry. Later, when I was 18, I had the privilege of travelling to Ireland for ministry and while there, the Lord planted a deep love in my heart for that country and her people. As a result of that trip, I attended Northcentral University, a Bible and Theology school in Minnesota, in order to better

If you know of a missionary from our diocese, and/or a missionary who has served with our diocese or you yourself have actively served in mission, please reach out and come in for a visit! We are continuously adding new names and faces to our website, historical documents and Missioner Wall. We are proud of you all!!



equip myself to serve. I graduated with a degree in Intercultural Studies (the missionary degree there) and a minor in both Bible/Theology and Koine Greek. Currently I am hoping to get Irish citizenship within the next few months in order to remain here for the long haul. The Lord has been opening some incredible doors in Ireland and I'm excited to tell you about them! While about 75% of people living in Ireland would consider themselves Christian, only 11% believe Jesus was a real person. Crazy right? Our mission became clear: bridge the gap. School retreats became a perfect avenue for this. After all, what better way to enable young people to encounter Jesus, participate in their faith, and learn a bit more about who Jesus is than enabling them to participate in their faith through games, activities, and interactive

prayer? We've been able to expand this aspect and provide confirmation retreats for younger students as well! But that's not all that's been happening. Recently I was approached by my parish priest who wanted to offer a space for me to use to facilitate the parish young people in their own faith journey's. It has been an absolute privilege to walk alongside Mullingar young people in their formation process. As the youth group gains more and more traction, my hope is that this space becomes a meeting place for young people where they get to participate in each other's lives, encounter Jesus, and really grow deeper in their faith. A goal I have is to bring the young people on a pilgrimage where they can meet other young people from around the world who are also passionate about their faith. We're not quite there yet, but baby steps. Some other areas of ministry I am able to facilitate and participate in are sacramental prep for the younger students. Praise God for the youth space where we can run some retreats and other activities for them to engage in their faith and learn more about this journey. I am also training students who would like to become altar servers and running a youth Mass every Saturday vigil. It fills my heart with immense hope to see the rising generation earnestly seeking the Lord at the Eucharistic table.

An area around which I am particularly passionate about is Biblical literacy. Over the past few months I have been able to develop and deliver for my parish a Biblical Literacy Course which made reading Sacred Scripture engaging, interactive, and accessible. My aim is to continue to teach this course for other groups around the country. I LOVE being a missionary and walking with these young people here in Ireland! I look forward to sharing our journey with you all- Claire

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Donations for any of the missionaries, mission connections and our relationships may be made in care of the Mission Office.

**Please direct comments, suggestions and articles to director@stcloudmissionoffice.com

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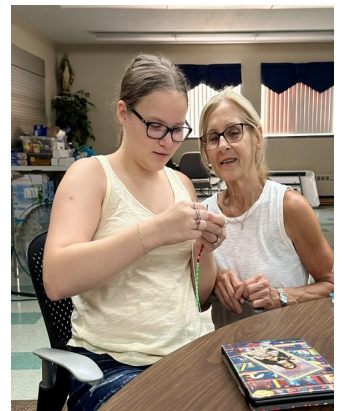
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One Bead At a Time....



After reading a Catholic magazine one evening while on the road for work, Marlyn was looking for something that he could do to fill his time away from family and home. Then, in late fall of 1978, Marlyn created on his own, 47 wire rosaries which he gave away as gifts to family, KC's, and a CCD class. Little did he know that he had begun a metro-wide ministry that has quite literally reached all corners of the world. Mary Fasen, who inherited the ministry from Marlyn in 2017, is the regional representative responsible for four individual groups of rosary makers who make rosaries all year long. Each group has a separate tab and file in a binder where all rosary types; quantities made by individuals; distribution sites;... are kept on record since 1978. Those who have received in 2026 are: Hospitals; Nursing homes; Homeless shelters; Homeland Security; Churches; Schools; Mission Office; Prisons; Hispanic Community; Military; Mexico;

Puerto Rico; South America; Haiti; Cuba; Canada; Alaska; India; China; Japan; Africa; Poland; Hungary; Philippines; Russia; New Zealand; World Missions; Viet Nam; Afghanistan; Sri Lanka; Bangladesh; Legion of Mary. The Knights of Columbus #961, donate the funding for the supplies from Our Lady's Rosary Makers, which include the beads, crucifixes, cording, as well as the funds for the shipping. Ingenuity has helped the rosary makers know that recycled and refurbished old umbrella pieces have become the cost effective and efficient way of threading beads into the decades. These four groups along with Marlyn have collectively made over a **half million** rosaries to date. The Fasen Family group began making rosaries in 1996 when Marlyn became acquainted with Mary's step Father-in-law through St. Augustine's/ St. Mary's Knights of Columbus. The St. Rose of Lima Group began in 2018 at St. Francis Xavier in Sartell by Nita who put a notice about rosary making in the bulletin and the ladies started coming. Jill Nessa was the original member to the group. Angela, is Mary's daughter-in-law and she has been making rosaries with her husband Carl and his family for over 25 years. All four of their children also make rosaries, every night, while they read a chapter in a novel before their bedtime. Joyce and Althea aren't sure exactly how long they have been members of the group; "4 or 5 years, 5 or 6 years? We just enjoy coming." There are twin sisters, Jane and June, who have been coming for 5 years and joined the group because their mother's name was Rose. They have brought along 14 year old, Andy, whom they are mentoring in more ways than she may be aware of. Nita, who is originally from Texas and brought the rosary making interest with her, also has the middle name of Rose. There are currently sixteen women who come twice a month, the first and third Thursday from 9-11 am at Xavier Hall to work together in a group. Mary noted that "Unity is key for us when we are doing our ministry together. We can share our faith. We share life experiences. We share joys and challenges. We pray with eachother and for eachother." Mary added, "I would hate to see the ministry of rosary making die away and be lost. It does take some time to learn; but only two- 2 hour sessions is all it takes. Uniting people in a common prayer around the world is huge."



Uniting the World in Prayer



Often times as we are approaching the beginning of the school year and World Mission Month (October), we start receiving requests from around the country for World Mission Rosaries to be used in Faith Formation and Youth Ministry programs, and Catholic School classrooms. Thankfully we have many individuals and groups who are creating for us all year long, but are also at the ready to supply us if a special request arises. This September 24th in St. Louis, Archbishop Fulton Sheen, previous National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the U.S., will be beatified. Archbishop Sheen 75 years ago created the

World Mission Rosary as a way to unite the world in prayer, by representing the 5 regions of the world with 5 different colored decades. Green for the Grasslands of Africa; Red for the Americas; Blue for the Islands of Oceania; White for Europe; Yellow for Asia. The National Office has asked that at least 75,000 World Mission Rosaries be created for the beatification so that every person participating in liturgy be able to pray together to honor Archbishop Sheen. With the help of our rosary makers to whom we put out the special request, the Mission Office has pledged 6,000 World Mission Rosaries to be sent to St. Louis for this special celebration.

We have received about 2,300 rosaries from Mary Fasen's groups so far.

Another group of @ 15 women and men (some are ex-officio) who create rosaries for the Mission Office year round are the Sacred Heart/St. Luke Rosary Makers from the Tri-Parishes of Boyceville, Elmwood and Spring Valley in Wisconsin. Coordinated by Cindy Schlegel from Baldwin, WI., Cindy was already making rosaries on her own as was a friend of hers, so they then taught a class per request in Spring Valley as there was so much interest. Boyceville then followed and the rest is history. Cindy noted that "The Boyceville group are the 'Go-Getters' led by two ladies in particular who only make World Mission Rosaries at about 225 each per month!" The Sacred Heart/St. Luke Rosary Makers have been together since 2015 and have collectively sent out over 60,000 rosaries. The average age of the members is 65; the oldest member is 77 and the youngest is 55. The group gets together once a month to fill the variety of requests that they receive from around the country as well as from around the world, most recently Ghana; Sudan; India; and the Mission Office! *We have received about 800 rosaries from Cindy's groups so far.* These World Mission Rosaries will continue to be created and counted, boxed and shipped to St. Louis by September 1st for the beatification celebration.

Thank you all for your time and your talent and for sharing your prayers with everyone around the world!



Servant of God

Last August 2025, I made my 14th journey to Kenya with Mary Mahoney Weaver, Michael Mahoney and Christopher Kaiser; the niece and nephews of Fr. John Anthony Kaiser M.H.M; at the time marking the 25th anniversary of his murder and death. This journey was more of a pilgrimage for me, an intentional opportunity to honor one of our very own missionaries, Fr. John; a highly regarded and respected missionary who put his heart, mind and soul into the service of others and was martyred because of it.



Our connections to Kenya run deep, are multigenerational and can be traced back to when many of our missionaries were first being sent from the Diocese of St. Cloud to East Africa in the early 1960's.

Those missionaries were members of the Mill Hill Fathers and Brothers; the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers; the Maryknoll Lay Missioners; the Franciscan Sisters; the Benedictine Fathers and Brothers; and more recently the Benedictine Volunteer Corp. Each and every one of these individuals paved the way for all of us to actively live out our Baptismal Call to Mission- to be a Heart of Mercy, a Voice of Hope and the Hands of Justice just like Fr. John, and to continue to make connections and build relationships with our brothers and sisters around the world.

Fr. John was and is a very significant national figure in Kenya- a voice of justice for those who were marginalized and vulnerable, and most especially for the women and children. He is an example of a prophet of old; someone who was truly in love with Christ; seeking to bring Peace, Justice and Solidarity through his service to the Church he loved and most especially to the beautiful people of his parish and country he promised to never willingly leave. He surrendered his freedom to help the oppressed and he literally lay down his life for his friends.



In the small town of Lolgorian, as the four of us joined in the mile long procession with nearly 3,000 others, the family members led and carried a memorial cross, portrait and banner of Fr. John to the church and new mausoleum. Many who gathered knew Fr. John personally: ministered with him; served with him; fed him; defended him; protected him. Songs of justice, peace and love in Swahili filled the air for Fr. John- "When they killed Kaiser they thought that would be the end of the Gospel but instead the Gospel remained alive and strong." Hands were joined together and 3,000 people now became brother and sister united in song and prayer. As for Fr. John's on-going impact on the life of Kenyans in the 25+ years since he was murdered: more than 400 children have been given the name John Kaiser; Fr.

Lawrence Otieno who was an altar server of Fr. John's became a Mill Hill missionary priest now serving in South Africa; Sr. Mary Francis Wangare has continued Fr. John's ministry of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation with the marginalized in Kenya; A Vocational School and Training Center were named for Fr. John.

As for we Central Minnesotans, we keep the story of Fr. John alive by: the Fr. John Kaiser Social Justice Scholarship Fund; the Fr. John Kaiser Anniversary Celebration; the Fr. John Kaiser Adopt a Highway Program; Mission Education in schools and parishes @ Fr. John and our other beloved missionaries and mission connections; the Promotion of writings, resources and information on Fr. John Kaiser; and the Pursuit of Canonization for Fr. John Kaiser.

Fr. John understood what it meant to be a missionary- a person who is selfless and willing to carry on the work that Christ has given to each and every one of us, under any circumstance and no matter how difficult it may be. Even in his humbleness, I think Fr. John would like all of us to not forget what he did to inspire each of us to live a life worthy of being a missionary disciple.

Elizabeth M. Brown

Updates From Missioners



Just a week ago, my husband Travis and I returned from a ten day journey to Ghana West Africa to visit one of our beloved missionaries, Fr. Fred Timp, SVD. Fr. Fred and I have been trying for my 16+ years in the Mission Office, to coordinate a journey to visit he, his wonderful friends and all of his ministry sites that have been a part of his life and ministry in Ghana for the past 43 years. Fr. Fred was born in Freeport, Minnesota in 1945. He has two brothers and two sisters and is the second born of the siblings. The family owned a small dairy farm where they enjoyed living simply yet abundantly with what the land and seasons provided. His father also worked at the Kraft cheese plant in Melrose and so

did Fr. Fred when he was old enough and that's where he learned to like bleu cheese! Fr. Fred was ordained at Techy in Illinois on December 18th, 1971 and was assigned in the U.S. for 11 years—2 years as a teacher at the minor seminary and 9 years in vocational recruitment. In October 1983, Fr. Fred left for Ghana where he spent his first 6 months in language learning at Nkolo. May 1984, Fr. Fred went to his first assignment in the rural Afram Plains, where he had 1 quasi parish (St. Mary's) and a 1/2 quasi parish with lots of miles in between. In August 1988, he became the dean of the Major Seminary in Tamale where he taught until 1993: Intro to Christianity; Intro to Liturgy; and Intro to the Bible. He oversaw 25 seminarians and found the position challenging but also very rewarding as he witnessed their growth within the Church. From the major seminary, Fr. Fred went to the parish of Chereponi where he focused on primary evangelization for 10 years. The parish was comprised of four tribes with diverse languages. Fr. Fred collaborated with an assistant and an Anufo catechist to translate vital religious texts into Komba—this included essential Bible passages, Mass prayers, and common Catholic prayers. Over ten years, they successfully translated Sunday readings, Solemnities, and key Mass prayers, while advancing evangelization efforts. These years brought many joyful baptisms in previously unreached villages. Fr. Fred described his time in Chereponi and later Saboba as his most fulfilling, developing deep connections with the locals. Our journey with Fr. Fred in all of these villages were door to door meet and greets and reconnecting with old friends while enjoying a calabash of Pito (Homemade beer) and sharing traditional local cuisine. What a blessing to witness the deep love and connection in these relationships Fr. Fred has with his friends and parishioners. When I asked Fr. Fred what his vocational call as a missionary has meant to him he answered, "As a missionary, it is my task to proclaim the gospel to those who have not heard it or to those who have not heard it well enough to understand it." Travis shared that one of the highlights of his journey with Fr. Fred was witnessing him celebrating and attending two back to back masses with the people in one of his home parishes, Saboba. "I have attended a number of Catholic churches in Minnesota but these liturgies in Saboba were honestly the most uplifting and spirit filled. Each mass was about 2 hours long but with all the joyful singing, dancing, drumming, and everyone willingly participating, it was easy to feel welcome and grateful. Fr. Fred looked so at peace and so at home."

Though more active and busy than ever, Fr. Fred has been in Accra at McCarthy Hill where he has lived with the retired SVD Fathers and Brothers since 2008. He served as Provincial Secretary from 2008-2016 and from 2016 to the present, he is serving as the Treasurer and the Provincial Archivist.

Thank you, Fr. Fred for providing an amazing experience to journey with you! Elizabeth and Travis



Updates From Missioners

Dear Friends,

It has been some time since we last wrote, and much has changed in our life and work here in Muhanga, Rwanda. We are grateful for your continued support and prayers over the years, and we wanted to share a fuller picture of where things stand. Our foundational work continues. We still walk alongside vulnerable members of the community through personal visits and practical assistance. The children's program, now running for nearly two years under Claudine's steady care, remains a bright and consistent presence. The women's group likewise continues to offer support and companionship to women facing difficult circumstances. One of the most visible new developments is the gallery we opened about a year and a half ago. Nearly three thousand people have come through its doors. It is a simple space that celebrates local culture and creativity, and it has also become a quiet place where visitors can sit, share tea and conversation, and feel welcomed. Many who come are from the surrounding rural areas; the gallery has become a small bridge between daily life and a sense of shared beauty. As the work has grown, we have also felt it right to name it more clearly. What began as foundation work is now called the Ubumuntu Project — a word that speaks of our shared humanity. The shift reflects a desire to serve not only individuals in need but the wider community and district in a more intentional way. You can see more of this unfolding vision at www.theubumuntuproject.org. Among the newer efforts is the Mirrors Project, an initiative to place images of dignity, daily life, and cultural beauty along the roads of Muhanga so that people might see themselves reflected with respect and care. We are also beginning to shape two longer-term places of welcome: a Sanctuary House meant to offer women and children a safe space for rest, and a House of Light — a non-religious gathering place where people can come together, pray, share, and simply be. These are still in early stages, but they point toward the kind of presence we hope to offer over time. On the creative side, last year I completed an audio-visual film titled *I Met God, She's Black*. It is available on the website, and we continue to hope it may one day grow into a fuller feature-length work. Personally, there has been much life as well. My wife and I's daughter Tona turns two on August 17th. Claudine also welcomed her third child, a daughter named Tehilla, last year. These small lives have brought deep joy into our days. After five years of working side by side in nearly everything, Claudine and I are also finding a new rhythm. As the work expands, she is carrying the primary responsibility for the



children's program, the women's group, the ongoing foundation efforts, and the daily life of the gallery. I am giving more of my energy to the Mirrors Project, to film and production work, and to the newer initiatives taking shape. We remain partners in the larger vision, just with a clearer division of the daily labor. I am deeply thankful for the years she has walked so closely with me, and for the faithfulness she continues to bring. We ask for your prayers as we move forward in this next season — still together, still committed to the people here, yet learning how to carry the work in a slightly different way.

May the Lord continue to bless the quiet, steady efforts that unfold day by day in this place. With gratitude,

Alan and Claudine

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100th Anniversary

‘One in Christ, United in Mission’

October 18th, 2026

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