

Mission Connections

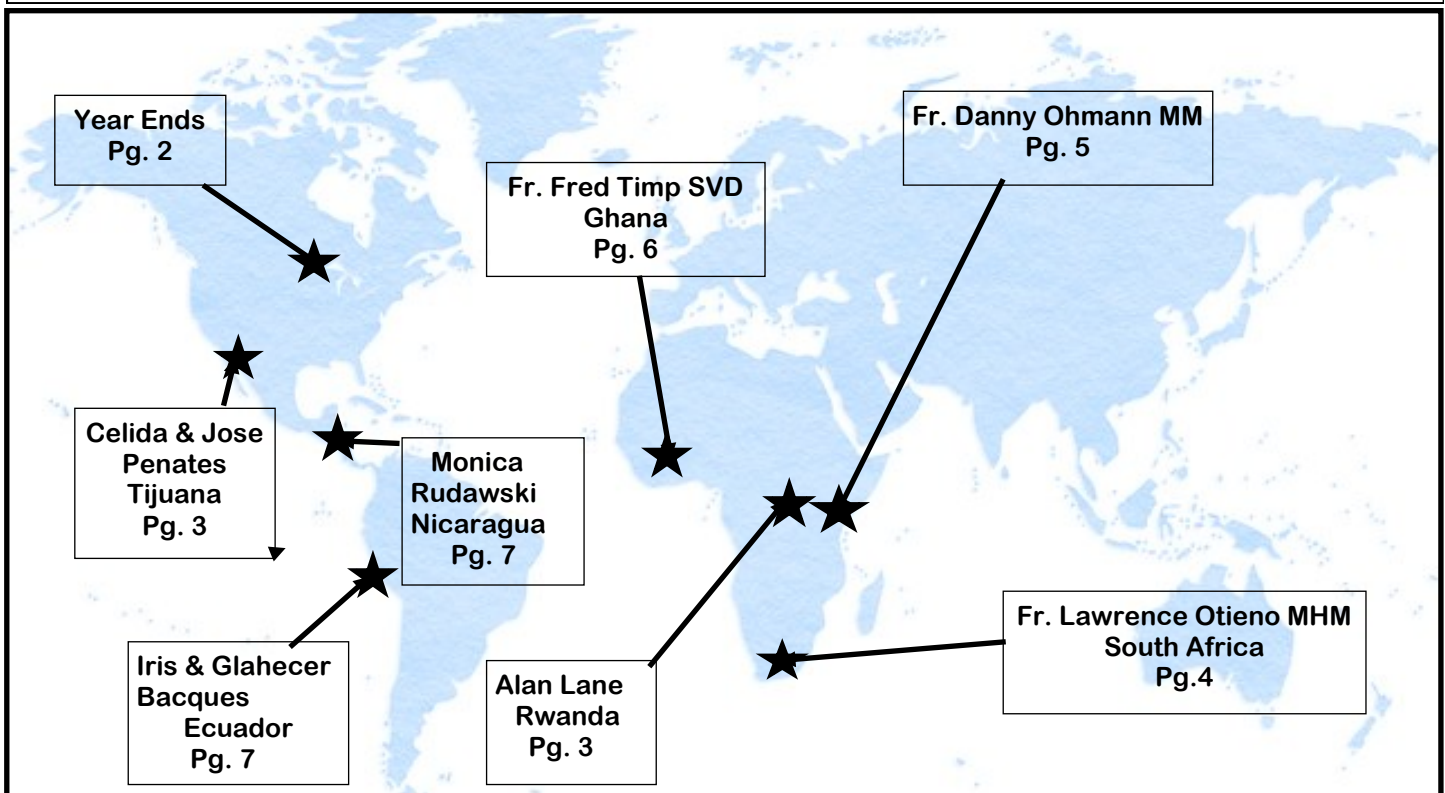
Volume #82

Winter 2026



“We don’t need to wish our friends, ‘Peace be with you.’ Peace is already with them. We only need to help them cultivate the habit of touching peace in each moment.”

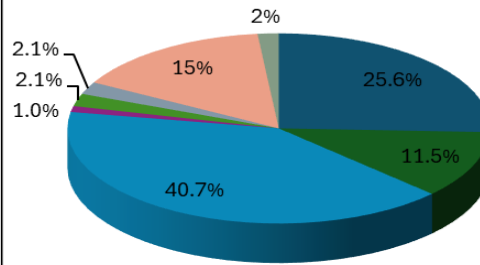
Thich Nhat Hanh



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

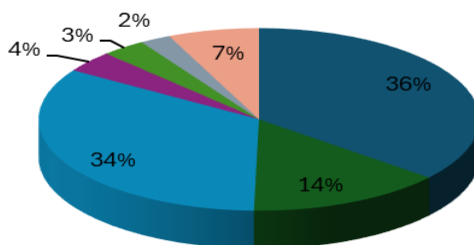
2025 Year End Report

INCOME



- Catholic Relief Services (25.6%)
- Pontifical Mission Societies (11.5%)
- MCP & Mission Support (40.7%)
- Mission Groups, Education & Promotion (1%)
- Fair Trade (2.1%)
- Mass Stipends (2.1%)
- Office & Administrative income (15%)
- Estates (2%)

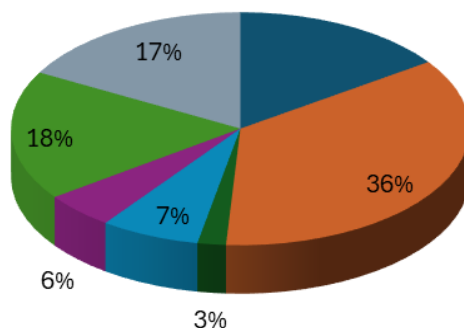
OUT-GOING



- Catholic Relief Services (33%)
- Pontifical Mission Societies (14.2%)
- MCP & Mission Support (33.2%)
- Mission Groups, Education & Promotion (8.3%)
- Fair Trade (4.2%)
- Mass Stipends (2.3%)
- Office & Administrative expenses (6.7%)

2025 was another great year for the St. Cloud Mission Office as we were able to participate in many wonderful experiences and connect with so many of you amazing individuals! We would like to extend a huge thank you to all our amazing donors, supporters, and partners in our diocese and around the world! It is through your continued enthusiasm for Mission that we are able to do all that we do!

Time Spent in Various Areas of Ministry



- CRS (15.3%)
- PMS, MCP & Mission Support (35.7%)
- Mass Intentions (2%)
- Fair Trade Sales (7%)
- Mission Groups (5%)
- Mission Education & Promotion (18%)
- Administrative & office maintenance (17%)

MISSION CONNECTIONS is published by the St. Cloud Mission Office, 11—8th Ave. South, St. Cloud MN 56301 (320) 251-1100.

It is distributed to those within the Diocese of St. Cloud and to others concerned with the mission of the Global Church, Global Solidarity and Catholic Social Teachings. There is no charge for this publication but tax deductible contributions for our educational work are gratefully accepted.

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

**The mailing list is managed by Carolina Walz
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**For further information about the work of the Mission Office contact Elizabeth Brown at director@stcloudmissionoffice.com

Updates from Missioners



Dear brothers and sisters, may God's love reign in each of you.

A little bit of ministry. This November, we joined a small group of people who, on their own initiative, want to express their faith and make it visible to other neighbors. Each night we visit a pre-arranged home and offer a simple prayer. Afterwards the host family offer some snacks. For me as a missionary, this is the most important moment because we can meet them and to share life. In some cases, the host family doesn't attend any church regularly. Reaching these families specifically is something I really like about this group. This activity will continue until December 20th. We'll conclude with the traditional Mexican Christmas *Posada* in which we hope to gather many neighbors for a lovely and unforgettable time together. After a pause in ministry and several unexpected events, we are resuming our ministry in the Tres Piedras neighborhood. How joyful it is to study the Bible with the children and youth! It gives me great hope to see some teenagers still coming, both excited and shy. Seeing these children and

young people again, seeing them run, play, and laugh freely, seeing them each go off to their respective groups to learn about God, is what truly fills me with joy. I like that I happily start singing and doing icebreaker activities. Then José leads a Bible lesson that's very appropriate for teenagers. I like seeing their enthusiasm and the effort they make to answer José's questions. I like that the Bible study with teenagers brings José to life and transforms him into an extroverted and dynamic man. If you were to ask me, "Where did you most feel God's presence?" I would answer, "When I saw the teenagers participating and José filled with joy." In those two moments, I felt the biblical phrase, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" Mathew 4:17. InnerCHANGE, our missionary order, is undergoing a major and hopeful transition. We are going to implement a new vision for the next five years. We call it "the North Star," which means neighbors serving other neighbors with God's love. The North Star will be an important instrument that will tell us if we are going in the right direction. We have also identified six strategic priorities that will help us fulfill our purpose. Our greatest desire is that all our communities around the world, with good intentions, being very creative, and with deep prayer, will find different ways to make visible the transforming kingdom of God and his great love for us. We send a fraternal hug, with much love, to all those who, in one way or another, are part of our missionary life. May God bless you abundantly.

Célida and Jose Penate

Hi Elizabeth-

As far as the work itself goes, we have had around 2000 people come through the gallery since it opened in March. We are open twice a week for a few hours a day (something we would like to expand if we receive some grants), but even with the limited time open it has been very successful, and meaningful, both for the staff and our visitors (who we offer hospitality in our office after they visit the gallery in the form of something to eat, drink, and watch on YouTube, as well as conversation. On a personal note it has warmed my heart in a way I can't quite explain when I see people come, mostly from the village, who take time out of their day to "see themselves" in the gallery, and to feel "loved" by the staff.

Foundation wise, we reduced the overall adult number of beneficiaries we help support (now 16), but we started a kids program (ages 6-11) that we have in our office every Saturday morning for two hours, helping them with self-esteem, self-confidence, and other things such as exposing them to subjects about life that aren't often covered in school. We currently have 15 kids in the program. Claudine runs it and does an outstanding job.

We have a small women's group that gets together every Tuesday with Claudine and one other staff member, helping the women with communicating with their children and spouses, cultivating ideas, and so on. And two staff visit patients at the local hospital twice a week offering companionship and some food.

Hard to say in some ways what it all means, but we find that everything we are doing is in some way helping those we interact with.

I hope all is well there. I Zoom with my mother most Friday's.

That has been a significant blessing.

Tona is almost 16 months and a joy to be around 97% of the time.

Thanks again for continuing to keep us in mind.
Nohedi Nziza (Merry Christmas)

Alan



Updates From Missioners



A THANK YOU NOTE

17th, Dec, 2025

God's grace has enabled us to make it to this festive season. To him, be the glory. As this year comes to an end, it is good to look back in order to rediscover every blessing we have received and be grateful. This is the goal of this report.

On the 26th, November, 2024, I was transferred to St. Anne Parish to continue with the missionary work. The parish is located in a remote village, covering 16, mission stations with varied distance. Road network around the area is poor and impassible in the season of rains. The parish serves Tswana tribe and the immigrants, mostly from the African

continent. They are friendly and kind and I am happy to be among them for missionary work. I'm learning Tswana language (Setswana) and culture.

The main task in this parish is primary evangelization. I travel a lot to different villages to meet people and to invite them to encounter Christ in the Church and sacraments. It is an honour to get this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the diocese and Christians of St. Cloud for their generous support that enables me to bring the good news of Christ to those who are far from the means of grace. Being a remote area where poverty is the order of the day, missionary work in it requires regular presence, resources, energy, good health and patience.

I am very grateful for the support I received in December 2024 and in Aug, 2025. I bought a second hand car for apostolic work with support sent in December 2025. This instrument of hope helps me to visit the sick, the elderly, the youths and transport food for the orphans and families in great needs. Besides that, additional support that I received in the course of the year was spent on car maintenance, insurance, petrol and my upkeep.

All these have made a great difference in the new parish. I could have not managed without the support. I am now settled and the missionary work is slowly bearing fruit. 6 couples celebrated the sacrament of matrimony, 43 youths received the sacraments of baptism and 1st Holy Communion in different mission stations. Slowly Christians are starting to attend Sunday masses. Other members are expressing the desire to take participate in life and mission of the church by accepting to serve as catechists and as members of parish pastoral council. There is hope for the better and it be realized at God's own time. Once more thanks for the support. May the Lord who sends and accompanies us in the mission bless and fill you with joy. I keep you, your family and Christians of your diocese in my prayers. Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2026.

Fr. Lawrence Dominic Otieno.



Updating our Missioner Wall and Historical Documents

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!

Updates from Missioners

Greetings, *Elizabeth and staff,* January, 2026

Accolades and stories continue during Fr Danny's 70th Jubilee year. Michael Gijira, a university graduate of the Watatulu Education program, sent the following email: "Dear Father Danny, I write to you with great joy and heartfelt congratulations as you celebrate your 70th Jubilee of priesthood. This is truly a remarkable testament to your unwavering faith, loving service, and deep dedication to God and to many of us especially to Watatulu. Over the years, your ministry has touched countless lives through your compassion, wisdom, education, health services and spiritual leadership. You have been a guiding light to many. We love you so much, may Jesus our Lord bless you. With love, Michael."

A favorite story (which changes depending on who tells it) speaks to the bond that Fr Danny formed with the Lay Missioners over many years. Dr Tom Temme, a volunteer in the 1980s, held a vaccination clinic for the Watatulu. The two men stayed in one tent and the nurses in another. One night the women were very noisy, until all was quiet. Tom asked why it became so quiet. Fr Danny responded that there were lions around the tent. But he said not to worry - we can outrun the women. He later said that he roared like a lion just to quiet the nurses.

Danny often talks about Julius Nyerere, the Founder of Tanzania and President from 1961 to 1985. A devout Catholic and a good friend of Maryknoll, he attended Mass daily and was known for his frequent fasting. Today Tanzania is not as peace-loving as it was then. You may have heard about the riots during the recent October election when thousands of people were killed, and all services, including schools, markets, bus stands, and banks were closed for a week. Deo reported that there were no riots or deaths in his district.



Fr Danny in his Sunday best



Michael, Principal Sr Martha, and Deo with students at St Leo's

Deo and our students are preparing for the new academic year beginning in January. One student graduated from St Leo's in December leaving eight in elementary school. Three students finished four years in secondary schools; thirteen remain. We have a record thirteen in various colleges across the country, and one in a Seminary.

Fr Danny joins us in wishing you a peaceful New Year. He thanks you, and prays for you and your families every day.

Ruthana Roy

Updates from Missioners

Dear Relatives and Friends,

I'm kind of late with my Christmas letter this year, but better late than never – I hope you agree. Even if you don't see this until after Christmas, I want to wish you a Blessed and Merry Christmas. May you experience the love of God for you in send his Son as our Savior and Redeemer as you celebrate this great feast with family and loved ones. I will remember you in a special way as I celebrate my Christmas Masses and remember your love and friendship over the years.

This past year has been one of joy and happiness for me. Here in Ghana things have gone well for me and I have been enjoying my work and activities. I enjoyed my home leave from August to early November. My only sadness about home leave is that I didn't get to meet all of you. I was able to go to Canada though and celebrate Colin and Evelyn Lang's 60th wedding anniversary. It was a wonderful celebration and I enjoyed every minute of my time in Canada with my relatives there.

During my home leave I also saw the doctors. After three years I am still cancer free! God has been good to me. Your prayers for me, especially when was being treated for it, have been instrumental in this outcome. Thank you for your continued prayers.

When I returned to Ghana after my home leave, I found a lot of catching up to do. I am pretty much caught up on everything in the office and the archives now, and going forward. The rains were not outstanding this year, and we have more sheep and goats eating our grass, so there hasn't been too much lawn mowing to do. I have been trimming some trees and doing other work on our grounds. There is plenty of work to do and I think even if I worked full time on the grounds I would always find something else that needed doing.

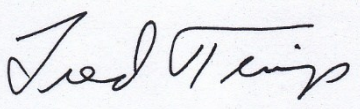
Our community here at McCarthy Hill is doing well. Some of the older priests and brothers are slowing down, as can be expected when people are in their upper eighties and nineties, but are still contented and enjoying life. Caring for them also keep us active and gives us younger ones something to do. People are still coming to join us at Mass. On weekdays we get a few people most days and on Sundays and big feast days we get about a hundred. They also add some life to our liturgies, especially when it comes to the music and singing. This gives us some opportunities to preach and exercise other ministries as well. It is not unusual that people come looking for a priest to hear their confession. A variety of groups also come to have a day of recollection or other spiritual activities and we help them in some way or other.

We had a seminarian with us while he was working to get a visa to go to Chicago to study theology and complete his training to be ordained as a Divine Word Missionary Priest. However, after waiting almost a year to get an interview at the U.S. Embassy in Accra he was denied a visa. He is now in the Philippines to do his studies. Our seminary here in Ghana was too full for him to complete his studies here. We now have another seminarian with us who is working to get a visa to Spain where he is planning to complete his studies and training. It is looking good for him now. He should find out in early January whether he will get a visa or not.

People continue coming asking for assistance, especially for help with medical expenses. There is a government health insurance scheme which is affordable, but it doesn't cover the really expensive medical issues like cancer, heart disease, or surgery of any kind. Most of the donations I have received from benefactors have gone to help people with such issues. My heartfelt thanks to all of you who have been able to assist in extending this help. You are in my prayers, and in the prayers of those who have been helped. May God continue to bless you!

I conclude with again wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May the joy of the Lord's presence fill you during these celebrations and throughout the new year.

Yours in the Spirit of the coming Christ,



Fr. Fred Timp, SVD



Updates from Missioners

Dear sister, I hope this message finds you well. Peace and good.

We continue to give thanks to God for you and all those who serve in the missions office. Your prayers and blessings have truly sustained us during this time, and we are deeply grateful for your ongoing support and encouragement. This period has been one of both strength in God and personal challenge.

I (Glahecer) have faced difficult moments with my mother, Agripina, and my older brother, Dionicio, as both were in very serious illness situations. Thanks to your prayers and God's blessings, they are now stable and at home. In summary, our family is stable and we feel hopeful moving forward. Our mission in the Amazon remains active, though we continue to face complex situations. Many Quichua families are struggling with illnesses such as colon and breast cancer, and several families have children lacking basic necessities for food and schooling. We are carrying out various activities to help them, and your support gives us hope and courage to continue. We were also able to obtain a vehicle for the mission, which will greatly aid our efforts. We are so grateful for the collections held in your parish for our ministry; they make a significant difference. Recently, we met with the PNRM and agreed on the plan to go to Minnesota in August of next year. We look forward to sharing more about this as the time approaches. Regarding our housing situation, for the past five years, we have had the generosity of friends who provided us with an apartment in Quito whenever we needed to leave the jungle and rest. We have now returned it, as they need it for their own use, and we have moved our belongings to our house in Chiviquí. However, the house still lacks an electrical system, water, and other necessary repairs to make it livable. We ask for your prayers as we work to install electricity and water and complete these repairs.

May you continue to find strength and joy in your service.

We remain united in prayer and send many blessings—a hug from afar.

Thank you for your continued friendship and support.

Iris and Glahecer



Hello Elizabeth,

I was so overwhelmed with our Cardiology Brigade that I barely made it back in time to work with S Elizabeth on our update letter. By now you have received it. I wanted to send a short message before now but that is how time flies by even here. In any case, I want to draw your attention to the many projects and good work we were able to do in 2025...in particular with the Franciscan sisters from Father Teddy's parish. All of the work there was due principally to the generous donation from the St Cloud Mission Office and one other private supporter of F Teddy's mission. Your support of our mission is one of the corner stones in which we are able to base our work. I just want to thank you for your graciousness with us.

It has been a difficult time in the USA with the government shutdown and the stress of the current economy. We realize that many of our benefactors have had family emergencies, health stressors and many other factors which affect a persons capacity to give large donations such as yours. We want you to know that we appreciate all you have been able to do up to this point, and that we understand that isn't always possible.

Regardless of how our budgeting aligns for 2026, we want you to know our deep appreciation and gratitude for you being part of the S Elizabeth Nicaragua Mission...whether that be through financial means or simply sending out prayers and good thoughts when we need them most.

Thank you again for all you made possible in 2025. And we look forward to staying in touch as we see what plans God has for us in the year to come.

All Good and Kindness upon your path,
Con cariño,
Mónica



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Upcoming Events

Spring Mission Rally!

Mark your calendars for Thursday,
 April 30th from 8 am-1 pm at
 Holy Spirit Church in St. Cloud, MN.
 Watch for the Flyer, Registration, and
 Announcements to be mailed and
 emailed in mid March. More information
 will be posted to our website event page
 and Facebook page as it gets closer. Feel
 free to reach out to our office with any
 questions-
 320-251-1100



Parishes will be receiving their Rice Bowl
 resources very soon to prepare for the 2026
 Lenten season. What a wonderful opportunity to
 participate in this act of global solidarity with
 your ACC, Youth Group, Mission Group, Family,...
 during Lent.

<https://www.csricebowl.org/>
 Remember to Pray. Fast. Give.

Stay Connected!

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