Chapter 9. Spearheading Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation

William Headley C.S.Sp.
Chapter 9

Spearheading Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation

Racial and Social Justice

“The church cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.”
(Pope Benedict XV)

The killing of George Floyd on a Minneapolis street in May 2020 should send tremors up the spine of every Spiritan serving in the United States. The Black Lives Movement, which arose because of Floyd’s death together with that of other Black people killed by police, conjures up memories of our Spiritan apostolic history and present service to people of color both at home and abroad. I argue that Spiritan domestic Social Justice takes expression chiefly in Racial Justice. This awareness should deepen our commitment to Racial Justice and stir among us an even deeper response to Social Justice.

Spiritan Racial Justice: Historical and Emergent

Historical

While lacking detailed records, it is estimated that between 1912 and throughout the 1960s Spiritans staffed approximately fifty parishes.1 Most of these works were in the deep south. I remember my assignment (1965–1969) to the Black parish of St. Peter’s, later to become St. Patrick’s, Charleston, South Carolina. Our Charleston parish, grade and high school, and social center were emblematic of

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1. From a September 9, 2021 interview with Michael Grey, CSSp from his research on the Spiritan Black apostolate.
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Spiritan Black work for racial justice. The telltale sign was how racial justice issues proved integral to our lives and work among Black Catholics. The pastor, Philip Haggerty, CSSp, had spent his priestly life in Black southern parishes. He led the Spiritan effort in Charleston through difficult times with sensitivity and wisdom.

Our Black St. Peter’s parish was merged with White St. Patrick’s during the height of desegregation. The proud grade and high schools blended with the predominantly White Catholic schools. Our African American high school graduates helped break the color bar at the largely segregated University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina. The social center served the city’s poor with life’s basics. Spiritans marched in the streets and encountered national Black leaders. On one occasion, a fellow pastoral associate, William Joyce, CSSp, was jailed overnight.

Today we deeply value the Black ministry in St. Benedict the Abbot parish, Houston. Yet, it is a remnant of Spiritan Black ministry in the south. None of the early southern parishes referenced by Michael Grey is still led by Spiritans. Numerous heralded Spiritans, however, who served in those Black ministries made significant contributions to our social justice heritage. Space limits mention of such racial justice champions.

- Albert McKnight, CSSp, an African American Spiritan raised in New York City, began his work in Spiritan African American parishes in Louisiana. Over his lifetime, Al served as pastor, economic empowerment director, and Black racial justice activist. His economic empowerment model spread throughout the south. McKnight’s distillation of a long and productive apostolic life culminated in an ever-deepening spirituality shared broadly in the Catholic Black community.
- John Walsh, CSSp, a pastor of Saint Landry African American parish in Opelousas, diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana, in the early 1970s became so incensed with the bishop of Lafayette, the Most Rev. Maurice Shexnayder’s failure to integrate the Catholic schools in their diocese that he sued the bishop. The integrated school, named Opelousas Catholic, survives till today.
- Thomas Byrne, CSSp, guided a team of Spiritans in a response to poor living conditions among Blacks in North Lake Charles, LA. As a religious leader, he reached out to repair pavements, cover open drainage ditches and improve safety and access at railroad crossings. To accomplish all this, he successfully solicited national funding.
Emergent

While Spiritan work with a racial justice focus blossomed in the southern United States, it would be a serious mistake not to acknowledge our African American work in the north. This has its own history. St. Peter Claver Church, Philadelphia, and St. Benedict the Moor parish, Pittsburgh were the first Black Catholic churches in their respective cities. Spiritans directed St. Emma’s Military Academy for African American high schoolers in Powhattan, Virginia.

As in the south, passionate Spiritan advocates for Racial Justice stepped forward also in the north.

- David Ray, CSSp, pastor of the Black ministry at Our Lady Queen of Peace, (OLQP), Arlington, VA, was an outspoken supporter of African American causes. And, he brought his concern home: David sheltered the homeless in the basement of OLQP rectory.
- James Healy, CSSp, trained as a lawyer, succeeded David Ray at OLQP. Our confrere was a fiery and eloquent advocate for every major racial and social justice cause. He reached outside the African American community to serve Haitians fleeing oppression in their native country through the “Washington Office on Haiti.”
- In recent years, Tanzanian Evod Shao, CSSp, pioneered a pastorate at St. Edward’s in a troubled African American neighborhood in Baltimore. Later, efforts expanded to include St. Gregory the Great parish. Another African, Honest Munishi, CSSp, served in this sector during recent riots. While serving there, David Cottingham, CSSp, witnessed, and struggled to overcome, street violence.

Spiritan Black northern ministry today is centered largely in parishes of major northern cities—New York City, Dayton, Arlington, Baltimore and Chicago. Nearly all these urban parishes are served by Spiritans from various African countries, providing a critical personnel enrichment.
Removal a Beam from Our Eyes²

In response to the George Floyd incident, the US Provincial Leadership Team issued a Statement on Racial Justice. Desiring to provide a stronger Spiritan response, the US Province joined with the two Spiritan Canadian Spiritan Provinces in a process of reflection and action called the North American Spiritan Racial Justice Initiative.

The first phase included Listening Sessions in English and French with more than ninety participants. They shared personal experiences of race. The intent was to deepen our understanding of the impact race has in our personal and professional lives. Further formative experiences spanned the following months: virtual Town Hall; challenging presentations by Prof. Gary Warner, Binh Quach, CSSp, and Freddy Washington, CSSp, small group breakout sessions, and additional Listening Sessions with guided reflection. Through this process of contemplative dialogue, we sought to respond to our inter-cultural reality as Spiritans. And, we sought to continue the process of deepening our commitment to live a Spiritan mission in the diversity we proclaim to others.

Racial Justice: A Wider Lens

Racial Justice may be the most prominent corporate Spiritan expression of social justice. It was not, nor is it, our only social justice concern.

Often working collaboratively with similarly-focused organizations, we broaden our attention to include other forms of social justice. Spiritans were instrumental in establishing the Washington Office on Haiti, the Africa Faith and Justice Network, and the Center for Faith and Culture, Houston. Attention is frequently turned to international issues: abuses of multinational corporations, intrigues of the United States’ government abroad, and dictatorships, particularly in South America and Haiti. These and other matters capture our advocacy attention. We joined much of the western world fulminating against Apartheid in South Africa. We encouraged sanctions to hobble that country’s white-dominated economy. Corporate Responsibility’s early efforts at redirecting and blocking corporate investments for their engagement in unjust practices had implications for the Congregation’s investments.

Enhanced Investigative reporting, improved research techniques, and wide-

² The material here is an adapted electronic account by Jeffrey Duaimé, CSSp, The Spiritan Racial Justice Initiative.
spread access to social media have widened our understanding of social justice issues. They enlarge our advocacy witness on long-pending issues. Our greatest single asset, however, is our diversity. American and international Spiritans joined by Lay Associates enable us to explore more deeply and respond more fully.

**Peacebuilding**

*The new evangelization calls on every baptized person to be a peacebuilder.*

(Pope Francis)

**Urgency in Building Peace**

A cliché used in promoting the discipline of peacebuilding is, “peacebuilding is too important to leave to ministers of state.” Pope Francis goes a step further: Making peace is every baptized Christian’s duty.

When it comes to making peace internationally as well as at every level of collective life in an independent nation, we need trained peacebuilders as well as politicians and diplomats. Yet, peacebuilding is too critical to leave only to those in high office who sign peace accords on mahogany tables in chandelier-illumined halls. The recruitment of peacebuilders must be expanded. Advancing peace is the task of virtually everyone regardless of one’s place in society. For fellow Spiritans—professed and lay—this mandate has a special urgency. This is not optional, a take-it-or-leave-it, for, “We count the following as constitutive parts of our mission of evangelization . . . action for justice and peace” (*Spiritan Rule of Life*, 14). This point will be argued more specifically by saying that there is a special place and immediacy for religiously motivated actors to include peacebuilding as part of their ministry.

**Religious Leaders as Peacebuilders**

A priest, deacon, and other prominent faith leaders have a decided advantage as religious peacebuilders. Such a person has a “Bully Pulpit.” This may be a religious leader’s actual pulpit in a house of worship. Or, it may be a facsimile in the form of a public platform from which one’s thoughts will be heard by a relatively large, receptive audience. When these religious actors speak and/or act, they generally carry with them the respect and authority of their offices. For example, on the occasion of the funeral Mass for the famed Spiritan liberal-oriented
advocate, Antoine Adrian, CSSp, fellow Spiritan, Max Dominique, CSSp, spoke powerfully and critically of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide’s failings. The president was seating in a very visible position in the Congregation!

Religious peacebuilders can draw from a rich faith tradition, using both the language and experience of Catholic Social Teaching to make their points. They more readily use evocative religious, persuasive, and emotionally impactful language. This often reaches beyond one’s attentive co-religionists. It can appeal to a larger, more diversified and alert audience. Such an appeal can activate “people power” in one’s constituency and beyond. Such power can bring people into the streets to protest, support certain politicians, and their particular policies. Quite frequently, such a religious actor either has special oratorical skills acquired through training or comes upon it somewhat naturally. Rev. Ian Paisley was Northern Ireland’s fiery and influential Protestant pastor and political leader during the sector’s troubled times. Other historical figures reach a special prominence as makers of peace and champions of non-violence: Archbishop Desmond Tutu (South Africa), Martin Luther King, Jr. (United States), and Mahatma Gandhi (India). These individuals inspire others by their manner of speaking and acting for peace.

The Spiritan Cardinal, Dieudonné Nzapalanga, and his interreligious colleagues took advantage of their prominent religious roles to promote peace in the Central African Republic. As a consequence, they acquired international exposure, both as individuals and for the cause of peace in their homeland. The much-publicized Nigerian team of Imam Muhammad Asha and Pastor James Wue did the same in Kaduna. The conflict they addressed began in 1992. They came together formally in the Interfaith Mediation Center, 1995.
A Peacebuilding Model: Federation of Asian Bishops (FABC)

It is one thing to nudge Spiritans to be peacebuilders, show the distinct advantages of a religious leader in making peace and acknowledging some peacebuilding success stories and heroes. It is quite another matter to explicate how one might practically be a peacebuilder. A number of years ago, the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) put into use a four-step peacebuilding model.\(^3\) Seemingly, it had its major application in interreligious settings. This was both understandable and prudent. The Catholic Church was, and still is, a minor faith tradition in the vast expanse and rich ancient spiritual traditions of Asia. In such circumstances, it is good to learn how to get along with one’s neighbors.

Interestingly, in advance of the Spiritan General Chapter scheduled for October 2021, a preparatory consultation on Interreligious Dialogue was held to reflect on this very question. While the most obvious concern that gave rise to this reflection was the Christian/Islamic tensions in Africa, representatives ministering in Asia also sought effective means of dialogue.

Before discussing the FABC model in detail, it is important to note that the creation of peacebuilding programs for use in grassroots situations is a dynamic expression of Catholic peacemaking vitality. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Pax Christi, Pace et Bene, Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN) and Caritas Internationalis (CI) are among Catholic agencies prolific in this field.

While the model referenced here was originally designed for interreligious peacebuilding, it is adaptable with modest changes for use in a wide range of conflict settings. Here, we briefly name, explain and exemplify each step.

*Dialogue of theological Exchange* occurs where specialists seek to deepen appreciative understanding of their religious heritages as well as that of others by thoughtful and prayerful interchange.

This is the classic expression of interreligious dialogue. It conjures up an image of theologians and religious leaders of various persuasions sitting

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around the proverbial mahogany table, holding deep discussions about refined theological concepts and practice. These do happen and much positive effect can come from them. Sometimes, as the following example illustrates, the setting is less formal.

Example. Shortly after 9/11 when interfaith and inter-cultural tensions were high in the United States, an interreligious coalition put together teams of Christian and Islamic ministerial personnel. These teams traveled about the southern California region for several months, listening to the fear, anger, and practical concerns of various communities. The teams offered both an educational experience and witness to interreligious dialogue.

**Dialogue of Life** is where people strive to live in an open and neighborly spirit.

This form of dialogue acknowledges the potential for interfaith exchanges and growth that happens, often unnoticed, at a local community level. It signals and implements peacebuilding from the ground up.

Example. Fr. Peter Pham is a noted Vietnamese-American Catholic theologian teaching in the United States. As a child in Vietnam, he was raised by a staunch Catholic mother when there was antipathy between Catholics and Buddhists. Pham went recently with his mother for a visit to Vietnam. He was startled when this very Catholic woman asked to visit a Buddhist temple. Her intent was to light candles for her Buddhist friends in America where she lived. Her son asked, “Why?” She told how Buddhist Vietnamese friends back in the States so very kindly took her to the store and to doctors. When they learned that she was going home, they asked her to light candles for them. So, she did.

**Dialogue of Action** happens when persons of various religions collaborate for the integral human development of all.

It must be noted that the FABC template categories overlap at times. This is particularly true when one juxtaposes Dialogue of Action and Dialogue of Life. It has proven helpful, when teaching this, to treat Dialogue of Action as the peacebuilding efforts of varied religious groups working together on a common improvement.
Examples. CRS, a major American Catholic humanitarian service agency, has worked in peacebuilding for more than 20 years. For the last few years, the agency concentrated on developing peacebuilding models for Islamic/Christian grassroots communities. The models have been field-tested, scrutinized by its worldwide team of peacebuilders, and written up as *Interreligious Action for Peace*.

**Dialogue of Spirituality.** This dialogue happens when those of various religions move beyond theological constructs and practices to a sharing of intrapersonal values and motivations derived from one’s religious tradition and deeply internalized.

This is the most difficult form of dialogue for believers to grasp. Vatican II’s Declaration of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra aetate* highlights the common search when it says that “[people] expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of [people]: What is humankind? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what is sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?” (no. 1).

Example. Thomas Merton, a secluded Catholic Cistercian monk, ended his life interacting with monastic counterparts of other faith traditions in Asia.

Being a peace-filled person helps the Spiritan gain the mental and psychological disposition to address the primordial life questions raised by *Nostra aetate*. Enabling others to be and do the same is the ultimate test of the genuine peace-builder and a Spiritan evangelizer.

**Integrity of Creation**

**Climate Plight: Charted and Lived**

It was one of those life experiences when sound foreboding climate theory is imitated by dire real events. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
(IPCC) released its 6th Assessment Report on August 9, 2021. It offers the most up-to-date and authoritative physical understanding of the climate system and climate change with severe predictions. The preparation of the Report brought together the latest advances in climate science.

As though it were waiting broodingly off-stage of national attention only long enough to allow the absorption of the Report, hurricane Ida struck the states of Louisiana and Mississippi on August 29, 2021. Ironically, that date marked the 16th anniversary of the catastrophic Katrina hurricane that pummeled that same area. Charging up the eastern coast, it resulted in emergency declarations for five northern states. Meanwhile, in the far northwest, some of the most devastating fires in recorded history are playing out their fury.

**Findings: Authoritative and Grim**

*IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report* projects heavy American climate change facts and projections onto a global screen and across a wide span of time. The Report, at once, chastises humankind for past wastefulness, confronts us with what remedial action we should take, and faces us with limited recovery alternatives. In a series of staccato statements intended for media summary presentations, an overview of the findings is drawn from the Full Report section of the study.

- “Recent changes in the climate are widespread, rapid, and intensifying, and unprecedented in thousands of years.” [Credit: Working Group I—“The Physical Science Basis”].
- “Unless there are immediate, rapid, and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to 1.5°C will be beyond reach.” [Credit: Peter John Maridabile | Working Group I—“The Physical Science Basis”].
- “It is indisputable that human activities are causing climate change, making extreme climate events, including heat waves, heavy rainfall, and droughts, more frequent and severe.” [Credit: Yoda Adaman | Working Group I—“The Physical Science Basis”].
- “Climate change is already affecting every region on earth, in multiple ways. The changes we experience will increase with further warming.” [Credit: Hong Nguyen | Working Group I—“The Physical Science Basis”].
- “There’s no going back from some changes in the climate system . . .” [Credit: Jenn Caselle | Working Group I—“The Physical Science Basis”].
• “. . . However, some changes could be slowed and others could be stopped by limiting warming.” [Credit: Andy Mahoney | Working Group I—“The Physical Science Basis”].
• “To limit global warming, strong, rapid, and sustained reductions in CO2, methane, and other greenhouse gases are necessary. This would not only reduce the consequences of climate change but also improve air quality. [Authorship not available, Working Group I—“The Physical Science Basis”].

Fr. Headley in a CRS dialogue meeting in progress

**Spiritan Application**

A thoughtful overview of this topic of Integrity of Creation (IC) was prepared in approximately 2010 by the late John Kilcran, CSSp, then our international Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Coordinator. He availed of the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC as his technical support.4

John did a *tour de force* review of IC’s treatment in Spiritan General Chapter documents over the last twenty-three years. The author noted that the 2004 Chapter was a “water-shed” for Spiritans, arousing interest and equipping us for service to IC. In his work, Kilcran made applications to our mission and spirituality. Methods he highlighted for promoting IC were drawn from various

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Chapters as well as from his experience, namely, advocacy, education, participating in training workshops, joining with other IC-focused groups and influencing government entities at all levels. A review of our provincial documents and IC collaborations suggest that we use such methods ever more aggressively.

Our own Lay Associate, Dr. Richard Gosser, has built on and advanced Kilcran’s work, introducing us to still deeper and newer reflections on Spiritan approaches to IC. Gosser reinterprets Libermann’s “new needs” in our context of climate concerns. And, Dr. Gosser thrusts ahead, finding a sound grounding for IC in Pope Francis’s famed encyclicals, *Laudato Si’* and *Fratelli Tutti*.

The comments by these two Spiritan writers and others are insightful and helpful as we give a Spiritan turn to climate change. Yet, it was a singular statement by Gosser that caused the starkest awakening. It was his reflection as a lay person, that “Maybe it is our concern for our children and grandchildren that make us sensitive to the question posed by Pope Francis . . . ,” and the question, “. . . what kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us?”

Perhaps, what we lack most in our spirituality and IC practice is a generational vision. Such a vision would honestly look over the last 150 years with a mix of admiration for what was accomplished and, pointedly in IC, shame for opportunities missed. Yes. Our elders built and left us schools, parishes, service centers and a proud heritage. They were also part of a generation now harshly criticized, as we are, for our misuse of the creation God has given us. A creation-sensitive critic offered her harsh criticism: “For decades we treated the natural world like both an endless cornucopia and an open sewer. Now we’re finding out what the consequences are, and people are surprised?”

Brother Spiritans from afar as well as married and child-bearing Lay Associates serve shoulder-to-shoulder with professed American Spiritans. As we pause in celebration of our 150 years of service to American peoples, can we turn around, having learned from the past failings, and ask with Rich Gosser and Pope Francis, “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us?”

*William Headley, CSSp*
*San Diego, California*

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Message: Abbot Leonard Wrangler, O.S.B.,
Subiaco, Arkansas

Dear Reverend Provincial Duaimé,

Sincere congratulations from all of us at Subiaco Abbey on 150 years of Spiritan presence and ministry in the United States.

The Spiritans and the Benedictines share a unique history in Diocese of Little Rock in Arkansas, both religious communities having begun their ministry here in the same year, 1878, and with the same general mission, to serve the German Catholic immigrants along the Arkansas River. The Church remains strong today in the Ft. Smith—Little Rock corridor because of the missions established along the river by the Spiritans and Benedictines along the last quarter of the 19th century.

Two encounters between the communities during the early days are especially remembered here at Subiaco Abbey. After the first monks arrived at their log cabin monastery on March 15, 1878, their first overnight guest, on March 20, was Father Fidelis Brehm, C.S.Sp., who had come to Arkansas from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, with Fr. Joseph Strub, C.S.Sp., provincial of the newly formed U.S. province, to select a mission center for the Spiritans. Fourteen years later, when both religious communities were well established, the Benedictines at Subiaco invited Father Matthew Heizmann, C.S.Sp., pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Morrilton, Arkansas, the center of the Spiritan mission, to serve as one of the two witnesses for the election of our first Abbot, Ignatius Conrad.

The mutual esteem continues today. And on this momentous anniversary of the arrival of the Spiritans in the United States, we congratulate you and promise you a remembrance in our prayers.

Sincerely,

Abbot Leonard Wrangler, O.S.B.
On behalf of all the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament,
Congratulations and Blessings to All
SPRITANS
on the Celebration of your 150th Anniversary!

What a great honor and joy for us as Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament to extend our sincere congratulations on your 150th Anniversary! Anniversary celebrations are times to reflect and give thanks for all that has been and prepare to say, "Yes" to all that will be. We offer the words of our foundress St. Katharine Drexel:

O Divine Spirit, I wish to be before you as a light feather
so that your breath may carry me where You will.
Saint Katharine Drexel

The guidance of the Holy Spirit led our Congregations to a shared collaboration in mission in Pennsylvania, Louisiana, New York and other locations throughout the United States. This collaboration of mission and ministries continues to bear fruit today. Through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, much joy, dedication and sacrifice has been shared together in service to God's people.

The SPRITANS will always hold a special place in our hearts.

Once again, on behalf of all the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, we are sincerely grateful to each of you, for you have enriched our lives in so many ways. What a blessing this partnership in mission has been and continues to be for our congregation. Prayers and blessings to all!

Sincerely in the Eucharist,

Sr. Donna Breslin, SBS
President
Message: Dr. Ken Gormley, President, Duquesne University

The Spiritan Option

In an article in this edition of Spiritan Horizons entitled Musings on Pedagogy in a Spiritan Key, Fr. Donald Nesti, C.S.Sp. defines the educational enterprise for Spiritans as Spirit-framed and Spirit-driven. The motto of Duquesne University, Spiritus Est Qui Vivificant, It is the Spirit Who Gives Life, provides a starting point and focus for the entirety of the Spiritan educational process. Led by the indwelling Spirit, Spiritans "educate persons . . . to be fully alive in their vocations as they participate in creating a better world wherever they are, always with an eye of care for the poorest."

This Spiritan impulse, or what Fr. Nesti terms "The Spiritan Option," may be best characterized in contrast to "The Benedict Option," a phrase coined by Rod Dreher in his work of that same name. In The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation (2017), Dreher argues for a return to monastic-like simplicity for Christians, a form of retreat into communities of order, stability, and prayer. It has been described as a manifesto for Christians, embracing exile from mainstream culture and constructing a resilient counterculture. The Spiritan Option, states Fr. Nesti, is quite the opposite impulse. It recognizes the Holy Spirit as "operative in all humanity and cultures." It engages the world from a position of faith, transcending boundaries and prizing dialogue. It is the impulse that led to the foundation of Duquesne University (1878), Holy Ghost Prep (1897), and every mission that Spiritans have undertaken over the centuries.

When Spiritans first embarked upon their ministry in the United States, they chose parishes and other ministries that were dedicated to underserved urban and rural areas, particularly in the African American community. At its height, Spiritans were engaged in more than thirty Black parishes in the southern United States. They undertook these missions because a preferential love for the poor is the defining characteristic of every Spiritan mission, pastoral or academic. It is the Spiritan Option.

It is no coincidence that Spiritans are masters of languages in many parts of the world. It is not uncommon to discover a dictionary of a local indigenous dialect published by a Spiritan. Spiritans seek to know and love those whom they serve, to respect their cultures and traditions, and to cherish all that is good within them. Spiritans "learn the language" of others to connect with them at the deepest and most meaningful of levels. It is also not uncommon for Spiritans to act humbly and with a certain disdain for the limelight. The Spiritans with whom I have had the privilege to work and whom I call my friends are precisely men and women in that mold: other-focused and attentive, eager to engage and to learn, and modest in the best sense of that word.

As this anniversary year unfolds, we do well by offering thanks for all that God has done through the Spiritan Congregation. The parishes, schools, orphanages, missions, and special projects of the Spiritans are testaments to courage and foresight. More than anything, however, they are symbols of a faith that is vibrant, empowered by a Spirit Who gives life to all.

Ken Gormley
President, Duquesne University
September, 2021
Telling Our Story: The Communications Office

The Communications Office of the US Province plays an important role in telling our story and promoting solidarity among members.

The office is located at the provincial HQ at the Spiritan Center, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania. The communications director manages internal and external communications for the Province and works closely with the Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement (SOMA), in Houston to promote the Spiritan mission (see article on the activities of SOMA).

US members receive a monthly internal Newsletter, Our Province. This is supplemented by Province Updates for more time-sensitive communications.

One Heart, One Spirit is a Newsletter published quarterly to share the latest Spiritan news with the public. It reflects a motto of the Congregation which is cor unum et anima una. Spiritan Mission Monthly is an electronic communication that shares mission updates and makes appeals to the many friends and supporters of the Province.

The Communications Office also manages the Province’s Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube accounts, as well as the Spiritans.org website.
The current Director of Communications is Jackie Parker. A 2005 graduate of Duquesne University, she joined the Spiritan team as communications director in 2017. Prior to that, Mary Winkler held the role for eighteen years before retiring, followed by Deacon Joe Cerenzia.

We make ourselves “the advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the weak and the little ones against all who oppress them.”

_Spiritans Rule of Life_, no. 14, citing Rule of 1949 (Notes et Documents, X, 517).