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WELCOME

In 2025, we will celebrate a Jubilee year, marking 25 years since the new century and the new millennium began. The year 2000 was filled with hope and optimism, with the world eager for peace, better international relations, and addressing global inequality. Now, a quarter-century later, what do we see? Sadly, it mirrors the first quarter of the last century. We have yet to fully employ the essential tools for progress and development.

Agreed by all the countries of the world at the UN there was a global commitment to 8 Development Goals – 1. halving extreme poverty rates, 2. achieving universal primary education, 3. promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, 4. reducing child mortality, 5. improve maternal help, 6. combat HIV-Aids & malaria, 7. ensure environmental stability, 8. forge global partnership for development.

We obviously have not employed all the ingredients needed for progress and human development. Pope Francis urges us not to lose heart, to trust in the ingenuity and generosity of the human spirit. He invites us to seek guidance from the story of God's relationship with people, as told in scripture. The Jubilee theme, "Pilgrims of Hope," reminds us that daily acts of kindness and local efforts for justice, as featured in the articles of this newsletter, build an ecosystem of sustainable change. It is these small but vital actions that keep the gift of hope and the gospel alive, the missing ingredients for true human progress.



Fr. Brendan Carr, CSSp, Provincial

OVERSEAS NEWS



ETHIOPIA: HOPE & SUPPORT FOR PRISONERS

In 2022, we launched a heartfelt appeal to bring support and dignity to the prisoners of Arba Minch in Southern Ethiopia. This project, started by Fr. Paddy Moran CSSp and continued by the current prison chaplain, Fr. Kilimpe Garbicha CSSp, aims to provide metal-framed bunk beds for the overcrowded prison. Each bed offers a simple but life-changing improvement—accommodating two prisoners, giving them a place to rest in dignity. The latest phase of this project set out to deliver 250 beds, each costing around €97.

While helping prisoners may seem unusual to some, we are called to look beyond judgment. In the words of Matthew 7:3, **“Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”** Compassion is the heart of our mission, and it guides our commitment to uplift even those society may overlook.

The Spiritans have long walked alongside the poor and marginalised across the globe, and this project is no different. Arba Minch Prison, housing over 2,000 inmates in Ethiopia’s Gamo-Gofa zone, faces dire conditions. Overcrowding, unsanitary environments, and the searing 34°C heat make the spread of diseases like typhus, typhoid, and malaria all too common. Yet, through your generosity, we have been able to bring hope.



Thanks to your incredible support, this campaign raised nearly €28,000 — enough to provide beds for over 450 men, transforming their daily lives. These beds don’t just offer physical relief; they are a symbol of compassion and humanity. You, our supporters, have shown that together, we can make a meaningful difference, even in places where hope is hardest to find.

As we look forward, we remain committed to continuing this work, one small step at a time. With your ongoing support, we can help to restore dignity and improve conditions for many more. The journey continues, and we walk it together, bringing light where it’s most needed.

OVERSEAS NEWS



SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AMIDST HISTORIC DROUGHT IN SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

Thanks to your generosity during the 2023 Christmas appeal, we raised over €40,000 to help families affected by the worst drought in 40 years in Ethiopia’s Borana Region.

Facing severe hardship, including over 150,000 moving into displaced persons camps, your donations directly supported 162 farmers and over 1,000 people with seeds for teff, maize, and wheat. Each family received essential resources, while widows and the elderly received additional help to plough and plant their fields.

Together with community leaders, we ensured that seeds were distributed based on local needs, empowering families to grow for a better future.

Thank you!





THANK YOU: HAITI'S FUTURE VETERINARIANS

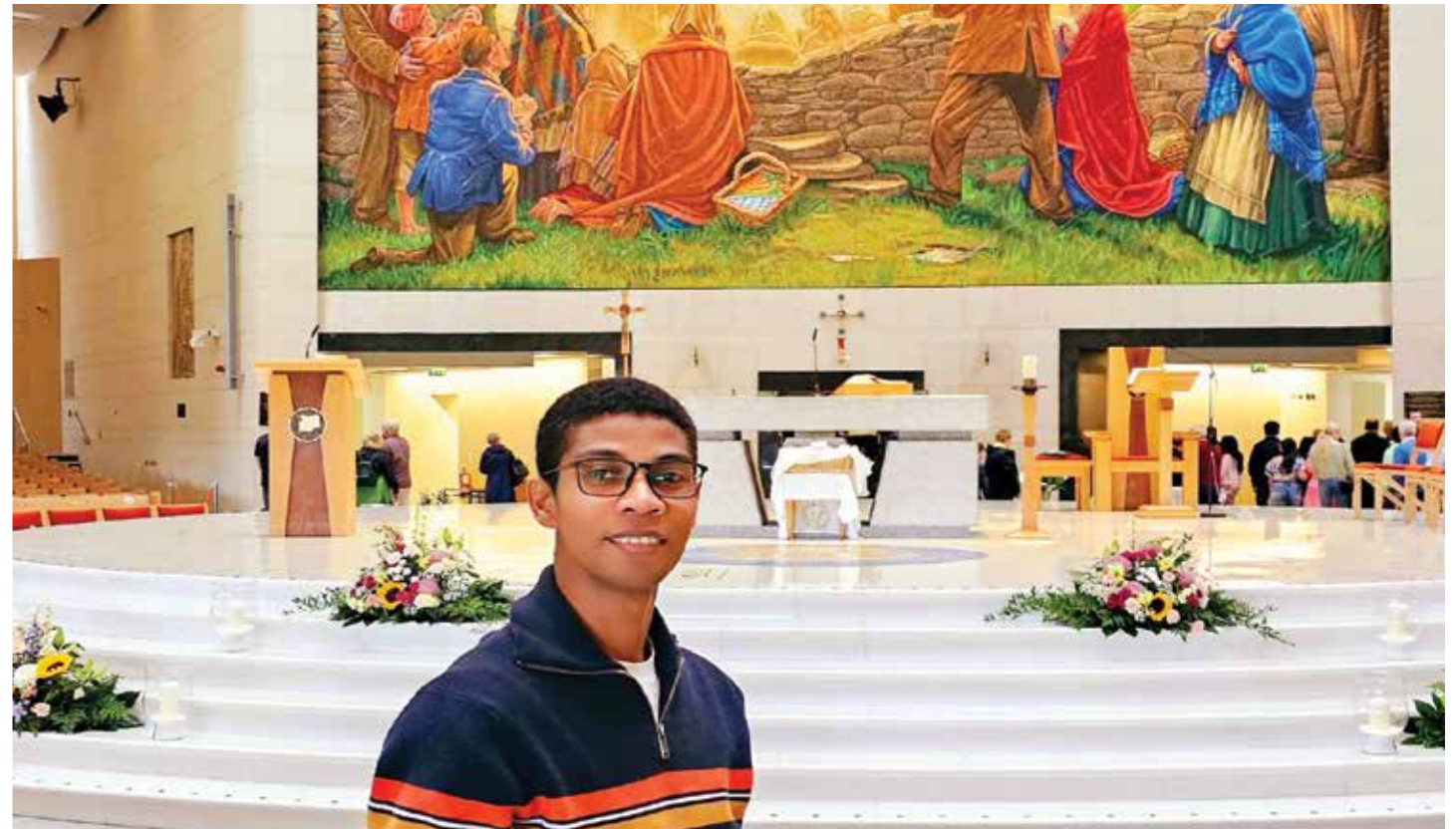
Thanks to your generosity, we're thrilled to share that we raised almost €4,000 through our recent appeal to support aspiring veterinary students in Haiti. This funding will help equip young Haitians with the vital skills they need to make a tangible difference in their communities, fostering resilience in a country deeply affected by poverty and past disasters.

Your contribution enables students at a rural university to gain hands-on veterinary skills that will allow them to support local agriculture, improve animal health, and strengthen food security across rural regions. In a nation still healing from the devastation of the 2010 earthquake, this training represents far more than career preparation—it's a pathway toward lasting, community-driven recovery and empowerment.

With almost €4,000 raised, you've given these students a foundation to build on, one that will continue to uplift them, their families, and their villages. Every donation received makes a lasting impact on the lives of young Haitians who dream of a stronger, self-sustaining future for their country.

If you would still like to be part of this journey, it's not too late. Every bit of support helps us take another step toward our goal of building a brighter tomorrow in Haiti.

Thank you for standing with us and for making such a powerful difference.



SPIRITAN STUDENTS TRAINING FOR PRIESTHOOD IN IRELAND

Two remarkable Spiritan students are currently pursuing their journey toward Religious Missionary Priesthood in Ireland, supported by generous donor contributions. Here's a look at how their faith and commitment are making a difference.

WILFRED OTUBO CSSP

Originally from Kampala, Uganda, Wilfred is in his third year of Theology at St. Patrick's Pontifical College, Maynooth. His journey began with philosophy studies in Kampala, followed by his Novitiate on the scenic slopes of the Usambara Mountains, Tanzania. Now in Ireland, Wilfred has already immersed himself in pastoral ministry, including impactful work at the Spiritan Retreat Centre in Ardracran, Navan. His dedication also led him to youth outreach and vital support for homeless communities. Wilfred is set to be ordained as a Deacon in the coming months and will soon begin ministering in Spiritan parishes across Dublin.



JEAN FREDIN IANDRY CSSP

From Madagascar, Jean recently embarked on his Theology studies at Maynooth after a year dedicated to learning English to support his ministry work. His educational journey began in Madagascar's capital, Antananarivo, studying in both Malagasy and French.

In Ireland, Jean has been enriching the lives of young people through his role in the pastoral team at the Ardracran Retreat Centre and his work with the Arch Club in Navan, a support community for those with special needs.

Both Wilfred and Jean are part of the vibrant Spiritan Community in Ardracran, where they contribute to local and youth ministry. Balancing their studies with community engagement, they also share a love for soccer, proudly playing for Bohermeen Celtics, their local team.

Thanks to your support, these students are building skills and gaining the experience to lead faith-filled, impactful lives. Your contributions enable them to continue their journey, touching lives and strengthening Spiritan ministry in Ireland and beyond.



25 YEARS OF HOPE AND HEALING

This year, the Spiritans celebrate an extraordinary milestone 25 years of SPIRASI (Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative), the National Centre for Survivors of Torture, supporting survivors of torture on their journey to healing.

Since 1999, SPIRASI has been a lifeline for asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland, offering specialised rehabilitation services, from medical assessments and therapy to ongoing psychosocial support. Every day, we work to restore dignity, hope, and resilience in those who have endured unimaginable hardship.

As we reflect on a quarter-century of service, we also recognise an unprecedented challenge. In the past two years alone, more than 26,000 individuals have sought international protection in Ireland, and, of these, an estimated 8,900 are survivors of torture. These numbers underscore the urgent and growing need for our services, especially as conflict and persecution continue to uproot individuals and families worldwide.

In 2022, we embarked on an ambitious Strategic Plan (2022-2025) to expand our impact, aiming to meet the needs of every survivor who seeks our help. However, the increase in arrivals has stretched our resources to their limit. Our team is working tirelessly to meet the demand, but longer wait times have become inevitable as we strive to assist everyone in need.

With your help, we can do more. By supporting SPIRASI, you become part of a compassionate response that ensures survivors can access the care they so urgently need without delay. Your contribution — whether large or small — will help us:

- Grow our capacity to reach more survivors
- Enhance partnerships with organisations which strengthen our support network
- Provide timely care to prevent extended suffering due to wait times

As we honour SPIRASI's 25 years of transformative work, we also look forward with determination. Each survivor who arrives in Ireland brings a story of resilience, and we are here to help them find healing and hope. Together, we can ensure they are met with a compassionate welcome, essential services, and a message of hope: **There is a path forward, and there is a future.**

Please consider supporting SPIRASI in this anniversary year. With your donation, we can continue to be the beacon of hope that so many need.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



THE KEANE CONNECTION

While generally searching for specific information, occasionally, an archivist stumbles across little gems that need following up when time allows. One such gem was the discovery of a collection of short stories written by John B Keane and published in the Spiritan Missionary Annals. These contributions by Keane thus prompted its own research into the connection between Keane and the Irish Spiritan province.

John B Keane was a popular 20th century playwright from Kerry. While known for plays like *Sive* and *The Field*, Keane was also a novelist and had many collections of essays. Much of his work spoke about life in rural Ireland.

Keane was born in 1928 in Listowel, County Kerry and it was here that he spent his literary career, running a pub which provided him with inspiration for his characters and ideas. His first play, *Sive*, was presented by the Listowel Drama Group and won the All-Ireland Drama Festival in 1959. It was followed by another success, *Sharon's Grave*, in 1960, *The Field* (1965) and *Big Maggie* (1969); all widely regarded as classics of the modern Irish stage. But it was not just in his plays that Keane managed to portray all aspects of humanity with

both wit and truth. He also wrote many fine novels, including *The Contractors*, *A High Meadow* and *Durango* along with essays and short stories.

It was discovered in an article in the *Missionary Annals* from December 1966 titled *Meet John B. Keane*, by the CSSp regular contributor, Tony O'Carroll, an old friend of Keane's dating back to their schooldays in Listowel. The article described O'Carroll's memories of Keane, how even at a young age, he showed great promise as a writer. O'Carroll praised Keane's works, particularly the humorous essays he wrote in between his popular plays. With that, he announced that Keane would be publishing some of these essays in the following issues of the *Missionary Annals*.

Keane published an essay each month, spanning from December 1966 to June 1968. Similar to his other works, they focused on aspects of life in rural Ireland. Essays such as *The Ungentle Art of Gambling*, *Unexpected Telegrams*, and *Baking the Bread* were observations on common activities in his community.



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One of the most powerful ways that you can help us make a difference is by leaving a gift in your Will. By doing so, you can ensure that those in need will continue to receive the help and support they need.

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