



# Saint Serra Club of Louisville VOCATION DIGEST

**FEBRUARY, 2025  
Newsletter**

**MISSION:**

To foster and promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Club chartered May 22, 1955

**“Always Forward, Never Back”**

**– Saint Junipero Serra**

## JANUARY MEETINGS CANCELED DUE TO BAD WEATHER

Due to snow and ice, our January 6 meeting was canceled. Due to extremely low temperatures and windchills below zero, our January 20 meeting was canceled. Speakers **Dan Conway** (columnist for The Record) and **Jennifer Wilson** (Indigent Burial Coordinator for Catholic Charities) will be rescheduled.

## WE HAD OUR NATIONAL “SERRA MEETS” ON JANUARY 20.

### ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

**John Liston**, Executive Director of Serra International, as well as Serra's National Council for the United States and The Serra International Foundation, highlighted some of the key moments in the history of Serra and helped us learn how we can be part of this year's festivities. John is married and lives in Chicago. He and his wife have two little children.



John went to Archbishop Quigley High School Seminary and got a BS

degree from the Darla Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina. He also obtained degrees in international business, human resources management and entrepreneurship. He received his law degree from Loyola University in Chicago, with a Certificate in Advocacy.

Before becoming our eighth Executive Director, he was a civil defense lawyer.

While serving as Executive Director, he also is an adjunct professor at Loyola University, where he teaches courses in negotiation, mediation, and client counseling. He's also the treasurer for a non-profit that

## UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**Regular meetings** - We target to have most meetings the first and third Mondays of each month, at **11:30 AM**, in the **Golden Corral at Hikes Point** (4032 Taylorsville Road). The charge will be \$12 for members and \$15 for guests. Non-members wanting to attend should contact Chuck Lynch in advance.

**Feb 3 (1<sup>st</sup> Mon)** – **Deacon Craig Roberts**, of St. Francis of Assisi (Louisville), will speak on his vocation journey.

**Feb 10 (2<sup>nd</sup> Mon)** - **Rosary for Vocations**, 7 pm, by Zoom. See separate article for details.

**Feb 12 (2<sup>nd</sup> Wed)** - **Holy Hour for Vocations** – After the noon Mass in St. Margaret Mary Chapel.

**Feb 17 (3<sup>rd</sup> Mon)** – **Kanobia Russell-Blackmon**, Director of Archdiocesan Communications, will speak about her role with the archdiocese, including what brought her to Louisville and her vision for the future of communications.

**Feb 17 (3<sup>rd</sup> Mon)** - **“Serra Meets”** – 8 pm Louisville time - national Zoom meeting for all Serrans – for details, click [here](#).

**Feb 25 (Tue)** – 11:45 - **Serra Board Meeting** - St. Margaret Mary Spirituality Center.

**Questions?** - Contact Chuck Lynch at (502) 442-9302 or [ChuckLynch4782@gmail.com](mailto:ChuckLynch4782@gmail.com).

serves public libraries.

John did an excellent job on the history of our Serra organizations, starting with four men who met over lunch in Seattle in 1934. He emphasized that this year is the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Serra.

### HIS PRESENTATION

Four Catholic laymen in Seattle, Harold Haberle, Dan Rooney, Leo Sharkey and Richard Ward were meeting regularly over lunch in 1934. They decided to form Serra in 1935. The club was started with the approval of Archbishop Gerald Shaughnessy, Fr.

## SERRA MEETS (continued from page 1)

John Gallagher, Vicar-General for the archdiocese, was their first chaplain.

Jack Bray was the person who recommended naming the club after Padre Junipero Serra. Franciscan Noel Moholy devoted his life to the cause of sainthood for Padre Serra. John Janette is credited with Serra's adoption of the vocational objective. Thirty years later, his own son became a priest.

For their first meetings, dues were twenty-five cents per meeting. Early on they had activities such as Parish Vocation Councils, a Day at the Seminary, Day of Discovery, Vigils of Nocturnal Adoration, summer employment for seminarians, and more. They devoted a lot of their time to support of the St. Edward's Seminary in Seattle.

For their first constitution, they were called Serra International, hoping they'd expand into other countries, especially since they were close to Canada. They had two objectives: "a. To foster and assist in the education of young men for the Roman Catholic priesthood; and b. to provide, through SERRA CLUBS, a means to form enduring friendships among Catholic men."

The first President was Dr. Thomas Sheehan in 1938. In 1951, Serra International was aggregated to the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations. And the 1951 international convention was held in Kansas City, the same city hosting the 2025 international convention.

The first club chartered outside of the U.S. was in Toronto in 1952. By the end of the 1950s there were clubs in six countries. By 1970, clubs in 10 more countries had been formed.

Programs like Called by Name (first formed by the St. Louis Club) and The 31 Club (first formed by clubs in Australia and New Zealand) began to catch on around the world.

Mr. Thomas Murphy went from being an attorney, to being the President of Serra International, to becoming a priest. Serra had famous people, such as Archbishop Fulton Sheen (1895-1979), speak at their international conventions.

In 1980, in Spokane, Washington, their club had a record – initiating 67 new members all at once.

Women were admitted to full membership in 1986. And today we have women leading three of our key organizations – Serra International, the USA Council of Serra, and the Serra International Foundation.

In 2000, the Serra International Great Jubilee Pilgrimage to Rome was a very special event, when Pope John Paul II spoke to the assembly.

On September 23, 2015, Fr. Junipero Serra was canonized a saint by Pope Francis in the U.S.

In 2017, Serrans had a private audience with Pope



Francis in Rome.

We have clubs in 130 of the 190+ dioceses in the U.S.

The Serra organization is now working on its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, collecting information, coordinating the international convention, and possibly creating a book for the occasion.

John said that he foresees more growth of our organization in other countries. There is a hotbed of clubs in Nigeria. Other clubs are being formed in the United Arab Emirates, Japan and Germany.

We want to thank John Liston for his great presentation on the history of Serra.

For the March 17 *Serra Meets*, the speaker will be **Rosemary Sullivan**, who is the Executive Director of the National Conference of Diocesan Vocations Directors (NCDVD). She will be speaking on "The impact and future of Serra's sponsorship of the National Eucharistic Congress."

Please remember that the St. Serra Club of Louisville, chartered May 22, 1955, is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. We will have a special Mass and luncheon (both with Archbishop Shelton Fabre) on the third Monday in May - May 19 this year.

You can watch the video of this January 20<sup>th</sup> Zoom meeting, including the business session, at [this web-site](#).

## [VOCATION OFFICE AND SERRA CLUB VOCATION CONTEST](#)

Judging has started for the Vocation Poster Contest (grades 4 through 6) and the Vocation Essay Contest (grades 7 and 8). The Vocation Office will be announcing winners probably by early February.

Home schooled students and Religious Education students were also invited to participate. We will also include a list of winners in a future issue of this newsletter.

Winners, along with parents, teachers, principals and pastors, will be invited to a meeting of the St. Serra Club of Louisville in March.

## [WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE - JUBILARIAN MASS FEB 2](#)

The annual Jubilarian Mass, with Archbishop Shelton Fabre, is to be on Sunday, February 2, at the Cathedral of the Assumption, at noon. All are invited; and there will be a reception after the Mass.

This Mass is held on a Sunday near the World Day for Consecrated Life (February 2) each year to honor those men and women religious celebrating their 25th, 50th, 60th, 70th, 75th, and 80th anniversaries.

## [NATIONAL CATHOLIC SISTERS WEEK IS MARCH 8 - 14](#)

Established in 2014, as part of Women's History Month, the National Catholic Sisters Week is March 8 through 14 each year, regardless of the day of the week that period begins. According to the national office, "The NCSW mission is to honor women religious through a series of events that instruct, enlighten, and bring greater focus to the lives of these incredible women. We welcome events of any type and encourage organizations to think about creative ways to celebrate sisters for the entire week."

This is a good time for all parishes, schools, and others to choose some way to celebrate this occasion. Maybe you can simply take your favorite religious sister out for a meal.

For more information, click [here](#).

Events that some are considering include a Mass and supper; a Sisters' Appreciation Day; a card or letter to your favorite sisters; Vespers; a "Cupcakes, Coffee, and Conversation" event; a retreat; etc. To

see what others are doing around the country, click [here](#).

To see the Global Sisters Report: Sharing Stories of Women Religious, check out the nine-minute video [here](#).

## [PRIESTS CELEBRATING ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES](#)

Congratulations to our priests celebrating anniversaries of ordination this month. We always include here any priests, from religious orders and other dioceses, who are working in our Archdiocese.

**REV. STEVEN D. HENRIKSEN**

ordained 2/2/13 - 12 years ago

**REV. LEO PAYYAPPILLY, OFM**

ordained 2/6/03 - 22 years ago

A list of all our diocesan priests can be found [here](#).

A list of other priests working in our diocese, from other dioceses and various religious orders, can be found [here](#).

## [DEACONS CELEBRATING ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES](#)

Congratulations to one deacon celebrating his ordination anniversary this month.

**DEACON DENNIS A. MAY (wife CHERYL)**

ordained 2/19/11—14 years ago.

A list of all our deacons, their wives, ordination anniversaries and parishes can be found [here](#).

## [SEMINARIAN BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH](#)

Happy Birthday to our seminarians this month:

**Harrison Frey, Feb 5**

**Evrard Muhoza, Feb 9**

**Amos Stinson, Feb 9**

You can get more information on all our seminarians, as well as where they're going to school, videos on hobbies, and videos on vocation stories by clicking [here](#).

## [ABOUT OUR YOUNG CATHOLICS](#)

Louisville college students among 17,000 attendees at SEEK25. – Read The Record article [here](#).

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Thomas Aquinas College students exemplify spirit of giving. - Read the article [here](#).



Are you being *called* to serve?



*Come & See*  
SPIRITUAL WEEKEND RETREAT

**March 28-30, 2025**

at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Free and open to single,  
Catholic women ages 18-42.

[ComeandSee.SistersofProvidence.org](http://ComeandSee.SistersofProvidence.org)



Contact Sister Joni Luna  
at 361.500.9505 or  
[jluna@spsmw.org](mailto:jluna@spsmw.org)

Sisters of Providence  
OF SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS  
*Breaking boundaries, creating hope.®*



**WORLD MARRIAGE DAY**  
**(continued from page 4)**

help us become living signs of your love. Make us grow more in love with the Church so we may renew the Body of Christ. Make us a sign of unity in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Brother. Amen.  
~ Fr. Bill Dilgen, S.M.M.

**FR. JOHN JUDIE HAS BEEN SUPPORTING EAST AFRICAN SEMINARIES FOR 30 YEARS!**

Late in 2024, Fr. John Judie put together a four-page newsletter celebrating the 30 years that Fr. John Judie Ministries, Inc. has been raising funds for seminarians in East Africa. He shares the origins of that ministry and many memories.

We have enclosed the entire write-up at the end of this newsletter.

Fr. John congratulations!

**PREPARE FOR LENT, WHICH BEGINS ON ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5.**

**PRAY, FAST & GIVE.**

**JUBILEE YEAR**

Pope Francis has declared 2025 to be a Jubilee Year, with a theme of "Pilgrims of Hope." Here are some related articles.

**The Jubilee Year Prayer** – Read it [here](#).

**Ten Things to Know about the Jubilee Year** – Read the article [here](#).

**Make St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians your guide to Jubilee Year** – Read the article [here](#).

**How faith in God radically influences our sense of hope** - Read the article [here](#).

**SERRA INTERNATIONAL'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL**

To get to videos of national and international meetings (sorted by most recent on top), including many Zoom meetings and Serra Meets, just do a browser search for "Serra International YouTube Channel" or click [here](#). While there, you can also click "subscribe" in order to be notified of new videos as they are added.

**PARISH VOCATION MINISTRY**

Some of the parishes in our archdiocese now have Parish Vocation Ministry (PVM) committees to promote and affirm vocations within their parishes. Here are some ideas to help them in this ministry.

**Vocation General Intercessions** for the 2024-25 Liturgical Year, Cycle C can be found [here](#).

**Vocation Bulletin Blurbs** for the 2024-25 Liturgical Year, Cycle C can be found [here](#).

**Parish Vocation Ministry Ideas** can still be found [here](#).

**"The 7 Greats"** (details on the 7 most popular tools from the S.P.A.R.K. website) can be found [here](#).

If your parish would like to send representatives to the next workshop for PVMs, just contact Serran Ken Peet at (502) 548-0321 or [KCPeet1@gmail.com](mailto:KCPeet1@gmail.com).

**JOIN US FOR OUR MONTHLY "ROSARY FOR VOCATIONS"**

Our Saint Serra Club of Louisville gathers online by **Zoom** for a Rosary for Vocations at **7 pm**, on the **second Monday of each month**. By link, click [here](#).

By phone, call (312) 626 6799. Meeting ID is 874 8155 6033.

**VARIOUS ITEMS OF INTEREST**

**Serran Birthdays this month:**

Lynn Haner, Feb 13    Fr. Jeff Hopper, Feb 13  
Fr. Pat Dolan, Feb 23

**Pope's Prayer Intention for the month of February** - For vocations to the priesthood and religious life - Let us pray that the ecclesial community might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life.

Thanks to **Paul Willett** for maintaining our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/SerraLouisville](http://www.facebook.com/SerraLouisville).

Thanks to **Lynn Haner & Charlie Francesconi** for proofing our newsletters.

Newsletter questions, comments, or submissions? Contact Chuck Lynch, Editor, at (502) 442-9302.

# *Father John Judie Ministries, Inc.*

*The 30th Anniversary  
1994-2024*

**By Fr. John T. Judie**

Thanks to  
the invitation  
of Fr.  
Augustine  
Mangatt,  
MSFS in  
1994

## **The Birth of the Ministry**

When I came to East Africa for the very first time in 1994, my intention was to experience and learn everything I could about the life of the people living in an economically underdeveloped part of the world. I also wanted to see how the Church ministers to the people living in such an impoverished situation. Naturally, I also wanted to connect with my own heritage as an African

American. I never imagined that what I learned there would open me up to see what was God's purpose in granting me this experience. It is the importance of the ministry that God has ordained and blessed from its beginning that has kept me returning to East Africa for these past thirty years.

I knew already about the vocation to priesthood and religious life that was being pursued by so many young people in East Africa. Most of the jr. and sr. seminaries, as well as the convents, are full. Some of them even have waiting lists. With the situation of poverty, however, the family members of the seminary students are required to pay a certain amount of school fees (tuition) per year. When the family members fail to pay the school fees, the student is dismissed from the seminary and sent home. Thus, I got the inspiration to start a seminarian sponsorship program, i.e. help keep the student in the jr. seminary, so that he can make it into the sr. seminary and pursue priesthood.

## **The Fruit of the Harvest**

As I reflect on these past thirty years of what this ministry has been doing, I marvel at the fact that God has continually blessed the ministry with so many sponsors, donors and benefactors to this date. Imagine the fact that we have never had to do a fund raiser in all of these years to keep the ministry going! A number of the jr. seminarians we started sponsoring in 1994 were ordained to the priesthood in 2006. Since then, I have met with or received contact from so many other priests (each year) who make sure that I know they also received the sponsorship support in their jr. seminary years. Thanks to the continued support we receive due to your generous giving, we have sponsored 63 students in five jr. seminaries this 2024 academic year.

Beyond giving support to those pursuing priesthood and religious life, we have been able to give assistance to so many in their life situations to help meet basic needs, medical care and educational

opportunities. Everyone needs just any opportunity to go farther in their lives. So many of those we have assisted will readily testify to the fact that this was a true “miracle” in their lives. The same will be said by a number of priests who are given parish responsibilities but no salary or funding from their diocese to get the ministry done. Besides the financial boost they have received, the support we have given has been a great source of encouragement and hope for them to keep doing the ministry for God and God’s people.

### **The Joy of Relationship**

Many people question or are puzzled by the fact that I now have so many sons. Frankly, this development in my life was just as surprising to me. In this patriarchal society, the culture places the responsibility of providing for the family on the first-born son. There are cases where some of the daughters may get further education and employment to help take care of their family. The fact, however, remains that giving the opportunity for further education and employment to the first-born son directly benefits the entire family. At this point, I am so happy to see how well most of my sons are prospering in supporting their family members—in spite of the everyday challenges of

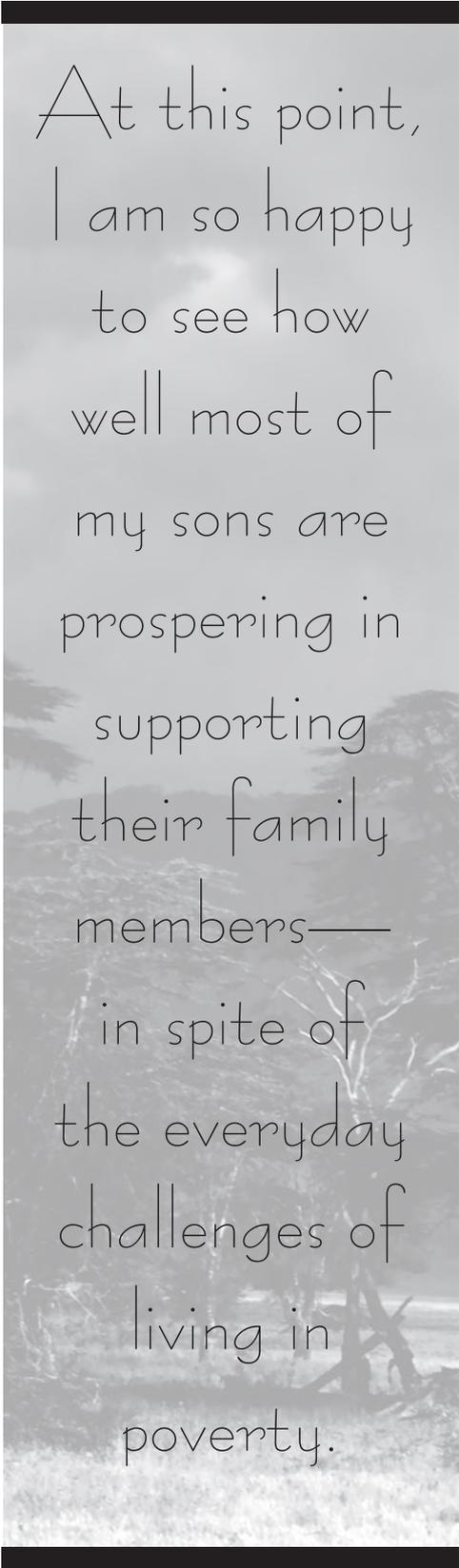
living in poverty.

Personally, this has proven to be a huge blessing for me and for my sons. I am not just a benefactor but a true and real “father” to them. Each one of them can tell their own story of growing up with no healthy and happy family life, i.e. some as orphans, some with parents who failed to give them true parental care and a couple who (literally) grew up “on the street” since age 5. Regardless of their adult age now, these young men are experiencing true parental love and care for the first time in their lives. This is a special gift of family relationship I never expected in my life but God has chosen to bless me with it anyway.

### **Joining in Ministry with Others**

St. Francis de Sales Jr. Seminary in Morogoro, Tanzania also opened its doors in 1994. We began the seminarian sponsorship program with their very first class of students. Thus, the seminary also celebrates its 30th anniversary along with us. Their celebration included the Form IV (senior high school) graduation ceremony, as well as a reunion of their alumni. I was so delighted to see 34 former students of the seminary who are all successful in some profession: doctors, lawyers, priests, sisters, businessmen and ministers in

government (political leaders) all doing well in their lives. Of course, they were recognized in the program that day and given an opportunity to address the assembly. Interestingly enough, what they wanted to do (more than



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anything else) was sing one of the gospel songs I had taught them years ago. They never forgot the music, the message and what that particular expression of worship meant for them. I was also invited to submit a personal reflection on our ministry's involvement in the seminary's thirty years of existence.

### **Reflection on Support for the Jr. Seminary**

WHAT A BLESSING!

Let me begin my expressing my heartfelt "Congratulations" to St. Francis de Sales Jr. Seminary and its staff (past and present) as they celebrate this 30th anniversary of service to the Church in East Africa. Thanks to the invitation of Fr. Augustine Mangatt, MSFS in 1994 and (at the same time) the very warm welcome of Fr. Thomas Olichal, MSFS as the first rector of the seminary, I have been privileged to share in this ministry at the jr. seminary since its beginning. Thus, Fr. John Judie Ministries, Inc. is also celebrating its 30th anniversary of ministry in East Africa. What a blessing!

My ministry involvement with the jr. seminary began when, during my very first visit to Tanzania, I learned about the problem of some students being dismissed because their parents

failed to pay their school fees. When I returned to the United States at the end of that visit, I had in mind to ask 10-12 friends to consider sponsoring a student to enable him to remain in the seminary. Within my first year back in the States, I had 71 sponsors. For these 30 years, we have been able to consistently sponsor seminarians on a yearly basis. I know that this financial support has been more than just some relief and encouragement for the students in need and their family members. I am happy to know that it has also given some relief and encouragement to the various seminary rectors and their staff members, so that they can manage well the financial aspects of running the seminary program. What a blessing!

In these past six years, I am able to spend many more months in Tanzania. The main focus of my ministry these days is counseling the students. Just recently, I was talking with a Form IV student about his preparations for graduation and leaving the jr. seminary after these past four years. His response to me was "I don't want!" Obviously, his life at this jr. seminary has become more than an institution for education and spiritual formation. His time at St. Francis de Sales Jr. Seminary has become "home" for him. I have reflected on many others who are graduates of this seminary program and are very successful in their lives today. No doubt, this

seminary program gave them also a sense of "home"—a source of comfort and care to encourage them to strive for their future success in life. My heartfelt "Congratulations" to all the rectors, priests and staff members who have been such a gift to all these students and young adults. What a blessing!

As I reflect today on these 30 years of personally witnessing the good effects of the seminary program and the part I have been privileged to play in it, I am most grateful to God for all of it. It is only by God's grace and design that we have been brought together and kept together to serve God's people in this way. I am also deeply grateful to the MSFS Community for allowing me to be a significant part of their missionary work here in East Africa. I invite everyone who reads this reflection to join me in saying: "To God be the glory for all that He has done!" What a blessing!

### **The Accident**

Many of you know already about the accident I had on October 21st of this year. I was preparing to leave one of the jr. seminaries in Tanzania, heading down the stairs with my luggage. The light at the top of the stairs was on but the light at the bottom of the stairs was not on. As I descended down the stairs to reach the light switch there, I did a misstep in the dark and fell

forward landing on both knees. Thus, I suffered both kneecaps dislocated and tendon tears inside both knees. Fortunately, I did not suffer much pain after the incident as long as I was able to keep both legs extended. I underwent double knee surgery on October 25th and have been in recovery since then.

As soon as the accident happened, I immediately turned to the Lord and put my situation in His hands. Since then, I have done what was required of me while, at the same time, I keep watching to see what God is up to in my situation. At the hospital, I was told that the hospital staff would get the best orthopedic surgeon they had to do the surgery. I received the spinal anesthesia, so I was awake during the entire procedure. At some point while the surgical team was working on me, the surgeon leaned over to me and said: "We are praying for you but we will do it in Swahili." Believe it or not, the surgical team stopped the procedure, went into prayer together and then proceeded to complete the surgery. Who ever heard of something like that happening?

### **A Christmas Miracle**

Besides being in good hands with the sons around me 24/7 and so many others giving me whatever assistance I needed, I was able to begin physiotherapy on a daily basis starting on December 19th. At that point, I started walking (with a walker) and was exercising my legs three times a day. Within a few days, I could walk without assistance but very slowly and cautiously. On Christmas morning (exactly two months after the surgery), I went out and celebrated my first public Mass at one of the convents nearby. After walking down the hallway of the convent to the chapel unassisted, I was able to preside and preach while standing comfortably through the entire Mass. The sisters all agreed that this was a miracle they were seeing with their very eyes. I told them: "This is how the Lord chooses to celebrate his own birthday!" I also celebrated public Masses on the following Sunday and on New Year's Day.

### **A Life of Gratitude**

I can truly say that I am living a life of gratitude for all God's blessings in my life. God has blessed me in wonderful ways in my life before priesthood, in the ministry He called me to do (before entering seminary) and in these 36 years of ministry in priesthood. Obviously, these 30 years of ministry in East Africa, filled with the richness of relationships, have proven to be bountiful blessings for me in my life. I remain ever grateful to all of you for your prayers, words of encouragement, expressions of affirmation and financial support to help get the ministry done. I could never have done any of this without all of you. I pray that each and everyone of you will experience the bountiful richness of God's blessings in your life as I continue to experience it in mine. Let the Lord be praised, now and forever! Amen.

