



# ONE HEART, ONE SPIRIT

CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT  
PROVINCE OF THE UNITED STATES

Spring  
2019

## Spiritan Ministry in Asia is Rich in Spirit

By Fr. Patrick Palmer, C.S.Sp., Provincial Superior of Taiwan, Vietnam and India

The Spiritan mission in Asia began in 1977, when Spiritans arrived in Pakistan and Papua New Guinea. Twenty years later, in 1997, they established missions in the Philippines and Taiwan. And ten years later, in 2007, they established a community in Vietnam. In 2010 a mission was set up in India. Each of these missions is different and unique, reflecting the extraordinary diversity of cultures and religions which makes up this continent.

Taiwan is a first world country, rich, materialistic and secular. The culture is a form of Buddhism; the Catholic population is tiny. The Spiritans have responsibility for four parishes and a number of outstations in two dioceses. They have also taken on chaplaincies to prisons, universities and youth. But perhaps their main role is to be witnesses to the Christian message to a people who seem to have lost their spiritual bearings.

Over the years Spiritans from many different countries have worked in this mission, including



Students in Vietnam

members of the U.S. Province. Frs. Binh Quach, Duc Loung, and Simon T. Nguyen have given many years of service here and Fr. Simon is still the pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Hsinchu Diocese.

Vietnam is a different world, a developing nation which is fast catching up to the Asian Tigers. It is also a Buddhist culture but with strong influences from Confucianism which may account for its openness to Christianity. The Church is a minority at 8%, but a strong minority. Because of the particular situation here, the Spiritans do not have parishes but are fully engaged in building up a foundation of the Congregation. It now has 50 students, the first of whom will be ordained within two years.

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Spiritans in Taiwan with diocesan clergy

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# Welcome



Another Easter season is upon us, culminating in Pentecost Sunday, the birthday of the Church and the founding feast of our Congregation.

On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus' followers and they were suddenly able to speak in different languages. Spiritan missionary priests, however, must work hard and study for many years to master the local dialects and customs of the people to whom we minister.

Our mission as Spiritans is global. We have stories to share from every corner of the world. In this issue, we are highlighting some of our work in Asia, where our dedicated servants of God cross cultural barriers to minister to those on the margins. Thank you for joining us on this journey.



Students in Vietnam with children from a local orphanage

## Spiritans Ministry in Asia

*Continued from page 1*

They are also involved in charity works and in helping out in their local parishes. Confreres from the U.S. Province have been involved from the beginning: Fr. Anthony Trinh Le was one of the pioneers of the mission and is still here; Frs. Joseph Quoc Le and Joseph Lam work here, as well as Fr. Duc Luong who moved here from Taiwan.

India is the newest mission in Asia, though Spiritans had a presence here in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Spiritan mission is based in Chennai and, as with Vietnam, its main work is establishing a foundation of the Congregation there. Already two Indian confreres have been ordained and received their missionary appointment to Africa. Our presence is another of the signs of hope in the Congregation.

Asia is still a relatively new area for mission for Spiritans. Our tradition has focused on Africa and South America but now, like all missionary groups, we are asked by the Church to look to Asia. It is the continent with the biggest populations in the world, where all the great religions originated but where the Christian message has least been preached. It is also the continent of youth and of economic dynamism.

We Spiritans are privileged to be called to mission here.

## Cor Unum et Amina Una in the Philippines

By Fr. Daniel S. Sormani, C.S.Sp.

On December 12, 1997, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, one of the Patron Saints of the Philippines, four Spiritans landed in the Philippines to begin our new mission in Asia.

Coming from Ireland, Brazil, Nigeria, and the United States, we were warmly welcomed by the people and set about learning the local language, Visayan Cebuano, and serving those most in need.

Today, more than 21 years later, there are 27 confreres in the archipelago. Thirteen Spiritans are appointed and ministering full-time

in the Philippines. We have two Filipino priests who were ordained more than a year ago, now assigned to Senegal and Mauritius. Witnessing to a truly vibrant, open, and welcoming community of believers, the Spiritans in the Philippines today come from Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Ireland, and Ghana.

There are also currently three local postulants and three aspirants, as well as a number of other Filipino youth discerning their call to Spiritan life.

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# Educating Religious from and for China

China has about 10 to 15 million Catholics (1% of the country's population), while Protestants number around six times the size of the Catholic population.

To raise funds for the formation of Chinese priests and improve awareness of the Church in China, the third annual Matteo Ricci, SJ Dinner was held in Houston on March 5, 2019.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo welcomed guests to the dinner. The Our Lady of China Award was given to Bishop Curtis J. Guillory of the Diocese of Beaumont and Fr. Louis C. Zee, former pastor of Ascension Chinese Mission in Houston.

Honored with the Community Service Award was Bonna Kol, president of the Asia Society Texas Center, for her dedicated endeavor to strengthen ties between Houston and Asia.

"We believe that these fine people represent the true spirit of service to God and the universal Church, especially those facing everyday challenges in China and Asia," said Gordon and Sylvia Quan, honorary chairs of the event. "Their service carried the Gospel message of compassion, justice and peace."

*"We have an important duty: to accompany our brothers and sisters in China with fervent prayer and fraternal friendship."  
- Pope Francis*

The event featured a talk about a profound encounter with the Church in China by Fr. Binh T. Quach, C.S.Sp., Ph.D., Director of the Donald S. Nesti, C.S.Sp., Center for Faith and Culture at the University of St. Thomas.

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## News from SOMA



### Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement

Based in Houston, Texas, the Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement (SOMA) supports the Congregation's public and charitable works of health, education, social services, and religious mission in the United States and throughout the world.

Fr. Dave Cottingham, C.S.Sp., Director  
Fr. Mike Grey, C.S.Sp., Asst. Director  
Ray Sylvester, Mission Projects

1700 West Alabama St.  
Houston, TX 77098  
(713) 522-2882

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Patrick Leung, Fr. Yifu Lyn, Fr. Donald Nesti, C.S.Sp., and Peter Tan at Fr. Yifu's graduation in January 2019.

# Ways to Contribute



## Online

Now you can support the work of the U.S. Spiritans when you shop at Amazon! Visit [amazonsmile.com](http://amazonsmile.com) and select "Sharelink-Spiritans Worldwide Aid Foundation Inc." as your charity of choice.

You can also visit [www.spiritans.org](http://www.spiritans.org) and click on the "Donate" button. Use the drop down menu to direct your donation to a category of projects, or dedicate your generous gift to a specific project.

## Check / Money Order

Please make your check payable to: **The Spiritan Foundation**, 1700 West Alabama St., Houston, TX 77098.

Please call 713-522-2882 with questions.

## THANK YOU!

## Educating Religious from and for China

*Continued from page 3*

Fr. Binh is the former Vicar General of Hsinchu Diocese, Taiwan, and served in mainland China for several years.

Founded by Fr. Donald Nesti, C.S.Sp., the China Education Fund aims to bring Chinese priests and sisters to Houston for graduate study so they can return home to better evangelize.

Fr. Yifu Lyu, the first student whose studies were funded by the CEF, recently achieved his Master of Arts in Faith and Culture from the Nesti

Center for Faith and Culture at the University of St. Thomas.

If you wish to contribute to this project, please return the enclosed envelope or visit [www.spiritans.org/donate](http://www.spiritans.org/donate) and designate China Education Fund.

If you are interested in taking professional Church tours and connecting with the Church in China, please refer to the US-China Catholic Association at [www.uscatholicchina.org](http://www.uscatholicchina.org).

## Spiritans Care for Poor and Orphaned in Zambia

**Spiritans began their ministry to the poor and orphaned in Zambia in the 1980s.**

As one of the world's most impoverished nations, three quarters of the population lives on less than \$1 a day, 40% have no access to clean drinking water, and illiteracy and HIV are ever present and growing threats to the nation.

Youth in Zambia account for 89% of the total population, and life expectancy in this youthful nation is only 37 years. The median age is 16.8 compared to 37.1 in the United States.

Many children in Zambia come from extremely difficult backgrounds and living conditions. Some have lost one or both of their parents, some have parents who suffer from life-threatening illnesses or live in other provinces, some live with abusive family members, and some are the sole providers for their families at very young ages.

To these children, escaping the cycle of poverty and devastation surrounding their lives seems impossible.

The Spiritan-led initiative Orphans and Vulnerable Organization (OVO) raises funds to improve the plight of Zambian children orphaned through HIV and AIDS, primarily through payment of school fees. Without this help, these children would not have the means to attend school, denying them their basic human right to education.

The work of this organization is coordinated by Fr. Michael Walsh, C.S.Sp., an Irish Spiritan. Fr. Walsh has been working with children orphaned by HIV and AIDS in Zambia for more than 30 years.





## Nigerian Novitiate Receives New Minibus

**Last year, the newly established Spiritan Novitiate in Aliadi, Nigeria, applied for a grant to meet the following challenge as described by its director, Fr. Agbo Boniface, C.S.Sp.:**

*“Currently we have no reliable means of transportation that can enable us to operate effectively as a newly established novitiate, and sadly, too, our economic disadvantage has not allowed us to afford one.*

*We often have to resort to public transport, which is quite unreliable most of the time, when we have events that require the participation of all of our novices as a group.*

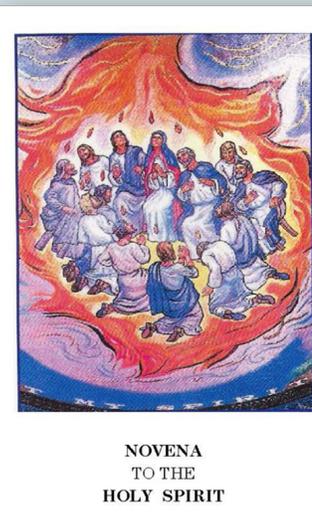
*We, therefore, need to have our own mini bus that can accommodate them all in order to travel with more convenience.”*

Happily, through generous donations from friends like you, the Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement (SOMA) was able to fulfill that need.

## Novenas Are Available

Novenas to the Holy Spirit are available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. The suggested price per copy, including postage, is \$2. For purchase and large order discount information, please contact the Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement at 713-522-2882.

Checks should be made payable and mailed to: **Congregation of the Holy Spirit**, 1700 West Alabama St., Houston, TX 77056.



Priests' residence at St. Martial College

## 150 Years of Service to Haiti

**The first Spiritans to Haiti arrived more than 150 years ago to engage in educational and pastoral ministry.**

St. Martial College was founded in 1865. One hundred and forty-five years later the college was destroyed by the 2010 earthquake that killed over 250,000, and left millions homeless.

In 2015 the Spiritan community dedicated the new primary school building at St. Martial College in Port-au-Prince.

Now attention is being given to the priests' residence at the college, also damaged in the historic 2010 tremor.

The building has suffered wall cracking and foundation settling, the roof and basic plumbing require updating, and there is a need to add three new bedrooms to the second floor.

Through the generosity of donors like you, we were able to provide the necessary funds to complete this project.

# Spiritan Appointed Director of Nesti Center for Faith and Culture

**Fr. Binh T. Quach, C.S.Sp., has been appointed as the new Director for the Donald S. Nesti, C.S.Sp., Center for Faith and Culture (CFC) at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas.**

Fr. Binh recently returned to the U.S. province after working since 2005 in Asia.

Instrumental in initiating the Spiritan mission in Vietnam, he worked in the Diocese of Hsinchu in Taiwan in parish work and served as Vicar General for the local diocese.

After many visits to the Catholic community in China over several years, he was assigned in August 2016 by

the Vietnam-Taiwan group to China where he ministered in the Diocese of Yi Du assisting in clergy and lay formation.

As director at the Center for Faith and Culture at UST, he will serve as the primary manager responsible for all academic and curricular activities, programs, continuing adult education, ecumenical and interreligious activities, and employees of the center.

Celebrating 25 years in 2019, the CFC encourages dialogue as students discuss the issues we face in today's world, bringing the Catholic voice to the ongoing conversation while actively listening and valuing the voices of others.



Frs. Donald S. Nesti and Binh T. Quach, C.S.Sp., at the blessing of the new CFC house

## Zanzibar Forum Sheds Light on Interreligious Dialogue

**By Fr. William Headley, C.S.Sp.**

More than eight of ten people on earth claim religious affiliation. Only sixteen percent of the world's population are Catholic. Spiritans minister in sixty countries on six continents. Consequently, they regularly "rub elbows" with people of other cultural and religious traditions.

Encounters with "other than Catholics" intensify for Spiritans. They deliberately go where the Church has difficulty finding laborers. We, therefore, often take on service in areas where Christians are religious minorities. Tensions frequently rise in these settings, spilling into violence.

Conflict with religious overtones can show itself in such contexts.

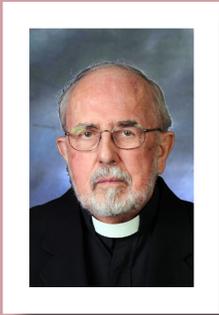
Interreligious dialogue (IRD) is a widespread practice wherein members of various religious traditions join to build bridges of understanding and collaboration. If successful, IRD facilitates peace.

From December 3-9, 2018, approximately 30 Spiritans and IRD experts from across the world gathered in Zanzibar, Tanzania for a "Spiritan Forum for Interreligious Dialogue." Shared experiences of IRD led to proposals for the 2020 Spiritan General Chapter.

The symposium's recommendations aim at better equipping Spiritans for IRD ministries in the midst of contemporary realities such as religious terrorism and fundamentalism.



## Fr. Girard J. Kohler, C.S.Sp., Enters Eternal Life



Fr. Girard J. Kohler, C.S.Sp., a member of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, died peacefully December 18, 2018. He was 81 years old.

Ordained to the priesthood in 1963, Fr. Kohler served on mission in Tanzania, where he engaged in the first evangelization of the Maasai and Sonjo peoples in the Diocese of Arusha until 1993.

After serving as administrator of St. Mary Magdalene Parish in Chicago and mission procurator the next twenty years at the Provinciate, Fr. Kohler officially retired in 2016.

A full obituary for Fr. Kohler may be found at [www.Spiritans.org](http://www.Spiritans.org).

*Eternal rest grant him, Lord. May your perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace.*

## Spiritans in the Philippines

*Continued from page 1*

And let's not forget the Spiritans in our second cycle formation house in Manila, coming from Vietnam and India, along with a Nigerian confrere busy with ongoing studies. For the past few years the Philippines has welcomed young men in formation from Vietnam and Poland to have their initial experience of mission with us. We are also blessed by the presence and inspiring ministry of the Spiritan Sisters in the Diocese of Iligan.

The number of active Lay Spiritans also continues to grow. There are 84 lay Spiritans throughout four dioceses. They meet monthly for a time of prayer and spiritual formation, have monthly apostolates to hospitals and prisons, and actively help with the education of poor children in three dioceses.

The vowed Spiritans are found in six dioceses, where we engage in ministry in urban parishes, rural parishes, and an ethnic Chinese-Filipino parish. Some of these parishes were, in fact, founded by the Spiritans at the request of the local bishop. There is also a very demanding prison

ministry, two hospital chaplaincies, as well as three Spiritan-founded kindergartens.

Another important aspect of the Spiritan presence in the Philippines is the varied youth ministries, including Campus



Fr. Daniel Sormani, C.S.Sp., with children of Resurrection Church

Ministry and a Spiritan-founded youth center. In all aspects of Spiritan life in the Philippines, a constant attention to helping advance the dialogue and harmony between the Christian and Muslim communities continues, most noticeably in the quality of warm, personal relation-

ships between the confreres and the Muslim people.

The most striking thing about the Spiritan presence in the Philippines is how much the confreres become a part of the families they serve...and are in turn ministered to by the local people. Our witness in our striking internationality is how quickly the confreres grow to love the country and the people, quickly picking up the local languages and customs, and making the Philippines "home" and "family." And all live, worship, and celebrate in the spirit of *Cor Unum et Anima Una*.



## April

- 14 Palm Sunday
- 18 Holy Thursday
- 19 Good Friday
- 21 Easter Sunday
- 28 Divine Mercy Sunday

## May

- 1 Religious Brothers Day
- 12 World Day of Prayer for Vocations
- 24 World Day of Prayer for the Catholic Church of China
- 31 Pentecost Novena Begins

## June

- 9 Pentecost Sunday  
Pentecost is the birthday of the Church and the founding feast of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.



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“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” - Matthew 28:19

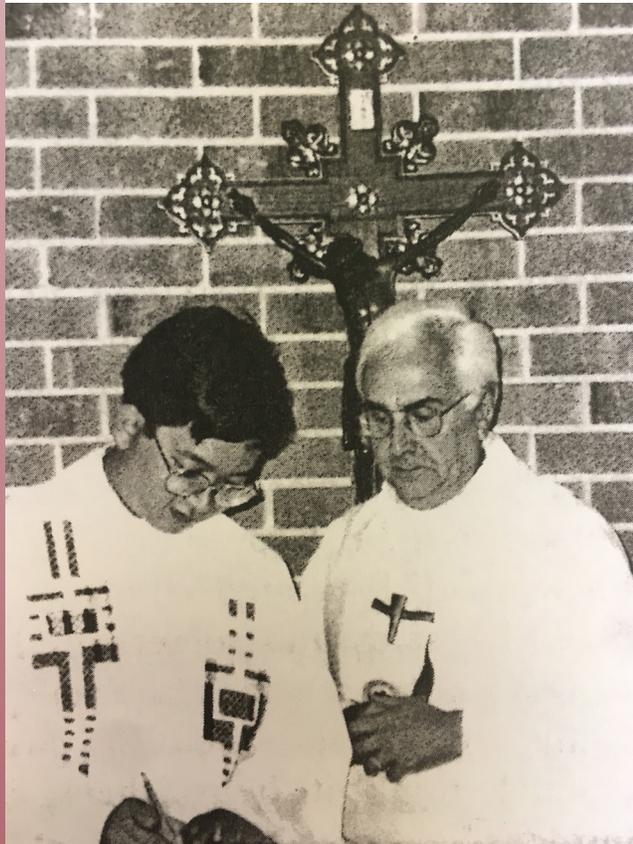
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### From the Spiritan Archives

**On September 9, 1995, Fr. Binh T. Quach, C.S.Sp., became the first Vietnamese Spiritan to make his profession.**

**Inside this issue:** Read about the inspiring history of the Spiritans' ministry in Asia, as well as Fr. Binh's new role as Director of the Donald S. Nesti, C.S.Sp., Center for Faith and Culture at the University of St. Thomas.

[www.Spiritans.org](http://www.Spiritans.org)

