



# SSS Grapevine

An Internal Publication of the  
Province of Saint Ann (USA)  
Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament

January 2, 2026 – 2026.1

## A Blessed 2026!

### Jubilee Year Ends with a Special Mass at the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist



As Pilgrims of Hope, we journeyed together this special year. Pope Francis awakened the church to be beacons of hope during this special holy time of 2025. On Sunday, December 28, the Feast of the Holy Family, Bishop Edward Malesic invited the church of Cleveland and those at the 12 sacred shrines and holy doors of the Diocese of Cleveland to return with the jubilee cross for a closing of the Jubilee Year and special Mass. This photo captures our group.

*(Pictured, left to right, Scott Gongos, Advancement Director of the Province of Saint Ann, Anthony Verdone, Saint Paschal Baylon parishioner and cross bearer, Father Lane, Bishop Malesic, an unknown couple, and Northeast Ohio local superior, Father JK Nguyen SSS.)*

At the province headquarters in Highland Heights, Ohio, we were honored to have our Saint Ann Shrine be named as a special jubilee site by Bishop Edward Malesic. Throughout the year, various pilgrims came not only from the 8-county diocese but also from Brazil and Argentina to spend time in prayer or attend Mass at this diocesan shrine. *(Pictured below are college students who made a special visit to Saint Ann Shrine in October.)*



## Happy New Year 2026 from our Staffs at SSS Parishes!



Saint Jean Baptiste Parish – New York, NY

religious and our 12 international priests. Thank you, and know we keep you in prayer and look forward to serving with you in the coming year!

As we begin a new year, the places we serve in parish ministry pray for you and are grateful for you! This past year, with the Province of Saint Ann (USA) celebrating 125 years of service, we were touched by your generosity and support, especially for our retired



Downtown Saint Joseph Parish – San Antonio, TX

*Pictured in the photos above, left to right: Fathers James Hayes, Fred Bugembe (Uganda), and John Kamas at Saint Jean Baptiste, New York City. In San Antonio, Saint Joseph (right photo), there are Fathers Arul Tharcius (India) and Anthony Pham (Vietnam)*

*In Houston at Corpus Christi Church, (left to right) Fathers Christian Christopher (Sri Lanka), Jaime Ario Rodriguez Reyes (Colombia), Tom Smithson, Paul Raj Gnanasekar (India), and Novice Matthew Vlastelica. In Holiday, Florida, we have in action Fathers Long Nguyen – in a blue vestment (Vietnam), Lito Hitosis (Philippines), right of the Book of the Gospels, Joseph Thai Minh Tran, and William Fickel.*



Corpus Christi Parish – Houston, TX



Saint Vincent de Paul Parish – Holiday, FL

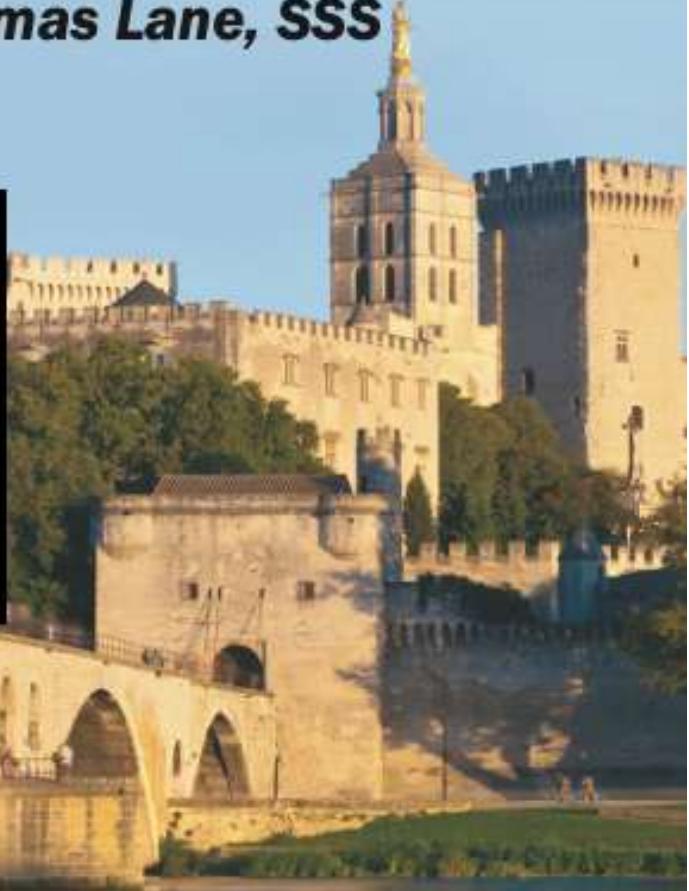
*At Saint Paschal Baylon, Highland Heights, we have Fathers Lane and Louis Demba Ndione (Senegal), and Brother Thomas Mella and Father Martin Hien Tran (Vietnam).*



Saint Paschal Baylon Parish – Highland Heights, OH

# EUCARISTIC PILGRIMAGE TO FRANCE IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SAINT PETER JULIAN EYMAR

**plus a Pre-Tour to Barcelona  
including Marseille, Avignon, La Salette,  
La Mure, Lyon, and Paris  
with Fr. John Thomas Lane, SSS**



**PRE-TOUR : OCTOBER 7-11, 2026  
MAIN TOUR: 13 DAYS OCTOBER 10-22, 2026**



For more information please contact:

Dimitre Bobev [dimitre.bobev@gmail.com](mailto:dimitre.bobev@gmail.com) 727-403-8060

Select International Tours

800-842-4842 [mirela@select-intl.com](mailto:mirela@select-intl.com)

[selectinternationaltours.com](http://selectinternationaltours.com)





## First Quarterly Meeting of the Province of Saint Ann International Priests

On December 12, 2025, 10 of the 12 SSS religious serving across our country and from around the globe gathered via Zoom to reflect on their time serving in the USA church and living in our five SSS religious communities. Unfortunately, two other men were unable to join due to their ministerial commitments: a funeral (*Father Arul Tharcius - India - Pastor in San Antonio*) and an anointing service in the hospital (*Father JK Nguyen - Vietnam - Hospital Chaplain in Mayfield Heights, Ohio*). Each religious shared their joys and challenges in sharing their lives and their ministries, and offered their guidance to the newest arrival from Uganda, Father Fred Bugembe. We are grateful to the many donors and benefactors who have supported us and these international men in our ministry. Here is a list, based on the “Hollywood Squares” picture above, top left to right:

- Father Christopher SSS (*Sri Lanka*) - Houston - Hospital Chaplain
- Together at the Eymard Conference Zoom Room, Father Martin Hien Tran SSS (*Vietnam*) - Highland Heights - Parochial Vicar
- Father Provincial taking the photo
- Father Rosario Pushparaj SSS (*India*) - Highland Heights - Parochial Vicar for two Lake County parishes (*Diocese of Cleveland*)
- Father Louis Demba Ndione SSS (*Senegal*) - Highland Heights - Parochial Vicar
- Father Fred Bugembe SSS (*Uganda*) - New York - Parochial Vicar
- Father Thomas Smithson SSS (*Provincial Council*) - Houston - Hospital Chaplain
- Father Anthony Pham SSS (*Vietnam*) - San Antonio - Parochial Vicar
- Father Joselito (Lito) Hitosis SSS (*Philippines*) - Holiday - Parochial Vicar
- Father Long Nguyen SSS (*Vietnam*) - Holiday - Pastor
- Father Paul Raj Gnanasekar (*India*) - Houston - Pastor

Our next meeting will be on Friday, February 27, 2026, with Claretian Missionary Father Ferdinand Okorie, the Academic Dean and Vice President of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Father Okorie is also the editor of *the US Catholic Magazine* and is originally from Nigeria. He will offer a spiritual retreat and reflection on the theme of mission for Lent.

---

***From the provincial offices,***

**We wish you all a happy, healthy, and holy New Year 2026  
and special 126<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Greetings! May God be Praised!**

