

# The Alexians

*The Love of Christ Compels Us*

*Immaculate Conception  
Province of the Congregation  
of Alexian Brothers*

**Mission Statement**

*Strengthened by community, prayer, commitment to the poor and the legacy of our founders, and in partnership with others, we Alexian Brothers witness the Healing Christ by a holistic approach to promoting health and caring for the sick, dying, aged and unwanted of all socioeconomic levels.*

**Values**

*Compassion  
Dignity of the Person  
Care of the Poor  
Holism  
Partnership*

## Brothers focus investments on ‘changing people’s lives’

**W**hile the Alexian Brothers pursue their healing mission through ministries in four states, the Philippines and Hungary, they also are helping the poor and vulnerable through their investment portfolio.

Since 2012, Alexian Brothers Communities and Ministries, the nonprofit organization of the Immaculate Conception Province, has worked with Ascension Investment Management (AIM) to ensure that the Brothers’ investments follow Catholic Socially Responsible Investment guidelines.

AIM is a subsidiary of Ascension, the nation’s largest nonprofit health system and the world’s largest Catholic health system. Ascension is the parent organization of Alexian Brothers Health System (ABHS) and coparent of AMITA Health, the joint operating company formed by ABHS and Adventist Midwest Health in 2015.

For the last three years, the Alexian Brothers have embraced AIM’s Impact Investment strategy,



Provincial Brother Dan McCormick, C.F.A., (second from left), and Brother Steve Fogt, C.F.A., (right), comptroller of Alexian Brothers Communities and Ministries, discuss the Alexian Brothers’ socially responsible investment philosophy with Joanne Kristoffersen, (left), secretary to the provincial, and Adeline Dzierozynski, business manager of Alexian Brothers Communities and Ministries.

which focuses on investments that support the betterment of the human condition and provide a competitive return. The strategy seeks to foster improvements in the following areas: clean water, food and nutrition, adequate and affordable housing, education, health and health care, environmental sustainability and financial services.

“The Brothers want to invest in a way that

*(continued on page 7)*

## Superior general likes what he sees at Hungarian mission

**B**rother Lawrence “Larry” Krueger, C.F.A., superior general of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers, visited the Brothers’ mission in Győrújbarát, Hungary, recently and later delivered a glowing report about the mission’s progress.

“The Brothers there have done a fantastic job,” said Brother Larry, who as superior general conducts an assessment, or “visitation,” once every three years at the mission. “They have dived in, done what needed to be done and expanded the ministry.”

Two Brothers staff the mission: Brother Alexius Siska, C.F.A., and Brother Leó Vendrey, C.F.A. Brother Alexius oversees the mission as director of its Alexian Brothers Community. He also ministers part-time to residents at the mission’s St. Elizabeth of Hungary Home for the Elderly, which provides assisted-living and skilled nursing care for low-income older adults. Brother Leó devotes most of his time to assisting the home’s residents and staff.

Brother Alexius and Brother Leó took on the day-to-day tasks of sustaining and growing the mission following the death of its founder, Brother Joseph Francis Czébán, C.F.A., in May 2013. Under their leadership, the 15-year-old mission has continued to grow. The home for the elderly, which has become known for delivering high-quality, holistic care, operates at capacity and maintains a waiting list.

Brother Alexius and Brother Leó have collaborated with Henriett Ziegler, the home’s administrator, to develop a plan for expanding the facility to meet growing demand for private rooms. The plan calls for connecting the home to the Brothers’ St. Alexius Monastery next-door and converting the monastery’s 12 bedrooms

into private apartments for senior residents. Twelve existing rooms at the home will be converted into private apartments during the next five years, giving the facility a total of 24 private rooms – more than half of its projected 47 total rooms. A new Brothers residence will be built at a nearby site owned by the Brothers.

Increased nursing home regulation slowed the process of obtaining permits for the project, but the process started to accelerate late this past summer, and the Brothers expect to begin the project by year-end. “They’re on the right course with expanding the home because a real need exists,” said Brother Larry, who visited the mission from Sept. 9 to Sept. 14. “There’s no doubt in my mind that what they’re doing is valuable.”

While planning the home’s expansion, Brother Alexius and Brother Leó have been extending the Brothers’ healing mission in other ways, Brother Larry said. Brother Leó, for example, conducts scripture studies for St. Elizabeth residents. Because of a shortage of priests, the two Brothers distribute Holy Communion to Catholic residents of local nursing homes. Brother Alexius also has been contacting local parishes to encourage priests to celebrate Mass at the nursing homes.

In addition, Brother Alexius and Brother Leó invite area residents to a weekly “holy hour” service in the chapel at St. Alexius Monastery. A monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament is placed on the altar during the service, which also includes scripture readings, prayers and hymns. The service concludes with Holy Communion.

Brother Larry’s visitation followed a visit to the mission from Sept. 6 to Sept. 9 by a group of Brothers from St. Alexius Province in Germany. The Hungarian Brothers accompanied the German Brothers and Brother Larry on visits to various religious and historic sites in Hungary. “It’s always a great pleasure to meet the Brothers in person,” Brother Alexius said.



Superior General Brother Lawrence “Larry” Krueger, C.F.A., (left), joins Brother Leó Vendrey, C.F.A., for a photo during Brother Larry’s visit to the Alexian Brothers’ mission in Győrújbarát, Hungary.

# Provincial's Letter

## Dear Alexian Friends:

As the Alexian Brothers have shifted away from our longtime administrative and nursing roles at healthcare facilities in recent years, we have focused our energies on identifying and pursuing new opportunities to perpetuate our 800-year-old mission of serving the sick, the poor, the elderly and the mentally ill.

Most of these opportunities require us to have some type of physical presence, which we can provide only to a certain point because the deaths of older Brothers and an overall decline in religious vocations have reduced our numbers during the last 30 to 40 years.

But the Brothers have found a way to increase our impact exponentially without having boots on the ground: Managing our investment portfolio to support the betterment of the human condition. (See article on page 1.) We are very pleased with the results of this effort, which so far has:

- fueled the expansion of a Kenyan pharmacy chain dedicated to improving wellness and quality of life among East Africans;
- provided financial services to people in Asia and Latin America who have little or no access to such services;
- and supported an innovative power and cooling solution that is providing more-reliable electrical power at a significantly lower cost for people in Sub-Saharan Africa, and is reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

While our investments are helping the underprivileged and making the world a better place, the Brothers continue to do the same through our individual and collective efforts here in the U.S. and at our missions in Hungary and the Philippines.

In Hungary, Brother Alexius Siska, C.F.A., and Brother Leó Vendrey, C.F.A., continue to expand our mission there. (See article on page 2.) While ministering to low-income older adults at the mission's St. Elizabeth of Hungary

Home for the Elderly, Brother Alexius and Brother Leó are pursuing a plan to expand the facility by moving out of their monastery and converting it into additional space for the home for the elderly. They also are extending the Brothers' healing mission in other ways, such as offering scripture readings for St. Elizabeth residents and conducting a weekly "holy hour" service for area residents.

In Chicago's northwest suburbs, Brother Torch Acosta, C.F.A., continues to expand our "presence ministry," which provides comfort, support and spiritual guidance to people at our namesake health-care facilities. (See article on page 4.) One of his top priorities has been helping clients of the Alexian Brothers Center for Mental Health find jobs. He takes pictures of "Help Wanted" or "Now Hiring" signs and funnels them to the center's vocational department. As a result, clients are finding jobs after receiving treatment at the center and recovering enough to return to the workforce.

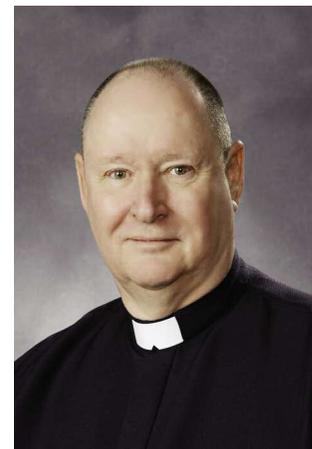
In the Philippines, our Brothers continue to assist or operate several ministries for the disadvantaged and sick. This year, the Brothers have taken on the additional responsibility of guiding four American novices through the first-year of their two-year Novitiate program, helping them develop their prayer life while exposing them to ministries that harken back to the healing work of the earliest Alexian Brothers in the Middle Ages. (See article on page 6.)

Together, these efforts and others, such as our ministry serving vulnerable homebound seniors in Chattanooga, Tennessee, are extending the Brothers' healing mission in multiple directions, renewing our tradition of caring for those most in need.

May God Bless You and Yours,



Brother Daniel McCormick, C.F.A.  
Provincial  
Immaculate Conception Province of the Alexian Brothers



## Did you know?

*Editor's Note: "Did you know?" provides brief glimpses into the rich, 800-year history of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers.*

Remember the movie "Dead Men Walking" about the death-row ministry of Sister Helen Prejean?

Actress Susan Sarandon won the Academy Award for Best Actress for her portrayal of Sister Helen in the 1995 movie, which tells the story of how Sister Helen provided spiritual advice and comfort to an inmate during the time leading up to his execution.

Sister Helen's ministry was reminiscent of one of the most dramatic ministerial expressions of the Alexian Brothers' 800-year history: the Brothers' presence on the executioner's scaffold during the 16th century. When a criminal was sentenced to death, a Brother would stay with him in jail the night before the execution and would accompany him to the scaffold the next day.

## 'Presence ministry' supports people trying to change their lives

**W**hen Brother Torch Acosta, C.F.A., drives his car in Chicago's northwest suburbs, he always watches for "Help Wanted" or "Now Hiring" signs. If he sees one, he pulls over and takes a picture of it.

Brother Torch has developed this routine not because he's looking for a new job, but because he's trying to help others become employed.

He visits the center for mental health on Wednesday afternoons, greeting and talking with clients in the facility's lobby and interacting with staff.

"If clients are waiting to see their therapist, I introduce myself and offer support, encouragement and prayers," said Brother Torch, who divides his time among several facilities and residences each week. On Wednesday mornings, he



Brother Torch Acosta, C.F.A., (front, sitting), joins associates of the Alexian Brothers Center for Mental Health for a group photo during the center's annual employee appreciation picnic. Brother Torch, who provides a Brother's presence at the center in Arlington Heights, Illinois, has played a key role in helping its clients find employment.

He emails the pictures to Ravi Kalani, vocational team leader at the Alexian Brothers Center for Mental Health in Arlington Heights, Illinois. The team prints the pictures and displays them in the center's vocational room, where clients seeking employment can look at them.

Brother Torch has provided hundreds of job leads during the last year, Kalani said. "It has been wonderful," he said. "People have definitely found employment with these leads he has sent."

Brother Torch's efforts are part of the Alexian Brothers' "presence ministry" at several of their namesake health-care facilities in the northwest suburbs. Brother Torch leads the ministry, through which the Brothers provide comfort, support and spiritual guidance to clients, patients, residents and family members.

visits residents in the center's Transitional Living Program and Community Integrated Living Arrangement program.

Many of the center's clients have had difficulty finding and maintaining employment because of mental illness, but through treatment at the center, they find ways to cope with their illness and prepare themselves to return to the workforce, Kalani said. His team provides a variety of services to job-seeking clients, such as assistance with creating resumes, searching Internet job sites, and following up on job leads.

"So many people post 'Help Wanted' signs that we don't have access to, and having Brother Torch going out, finding them and sending them to us has really helped us know what's going on in the community, including what types of

places are hiring and when they are hiring,” Kalani said.

Brother Torch also provides encouragement to job seekers. “Looking for jobs is hard, and when you get rejected, you can be down,” Kalani said. “When they see how hard he’s out there working and finding all of these job leads, and then he comes in and is very encouraging to them, they get more motivated and feel better.”

Brother Torch has been visiting the center for more than a year, and his presence “has been incredible” for clients and staff, said Paula Speer, revenue cycle manager at the center and chairperson of its spirit committee. The committee focuses on keeping staff morale at a high level and keeping associates strongly connected to the center’s mission and clients, as well as the community.

“Having a Brother’s presence here really does tie us back to the Brothers’ 800-year-old healing mission,” Speer said. “It makes it more tangible. When clients see a Brother in the lobby, they gravitate toward him. It makes the kind of work we do here more impactful.”

Brother Torch attended the center’s annual employee appreciation picnic Sept. 12, interacting with associates and participating in activities with them. The event “is a way to enhance our sense of unity and make everyone feel connected to each other, to the center and to the Alexian Brothers’ mission,” Speer said. “Brother Torch was an awesome addition. It made it like: ‘We’re all in this together.’”

Last spring, Brother Torch expanded his presence ministry to include the AMITA Health St. Alexius Outpatient Center in Schaumburg, Illinois, where he participates a few times each month in a group exercise class for seniors. The “Seniors in Motion” class meets on Mondays and Wednesdays and is open to the public. It helps seniors stay fit and offers opportunities to form new friendships, according to center staff members Stefania Missanelli, Mary Coon and



Brother Torch Acosta, C.F.A., (center), participates in a group exercise class for seniors at the AMITA Health St. Alexius Outpatient Center in Schaumburg, Illinois. Brother Torch visited the class initially to support and encourage class participants, and at their suggestion, soon started exercising with them.

David Dinello, as well as class participants. “The group enjoys Brother Torch’s participation and faith,” Dinello said.

Brother Torch began visiting the class initially to encourage patients and is grateful to them for encouraging him to exercise with them. “I hope that many others may join and meet wonderful people who want to stay healthy and have a positive quality of life,” he said.

Brother Torch said he models his presence ministry after the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. “If people didn’t go to Jesus for healing, He took the initiative to go to them,” he said. “I am struck by Jesus’ fearlessness to meet the needy where they were at. I admire how He went to the people.”

## Assignment of novices to Philippines mirrors change in Brothers' identity

Reflecting a renewed focus on ministries serving the vulnerable and marginalized, the Immaculate Conception Province for the first time has assigned a group of U.S.-based novices to spend the first year of the two-year novitiate program at the Brothers' mission in the Philippines.

Novice Brothers Zeke Mapa, Joe Pense, Robert Podjarsky and Marc Rizzo joined the Alexian Brothers Community in the Bajada

section of Davao City during the summer to begin their novitiate training under the guidance of Brother Raphael Fallado, C.F.A., director of

novices and director of the Bajada community.

The novices since have been immersed in ministries that recall the work of the earliest Alexian Brothers, who cared for the poor and sick during the Middle Ages. The novices have ministered to the needy at the Talikala shelter for prostituted women and children and at a home for sick and malnourished children and a home for the dying, both operated by the Sisters of St. Teresa of Calcutta. The novices also spent two weeks living with an indigenous tribe in a remote village in the Bukidnon mountains northwest of Davao City.

All four men have been moved deeply by the experiences, which have strengthened their faith and have given them a better understanding of poverty, said Provincial Brother Dan McCormick, C.F.A. They also have been influenced by living in community with the Filipino Brothers, experiencing their inspirational approach to prayer, and participating in novi-

tiate classes focused on liturgy, spirituality and understanding cultural differences. A retreat at a Benedictine monastery also had a profound spiritual impact on the novices, Brother Dan said. "The consistent message I have received from them is: 'I have encountered God in a deeper way,'" he said.

The decision to send the novices to the Philippines stemmed from "a sea change" in the Brothers' identity since Alexian Brothers Health System (ABHS) became part of Ascension in 2012, Brother Dan said. The Brothers at that time already had withdrawn almost completely from daily roles at ABHS facilities because of their declining numbers and significant structural changes in U.S. health care, and the Ascension agreement freed the Brothers from their remaining ABHS oversight responsibilities.

"We have recognized that we are not going to be founding and running hospitals anymore," Brother Dan said. "Instead of drawing people to God at a place like a Catholic hospital, we have to take God to the people, especially those who are vulnerable and marginalized."

New Alexian Brothers ministries, such as one serving vulnerable, homebound seniors in Chattanooga, Tennessee, reflect this spirit.

"In sending the novices to the Philippines, we hope to provide a new opportunity for exploring what it means to be a missionary, to be a Brother, to confront abject poverty, and to provide hands-on care at the bedside," Brother Dan said. "We want them to understand the reality that for many in the world, life is about finding their next meal. We want them to confront their own humanity, embrace the reality of who they truly are, and accept their own powerlessness in the face of poverty and death. We want them to open themselves to being vulnerable and to learn to be accessible for others, so they can live without fear, be present for those in need, and walk with them in the depth of their depression, sorrow or pain."



Novice Brothers Zeke Mapa, (front row, left), Robert Podjarsky, (front row, third from left), Joe Pense, (back row, fifth from left), and Marc Rizzo, (back row, sixth from left), along with Brother Raphael Fallado, C.F.A., director of novices (front row, right), pose for a photo with members of an indigenous tribe in the Philippines. The novices lived with the tribe for two weeks in the mountains northwest of Davao City.

## Brothers focus investments on ‘changing people’s lives’

*(continued from page 1)*

produces good by changing people’s lives,” said Brother Dan McCormick, C.F.A., provincial of the Immaculate Conception Province. “This strategy allows us to support things like providing education for the underprivileged and improving health, housing, clean drinking water and sewage systems. It’s a whole gamut of social services that we think needs to be encouraged and managed responsibly. There also are a number of investments that support environmentally sound ‘green’ projects.”

The Brothers’ investments, for example, have helped to fuel the expansion of a Kenyan pharmacy chain dedicated to improving wellness and quality of life among East Africans. The chain is seeking to redefine the traditional pharmacy model by providing access to affordable, high-quality medicines and health-related products, and by offering consultation centers and telemedicine capabilities at its locations.

Through such strategies, the chain aims to solve a variety of problems, including high drug prices caused by fragmented distribution networks, as well as a scarcity of essential medicines, which often causes low-income people to buy medicines that might not be certified or are counterfeit or out of date. The Brothers’ investment has helped the chain serve more than 1 million people, many of whom are at the lowest end of the economic spectrum.

The Brothers also have invested in a social ventures fund that supports financial institutions providing services to people in Asia and Latin America who have little or no access to such services. These businesses provide access to capital and products and services such as small business credit, vehicle financing, household finance, equipment finance, insurance, mobile banking and money transfers. Companies in the fund directly serve more than 10 million people with small business loans, micro-savings accounts, micro-insurance and mobile payment tools.

“By investing in companies that provide lower-cost and reliable financial services in areas where they have not existed, the Brothers are supporting sustainable economic growth and helping improve the living standards of those at the bottom of the economic pyramid,” said Luke Knecht, partner and managing director at

**The Brothers’ investments are “helping the underprivileged and making the world a better place.”**

Dearborn Partners, LLC, a Chicago-based investment management firm. Knecht advises the Brothers about their investments and introduced them to David Erickson, chief investment officer at AIM, and Jessica Cook, senior development officer at AIM.

The Brothers also have invested directly in a company that offers an innovative power and cooling solution to clients in Sub-Saharan Africa. As of 2015, this area had more people without reliable access to competitively priced electricity than anywhere else in the world.

“The company in which we invested on the Brothers’ behalf provides reliable and energy-efficient solutions to clients in Nigeria and elsewhere by providing a solar-diesel-battery hybrid,” Erickson said. Added Cook: “The Brothers’ investment in the company has helped provide more-reliable power at a significantly lower cost while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.” The company had installed its hybrid system at 54 sites by the end of 2017, eliminating more than 2,300 tons of carbon dioxide emissions. The company planned to install the system at 30 sites per month in 2018.

“The Brothers are very pleased with the impact of our investments through AIM,” Brother Dan said. “They are furthering our healing mission by helping the underprivileged and making the world a better place.”

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# The Alexians

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## Bishop visits Brothers in St. Louis



(Left photo) The Most Reverend Mark Rivituso, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, poses for a photo with the Alexian Brothers of St. Louis during a pastoral visit to their community on Oct. 2, the Feast of the Guardian Angels. Shown with the bishop are (left to right): Brother Edward Walsh, C.F.A., Brother Steve Fogt, C.F.A., Brother Warren Longo, C.F.A., Brother Jeffrey Callander, C.F.A., and Brother Thomas Keusenkothen, C.F.A. (Right photo) Bishop Rivituso and Brother Warren face the altar as the bishop prepares to celebrate Mass in the chapel at St. Alexius Hospital, formerly known as Alexian Brothers Hospital. Hospital employees and Alexian Brothers Associates joined the Brothers at the Mass. Bishop Rivituso later blessed a statue of Christ the Healer outside the hospital and ate lunch with the Brothers and Alexian Brothers Associates at the Brothers' residence. He commended the Brothers for remaining in the city to address the needs of the poor.