



# **HONORING OUR RETIRED PRIESTS AND BROTHERS**

## **RENOVATING THE LAVIGERIE HOUSE**

**5757 7TH AVENUE NORTH | ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33710-7112**

In 1986, the Missionaries of Africa embarked on a project to design and construct a new home for their retired members from the United States. The plot of land for this endeavor was generously donated by Richard and Kathy Deeds, situated across from their own residence and just a stone's throw from the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle, the seat of the diocese. The existing community house in Florida was small and inaccessible, necessitating the funding of this new construction with the needs of senior members in mind.

Designed to accommodate a dozen members, the community at the new residence would comprise both retirees and younger members of the Missionaries of Africa dedicated to caring for the retired individuals. This new establishment was designated as a "house of prayer" and christened Lavigerie House, in honor of the esteemed founder of the Missionaries of Africa, Archbishop Charles Cardinal Lavigerie.

For nearly four decades, Lavigerie House has provided a safe haven for our retired American members of the Missionaries of Africa while also serving the wider community. Parishes, hospitals, and numerous other ministries have benefited from the active involvement of the Missionaries of Africa. Today, one of our retired members serves as a chaplain at the local VA hospital, while another is actively involved as a volunteer in prison ministry. Our members often assist local parishes in celebrating Masses or hearing confessions. All members actively participate in prayer and various activities to support the Church and our missions.

## Needed Repair Before Updating

In an effort to care for the environment and lower utility costs, we began planning to add solar panels to Lavigerie House, taking advantage of the abundant Florida sun. Many of our missions in Africa already depend on solar power for their basic electrical needs, so our members are familiar with the technology. It seemed like a logical step forward for Lavigerie House. However, before we could proceed with the solar panel installation, we were informed that we needed to upgrade the house to meet existing building codes.

Lavigerie House was not built to meet Florida's current building standards. Over the past decade, there has been an increase in hurricane damage, leading to the strengthening of local building codes to fortify structures against hurricanes. Before any solar panels can be installed, all the windows need to be replaced with hurricane windows, which are engineered to be safer and withstand more extreme weather conditions than standard windows. Hurricane glass, also known as laminated glass, is designed to withstand extreme wind speeds and protect against wind-borne debris. Additionally, all doors need to be replaced with steel and hurricane glass. Currently, all windows and doors are the original builder-grade installations from 1986. The immediate concern is that hurricane-force winds and debris could break the existing windows and doors, endangering our members. The biggest danger is that broken windows and doors can potentially create negative pressure that may lift or tear away all or part of the roof.



Lavigerie House in 1986



Caption

## Addressing the Risk and Sustainability

What started off as one thing has now become a safety issue for community members in Florida. Now that we are alerted to the risk, we are planning a two-phase strategy to renovate Lavigerie House in Florida.

### Phase 1: Adding Hurricane Windows and Doors

The immediate need to protect the Lavigerie House community is to replace all the current windows and doors with hurricane windows and doors. This will fortify the building, bringing it up to current building codes. The new windows and doors will cost twice as much as normal non-impact windows of the same type and size, but they will have the added benefit of being more energy-efficient, longer-lasting, and less breakable.

The cost for the new hurricane windows and doors is \$60,000, with an additional \$25,500 needed for labor and installation.

## Phase 2: Implementing Solar Energy Solutions

Once Phase 1 is complete, we can address the original goal of enhancing the energy efficiency of Lavigerie House by incorporating a solar panel system. Given that all the house's mechanical systems, including heating, cooling, and cooking, are electric, the utility costs amount to nearly \$9,000 annually. Installing a solar panel array would significantly reduce consumption during peak hours, and when combined with the implementation of energy-efficient windows and doors, we anticipate a 95% reduction in overall energy costs.

The estimated expenses for the solar panel array and its accompanying hardware are projected to be \$152,334. However, we believe we will be eligible for the \$39,606 Residential Renewable Energy Tax Credit (ITC) rebate, reducing the overall cost to \$112,727.

While there are funds already earmarked for the solar panel system, no funds were allocated for the installation of hurricane windows and doors. Completion of Phase 1, the total replacement of all windows and doors, is necessary before permits can be issued for the new solar panel system.

## The Future of Lavigerie House

The Missionaries of Africa are deeply committed to the future of Lavigerie House. There is an immediate and ongoing need for an accessible retirement house for our members who have dedicated their lives to serving the Church and the missions.

We are dedicated to maintaining and expanding our ministerial presence in Florida through the community at Lavigerie House. With your support, we can ensure that Lavigerie House continues to be a place of safety, support, and service for our senior members and the wider community for years to come.



Brother James Heintz,  
M. Afr. Mchinji, Malawi, 1980

Brother James Heintz, M.Afr.,  
St. Petersburg, Florida, 2024



Father Tom Reilly, M. Afr.,  
Zambia, 1988

Father Tom Reilly, M. Afr.,  
St. Petersburg, Florida, 2024

## Lavigerie House Facts

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Current  
Residents

83

Average  
Age of the  
Residents

54

Average  
Years of MOA  
Membership

488

Total Combined  
Years of MOA  
Membership

African Countries Served by  
the Current Residents:

D.R. of Congo, Ghana, Malawi, Mali,  
Nigeria, Tanzania, and Zambia

Other Countries Served by the Current Residents:  
Canada, Great Britain, India, Mexico, and USA

Built in: 1986

# How You Can Contribute

Your support is crucial in helping us achieve our goal of renovating and enhancing Lavigerie House to ensure the safety and sustainability of our community members. There are several ways you can make a pledge to support this important project:



## CASH DONATION

You can make a cash donation directly to our renovation fund.



## CHECK DONATION

You can also make a donation by writing a check payable to the Missionaries of Africa. Please indicate 'Lavigerie House Fund' in the memo line.



## STOCK DONATION

Donating stocks or securities can be an advantageous way to support our project while potentially receiving tax benefits. Please contact us for more information on how to donate stocks or securities.



## IRA CONTRIBUTION

If you are over 70½ years old, you can make a tax-free contribution directly from your IRA to support our renovation project. This may also provide tax benefits for you as a donor. Please consult with your financial advisor for more details.

**Your support and generosity will not only help improve the safety and sustainability of Lavigerie House but will also have a lasting impact on the lives of our senior members and the greater St. Petersburg community. Together, we can make a difference and create a better future for all.**

**For more information, contact:**  
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## Brief History of the Society of Missionaries of Africa

The Society of Missionaries of Africa, known as "The White Fathers," was founded in 1868 by Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, Archbishop of Algiers and Carthage. Named for their white habit inspired by traditional North African dress, the White Fathers wear a rosary around their necks to show their dedication to the Blessed Virgin Mary, with their feast day on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

From the start, the Society's mission has been focused on Africa. Initially, young men from Europe answered the call to serve Christ and the people of Africa. In 1886, John Forbes from Quebec became the first Missionary of Africa from the Americas, strengthening the ties between France and Quebec. This connection led to the establishment of a postulancy in Quebec City in 1900, where hundreds of Canadians joined the Society over the following century.

In the United States, the first house was opened in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1929, followed by others in New York and Maryland. The current house in Washington, DC, was acquired in 1949.

Today, the Society includes approximately 1,110 fully professed members, including priests, deacons, and brothers, who have taken permanent vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In the Americas, there are 102 Missionaries of Africa: 75 in Canada, 17 in the United States, and 10 in Mexico.

The headquarters for the Province of the Americas is in Washington, DC. The Society runs one parish in the United States, Our Lady of Light Parish in the Diocese of Brooklyn. The retirement house, Lavigerie House, for American Missionaries of Africa is in St. Petersburg, Florida. The Province of the Americas operates one formation house, the Philosophy House in Guadalajara, Mexico, which is integral to the Society's educational infrastructure, providing a dedicated space for training future missionaries.

The Society of Missionaries of Africa's unwavering dedication to its mission and the enduring commitment to serving the people of Africa.