“Seeing What Really Matters in Life”

“You, dear consecrated brothers and sisters, caught sight of the treasure worth more than any worldly good. And so you left behind precious things. Why? Because you fell in love with Jesus, you saw everything in Him, and enraptured by His gaze, you left the rest behind. Religious life is this vision. It means seeing what really matters in life.” (Pope Francis, homily on the World Day for Consecrated Life, 2020)

We, men of Holy Cross, share a common vision — a vision of what really matters in life; a vision which compels us to leave all behind in order to follow the One in whom we see everything.

The consecrated life is an act of love for the Lord; even more so, it’s the Lord’s loving gift to us who live it by our vows of celibacy, poverty, and obedience. What a grace it is, as our Constitutions state, “to live in the image of Jesus, who was sent in love to announce God’s rule and who beckons us to follow Him!” (Constitution 5:43)

As we celebrate the perpetual consecration of Robert, Pablo, Geoffrey, Felipe, and David, we give thanks and praise to God for the witness of their public profession and for their brotherhood in community. Final Vows also marks a commitment to lifelong service in imitation of Him who “came to serve and not to be served.” Pablo will live his life of service as a perpetually professed religious brother. Robert, Geoffrey, Felipe, and David are ordained to service in the Church as deacons in anticipation of their priestly ordination at Easter.

This issue of Ave Crux also introduces men who are new to formation in Holy Cross or who are continuing their formation as Postulants after Old College. They, too, in the words of Pope Francis, “have fallen in love with Jesus.” They have spent time discerning His call in prayer, in conversation, and in service. Now, they have taken an important next step: discerning, in an intentional way, life as a consecrated priest or brother of Holy Cross. As you will read, they share how they were led to Holy Cross and they offer sound advice about how to discern the Lord’s call. We welcome them and we are privileged to accompany them as they continue along the path of discernment.

Living the consecrated life means leaving behind precious things, but seeing and embracing what really matters in life is a treasure worth far more than any worldly good. Joy, peace, fulfillment, purpose, community — these, and more, await. Will you answer the call?

Ave Crux,

Fr. John M. DeRiso, C.S.C.
Director of Vocations

Fr. John DeRiso, C.S.C., is Director of the Office of Vocations for the United States Province of the Congregation of Holy Cross. He resides in Morrissey Manor on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, presiding at Mass and serving as a pastoral presence for the men of the residence hall.
With joy and thanksgiving, the Congregation of Holy Cross celebrated the Perpetual Profession of Vows of five men: Mr. David Smith, C.S.C., Mr. Geoffrey Mooney, C.S.C., Br. Pablo José Quan López, C.S.C., Mr. Robert Lisowski, C.S.C., and Mr. Felipe Campos Reséndez, C.S.C. (pictured left to right, above). Their profession took place at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind. Rev. William M. Lies, C.S.C., Provincial Superior of the Congregation of Holy Cross, United States Province of Priests and Brothers, presided at Mass and received their vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.

The following day, Mr. Robert Lisowski, C.S.C., Mr. Geoffrey Mooney, C.S.C., Mr. Felipe Campos Reséndez, C.S.C., and Mr. David Smith, C.S.C., were ordained to the Order of Deacon in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart by the Most Rev. Kevin C. Rhoades, bishop of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese.

Rev. Mr. Robert Lisowski, C.S.C., graduated with a B.A. in philosophy with minors in psychology and classical languages (summa cum laude) from St. John’s University, Queens, N.Y., in 2014. He received his M.Div. from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind., in May 2020. Robert entered formation with the Congregation of Holy Cross in August 2013 as a Postulant. He made his First Profession of Vows on July 30, 2016.

“It is my hope that my living of the religious life ultimately signals to the world that God is alive, that God has spoken to us uniquely in Jesus Christ, and that God has sent His Spirit into our hearts as inspiration and consolation for this journey back to God's self,” said Robert. “The great spiritual task that we all face is to believe in the love and nearness of this God and to live each day as best we can out of this conviction.”

Robert is currently assigned as a rector at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind.

Br. Pablo José Quan López, C.S.C., graduated with a B.S. in biological sciences from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind., in 2013, and attained his M.Div. from the University of Notre Dame in 2020. Br. Pablo entered formation with the Congregation of Holy Cross in August 2013 as a Postulant. He made his First Profession of Vows on August 1, 2015.

“I was helping out with adult faith formation and preparing adults for the Sacraments of Initiation, and found great joy in teaching others about the Catholic faith. As I listened to people's journeys of faith, I found myself learning a lot about what it means to follow Christ, to have faith in God’s Providence, to carry the Cross, and to find true hope and joy amidst difficult circumstances.”

Br. Pablo is serving at St. André Bessette Parish (“Downtown Chapel”) in Portland, Ore., and is also assisting in Campus Ministry at the University of Portland, Portland, Ore.

Rev. Mr. Geoffrey Mooney, C.S.C., graduated with a B.S. in mathematics and a B.A. in theology from the...
University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind., in 2009. In 2011, he received his M.Ed. from the same, and received his M.Div. from the University of Notre Dame in 2020. Geoffrey entered formation with the Congregation of Holy Cross in August 2014 as a Postulant. He made his First Profession of Vows on July 30, 2016.

“In the summer of 2019, I spent six weeks in East Africa, visiting our Holy Cross parishes, schools, and formation houses in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. Everywhere I went, the same refrain greeted me and reminded me how much we are united as God’s family: ‘God is good all the time. All the time God is good — because that’s His nature.’ God’s nature is pure goodness, and He wants us to be good like Him — good to ourselves, good to others, and good to Him. I pray that this lesson from my time in East Africa will guide all my future ministry in Holy Cross.”

Geoffrey will serve as a deacon at Christ the King Catholic Church, South Bend, Ind.

**Rev. Mr. Felipe Campos Reséndez, C.S.C.** graduated with a B.A. in theology from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind., in 2013, and obtained his M.Div. from the University in 2019. He entered formation with Holy Cross in August 2013 as a Postulant, and made his First Profession of Vows on August 1, 2015.

“I hope that by my vows I can show to others God’s goodness and love for every one of us. He has transformed my life, given me so much more than I deserve or can repay, and loved me beyond anything I could ever imagine or express. I can only hope that my life will be seen as a thanksgiving for that love and goodness, and in even the smallest way help others move to that same joy and thankfulness with which I have been blessed.”

Felipe will serve as a deacon at St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic Church, Austin, Texas.

**Rev. Mr. David Smith, C.S.C.** graduated with a B.A. in political science from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind., in 2014, and obtained his M.Div. from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind., in 2020. David entered formation with the Congregation of Holy Cross in August 2014 as a Postulant, and professed First Vows on July 30, 2016.

“Each of us as Christians is called to follow Jesus and, in a special way, this calling to the consecrated life is a gift that grants the opportunity to embody and identify with Christ in such a radically explicit way. My hope is to grow each day through this witness to be able to say, alongside St. Paul, that, ‘It is no longer I who live but Christ.’ Our world stands in need of much peace, hope, and love.”

David will serve his diaconate year at St. John Vianney Parish, Goodyear, Ariz.
When I walked into Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in downtown Indianapolis, my life took a major turn. I was going through my Confirmation in eighth grade and felt an unusually strong pull to the idea of celebrating the Sacraments and the vocation of Holy Orders. However, I did not really take action on this call until my sophomore year of high school, when my chaplain encouraged me to tour the diocesan seminary in Indianapolis. This visit confirmed for me the pull I felt towards the priesthood and I knew in my heart that this was the vocation I needed to pursue in life.

I first learned about the Congregation of Holy Cross through my friend Sam, as we both went through discernment together in high school. Through further deliberation, I decided to apply to the Summer Seminary Immersion Program (SSIP), a two-week academic course offered by the Congregation of Holy Cross in conjunction with the Notre Dame Summer Scholars Program. From the very first day of the program, I knew this community would be an exceptional fit for my discernment.

To prepare myself for Old College, I immersed myself in Scripture and prayer. The more time I spent reading the Word of God and praying to God, the more my fears were alleviated.

My advice to those who are discerning a religious or priestly vocation is not to go through the process alone. Discerning is challenging; however, when you surround yourself with people who truly care for you and create a strong, steady prayer life, the whole process becomes much easier. Be confident that God has placed people in your life that will love and encourage you throughout the process of discerning religious life.

More about Joshua ...

Family: Second oldest of four children of Jeffrey and Nicole Amodeo
Home Parish: Saints Francis and Clare Parish, Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Education: Roncalli High School, 2020; First-year student at the University of Notre Dame
Hobbies: Biking, hiking, baseball, playing and listening to music
For those men who entered formation in the Undergraduate Seminary, the next step in formation is Moreau Seminary, where they join with other men who have completed bachelor’s degrees to form a Postulant Class. The former “Old Collegian” typically completes his Postulancy while a senior at Notre Dame or at Holy Cross College. With a move to Moreau comes greater focus on theology and philosophy. Postulants discern whether to proceed to the Novitiate, after which they will profess temporary vows, and enter the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) Program at Notre Dame.

John Draves
Berea, Ohio

My relationship with Holy Cross began when I participated in SSIP, and it was during that program that I first heard God’s call to enter the Old College Undergraduate Seminary. I was reading a particular passage from St. Augustine’s Confessions. A profound sense of peace and joy overwhelmed me.

Since my time in Old College, the initial invitation from God has changed and matured in many ways, thanks in large part to the men that I have been in formation with and the older Holy Cross religious with whom I have been able to spend much time. It enabled me to live in community, experience initial formation, and cultivate a disposition ordered toward continually discerning how God is actively calling me.

For those considering the possibility of entering formation, I would recommend talking with any of the seminarians currently in formation. I would also recommend watching homilies or community liturgies that have been uploaded to YouTube while reflecting on the line, “see how they love one another,” to realize the strength and commitment of the religious to the Holy Cross community.

Seminary formation is directed toward a young man’s growth in virtue so that he might appropriately ask and seek to answer the question, “How is God calling me to live and love more fully for Him?”

There is no formula, equation, or argument that will lead you to the possibility of entering the seminary because, ultimately, it will be the stirring of the Holy Spirit within your heart that provokes such a possibility. Therefore, do not be afraid when you feel or recognize that stirring in your heart, but embrace it and run with it.

More about John ...

Family: Youngest of three children of Jack and Barb Draves
Home Parish: St. Mary Parish, Diocese of Cleveland
Education: Senior at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN; American studies and philosophy double major
Hobbies: Reading, watching movies, walking, biking, swimming and listening to music
I first encountered Holy Cross on a college visit when I was a junior in high school. I came to check out the University of Notre Dame, but ended up meeting Fr. Neil Wack, C.S.C., the former director of vocations. The brotherhood that I saw in Old College on that visit drew me to the Congregation. I remember thinking that I wanted to join in on that. The rest is history! I entered Old College a little over a year later, and for the past three years, I’ve lived there, which has been great preparation for the Postulant Program. Living in an environment which encourages prayer and a solid community life has helped me grow more confident in myself and in pursuing this call.

Before entering Old College, my formal and informal visits made a big impact on me, since one of my fears was that seminarians would either be too weird or too holier-than-thou to get along with. Living with the guys a couple times for several days helped show me just how irrational that fear was. Another big thing for me was that I was afraid I had to have everything figured out already – that I had to know 100% that Holy Cross was for me. A conversation I had with Fr. Jarrod Waugh, C.S.C., helped me see that that certainty was something I could grow into as I went along in formation.

If I could give you just one piece of advice, it would be this: balance prayer with action. It’s not bad to pray a lot in discernment, but it is possible to hide behind prayer to avoid uncomfortable aspects of pursuing a vocation. Praying doesn’t mean waiting until you know for sure what God is calling you towards. Take time to stop and listen to Him often, but don’t forget to move. Moving is how we get where He’s calling us.

More about Jacob ...

Family: Oldest of three children of Jeff and Amy Gorman
Home Parish: Holy Redeemer Parish, Diocese of Evansville
Education: Senior at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN; philosophy major, theology minor
Hobbies: Painting, running, ultimate frisbee
Andrew Copp  
La Grange Park, Illinois

The first indication that I would discern a vocation I found in a particular petition at Mass: “We pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life.” Toward the end of grade school, my pastor asked (seemingly out of left field), “Andrew, have you ever thought about the priesthood?” Just days later, one of my scouting mentors asked me the same question!

In 2015, I fully acknowledged God’s call while on the St. George Trek—a 12-day hiking and backpacking excursion in the mountains of New Mexico—with priests and seminarians as crew leaders. Afterwards, this vocation remained in the back of my mind through my senior year of high school and all through college, where first I encountered Holy Cross at Keough Hall. Over that time, I discovered in Holy Cross an incredible community of faithful who create a loving and learning environment that is wondrous to behold.

The entire past year has been the strongest of my faith life, filled with celebrations of the Eucharist and prayerful moments at the Grotto and the Hidden Cross. The more I engage with my family and friends about the Postulant Program, the better I am able to make sense of the many emotions and thoughts that have been a part of my journey.

If you are discerning a vocation, keep your eyes, ears, and heart open. Prayer is a very important part of discernment, but it is by no means all of it. God’s movements and invitations can come in many different forms: a particular image on a sunny day, a conversation with an acquaintance in passing, or a surge of emotion. Make sure to pray and reflect, but also experience the environment and community around you.

More about Andrew ...

Family: Second of three children of Jay and Laura Copp
Home Parish: Holy Guardian Angels Parish, Archdiocese of Chicago
Education: University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, BSEV, Environmental Engineering, theology minor, 2020
Hobbies: Hiking and backpacking, music, board games, baseball
I felt a tug toward the priesthood that continued to pop up at various points in my life, but my stubborn self was always able to ignore it—I had my life figured out! But the Hound of Heaven is persistent! Through the example of others, I was finally able to dial in to what that tug was and answer God's call. When I was an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame, I grew to know Holy Cross and was impressed by how down-to-earth they were. They showed me that if I am called to be a priest, Holy Cross would be where I could best live out that call.

Now, something the guys at Moreau don't tell a lot of people is that they have 24/7 access to a hard packed ice cream bar with full servings. That really tipped the scales for me! (Joking, of course!) Preparing to begin the Postulant Program in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic is something I never would have imagined, but discernment is personal and unique to each of us! Talking with the Office of Vocations, and taking time to pray, were vital in affirming my readiness to apply. I also knew some priests who graduated from The George Washington University, as I did, and seeing the life they live alleviated many of the fears and doubts. My advice is not to focus on where you are, but listen to where you feel called to be next. Trust in God's plan, and you'll find yourself in the right place.

Thinking of the priesthood is admittedly really daunting, but taking the next step for a year at Moreau Seminary of praying and drawing closer to the Lord is way more palatable, and this helped put many things to rest. In the end, there isn’t a ‘right or wrong’ vocation—we are each called to love, and the religious life is a great option to explore!

More about Ethan ...

Family: Only child of Michael Kelley and Mary Freeman
Home Parish: St. John the Evangelist Parish, Diocese of Buffalo
Education: The George Washington University, Washington, DC, BA, International Affairs major, history minor, 2019
Hobbies: Running, reading, writing
I came to know the Congregation of Holy Cross during my time as an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind. After a freshman theology course, the late Fr. Eugene Gorski, C.S.C., suggested that I consider the priesthood and discuss religious life with other priests. I was caught off-guard by this remark and simply took it as a compliment for my sincerity in classroom discussions.

I realize now that Fr. Gorski’s suggestion opened me up to the possibility of religious life, and from that point forward, I found myself often saying to friends, “I could see myself becoming a priest one day.” Since that time, I have developed many strong relationships with Holy Cross priests. These Holy Cross religious model how to serve God in a vibrant and fulfilling manner, and I feel inspired to follow in their footsteps.

To those discerning, I would say be grateful for your openness to religious life, and trust in God to guide you through your discernment. A simple suggestion to consider the priesthood opened my heart to religious life, and even though nine years passed before I finally applied to Holy Cross, upon reflection, I see the value in each of those years of openness and discernment.

Robert Weltner
Green Brook, New Jersey

I came to know the Congregation of Holy Cross during my time as an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind. After a freshman theology course, the late Fr. Eugene Gorski, C.S.C., suggested that I consider the priesthood and discuss religious life apparent in my life through various retreats and mission trips, such as a pilgrimage I made with other Holy Cross high school students from Cathedral High School to St. Joseph’s Oratory of Mount Royal in Montréal.

I believe it is Providence that led me to stop by the Holy Cross booth at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), where I met with Fr. Dennis Strach, C.S.C.

Prior to NCYC, I had applied for a master’s in social work as a means of finding a career that better fit me than the job I held in sales. I told Fr. Dennis that it may be best if I attend school for a year to pursue my MSW, but he made an observation that made me rethink my decision. He said that I may very well be called to social work, but that the desire to become a priest was placed in my heart long before I thought of the program. Immediately, I realized that all of my gifts and talents, including an interest in social work, gravitated toward the Church and serving others, and that seminary is something I must pursue to better understand God’s will for my life. After a visit to Moreau Seminary, I felt at peace and decided to apply to the Postulant Program.

I would advise my peers considering a religious vocation to surrender their will to God and also seek a spiritual director. There is much power in talking with another person about your faith journey. They will make observations that you would have not otherwise noticed.

Benjamin Sasin
New Palestine, Indiana

I first heard God’s call to priesthood at St. Michael’s in Greenfield, Ind. I remember coming home after church some Sundays and “celebrating” Mass in front of my family using a cup to make the host out of bread. As I got older, God made my call to priesthood more

More about Ben ...

Family: Second of three children of Chris and Anna Sasin
Home Parish: St. John the Evangelist Parish, Diocese of Indianapolis
Education: Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, BA, Management, 2018
Hobbies: Traveling, cooking, baking, weight lifting, hiking, camping

Prayer, reading, and open conversations with family and friends all helped me overcome my hesitations and empowered my action as I experienced their love and support. If you remain prayerful and open to a vocation, God will lead you to the people, writings, and experiences you need to gain clarity for His call in your life.

More about Robert ...

Family: Youngest of three children of Ted and Marty Weltner
Home Parish: St. John the Evangelist Parish, Diocese of Metuchen
Education: University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, BBA, Accountancy; mathematics supplementary major, 2014
Employment: Manager/consultant, KPMG LLP, Deal Advisory and Strategy, 2014-2020
Hobbies: Travel, attending sporting events, physical fitness, reading, and socializing with friends
Timothy Wymore
Tulsa, Oklahoma

I have sensed God calling me to the priesthood since about the time of my First Communion. I vividly remember my parish priest at the time, Msgr. Ken Fiedler, asking if any of us boys were called to the priesthood. I had never considered it, but instantly felt called.

Then as a senior in college, while attending a Holy Cross vocations pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi, I experienced God’s call in a powerful way. After that, I gave the Benedictine monastic life a try as a novice a few years after college, but it wasn’t for me. Then, following my time as a high school theology teacher, during and after my time with the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) Program, I was drawn to the possibilities of ministry and teaching as a Holy Cross religious, especially among college students.

After ACE, I kept in touch with some of the men in formation, and prayed for all with whom I now study, work, and live. Another exercise that allowed me the initiative to begin to talk to vocation directors was Exodus 90, a program of fraternal prayer and discipline. I prayed for the freedom to pursue God’s call for me, and God answered my prayers! I returned to spiritual direction and then benefited greatly from making a couple of trips to Moreau Seminary to demystify the community and its daily life.

I would relay to you what may be the most frequently given advice in the Bible: do not be afraid. God desires not only our good but our happiness. God rejoices when we seek to honor Him.

More about Timothy...

Family: Oldest of two children of Kevin and Lynne Wymore
Home Parish: Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Diocese of Madison (WI)
Education: University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, BA, Political Science, 2007; University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, M.Ed., ACE Program, 2014
Employment: Theology teacher, Bishop Kelley High School, Tulsa, Okla., 2012-2020
Hobbies: Cycling, camping, reading, writing, and politics


“We will then be a sign in an alienated world: men who have, for love of their Lord, become closest neighbors, trustworthy friends, brothers.”

Holy Cross Constitutions (4:42)

Front Cover Photo: Pictured in front of the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, are the five men who made their Perpetual Profession of Vows in 2020. Pictured from left to right are: Robert Lisowski, C.S.C., David Smith, C.S.C., Br. Pablo José Quan López, C.S.C., Felipe Campos Reséndez, C.S.C., and Geoffrey Mooney, C.S.C.