

EDUCATION • PARISH • MISSION

# Ave✠CruX



Volume 2 Issue 3 | The New Seminarians

Office of Vocations, Congregation of Holy Cross



## Ave Crux, Spes Unica – Hail the Cross, Our Only Hope!

We in the Congregation of Holy Cross profess this truth as the center of our spiritual tradition, and for 175 years, we have worked to bring the hope of the Cross to schools, universities, parishes and other ministries on five continents.

We are men with hope to bring, yet discerning God's will and taking this step in our lives was not entered into lightly or on our own – finding the right next step often comes by reaching out to a vocations director. Our role is to help you hear and answer God's call. Drop us a line and we will help you discover where God's call is leading you.

CONGREGATION *of* HOLY CROSS  
UNITED STATES PROVINCE  
OF PRIESTS AND BROTHERS

Office of Vocations  
P.O. Box 541  
Notre Dame, IN 46556  
(574) 631-6385  
[vocations@holycrossusa.org](mailto:vocations@holycrossusa.org)  
[holycrossvocations.org](http://holycrossvocations.org)



[facebook.com/holycrossvocations](https://facebook.com/holycrossvocations)



[twitter.com/CSCVocations](https://twitter.com/CSCVocations)



[youtube.com/cscvocations](https://youtube.com/cscvocations)



[instagram.com/cscvocations](https://instagram.com/cscvocations)

## Sharing their Journeys

Greetings in Christ! In this latest edition of *Ave Crux*, you have the chance to read about the new men in formation in the Congregation of Holy Cross. There are 16 in our Postulant class (13 who are new to formation, and 3 who have moved over from Old College). In addition, we have 3 new Old Collegians (2 freshmen and 1 who has already been a student at Notre Dame for two years).

In looking over their stories, you might find some similarities with your own path of discernment. They come from very different backgrounds. I am sure if you asked each of these men they would tell you they do not know for sure that they are called to be a consecrated religious and/or a priest. What they do know is that this is the right “next step” for them to take, and they are confident this year of formation is where God wants them to be. God knows where they will be next year, but regardless of where they are, for sure they will be further along in knowing His will.

We are here to help you in your own discernment of God's call, providing you with whatever tools you may need. Please let us know if you would like to have a phone conversation, or look at the possibility of visiting us for a “come and see weekend” or one of our retreats. Our biggest job in this office is to keep you and all who are discerning their vocations in our prayers. Make sure you keep an active prayer and Sacramental life, and make sure you take time to listen for the Lord's voice. That will bring you the clarity you seek and the courage you need to take the next discernment step in faith.

God bless you and your family!

Rev. Neil Wack, C.S.C.  
[vocation@holycrossusa.org](mailto:vocation@holycrossusa.org)

*Rev. Neil Wack, C.S.C., is director of vocations for the U.S. Province of the Congregation of Holy Cross. After earning a degree in computer science, Fr. Wack entered the seminary at the University of Notre Dame in 1997 and was ordained a priest at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in 2004. He was assigned to a parish in Colorado, and then transferred to his home parish of Christ the King in South Bend, Indiana, in 2005, and served there for ten years. As director of vocations, Father Wack coordinates vocation promotion efforts at Holy Cross campuses, parishes and other apostolates across the United States.*





The Old College Undergraduate Seminary is housed in the University of Notre Dame's original building, which was constructed in 1843. It is more than a residential community; it provides a well-rounded life that includes prayer, recreation, conversation and shared meals.

Old Collegians pursue their academic interests as students at Notre Dame or Holy Cross College, while at the same time, being introduced to religious life in Holy Cross through a process of spiritual formation in the context of community living.

# The "New" Old Collegians...



## John Draves

Berea, Ohio

During the second semester of my junior year, I received a postcard from the Congregation concerning the Summer Seminary Immersion Program (SSIP), a two week academic summer program, which was my first direct contact and exposure with the Congregation. I ended

up attending the SSIP during which I was truly immersed into the life and work of the Congregation of Holy Cross.

The distinct and vibrant family-like atmosphere that radiates from the Congregation as a whole was the foremost characteristic that inspired me to apply, and I've been preparing by talking and praying - talking with those I love and respect the most, and praying to the One who loves and respects me the most.

My Aunt Donna was, by far, the most influential person in helping me make my decision to apply to Old College and in recognizing my vocation because she knows and understands faith in a way no other person in my family does. She has given me a great example of humility, faithfulness, and hopefulness to follow and aspire to, even though she would never admit this. She has truly lived up to St. Augustine's saying, "Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you," and so she has shown me how to put God first in my life and how to

trust in whatever God has in store for me. I've noticed little yet extraordinarily meaningful confirmations since I made the decision to apply to and attend Old College - through people, places, sights, sounds, smells, and even the smallest, most personal experiences of light and love. If you are discerning as well, I recommend you pray, pray, pray, and then when you get tired of praying, pray some more!

More about John ...

**Family:** Second of two children of Jack and Barb Draves

**Home Parish:** St. Mary's Catholic Church, Diocese of Cleveland

**Education:** St. Ignatius High School, Cleveland, Ohio, 2017, Summa Cum Laude; entering Old College through the University of Notre Dame

**Hobbies:** Reading, playing video games, watching movies, listening to music, and discussing relevant topics with my friends and family



## Jacob Gorman

Evansville, Indiana

When I visited Notre Dame during the summer before my senior year of high school, I was interested in the small building my tour guide referred to as “the seminary or something.” I later learned that the building was called Old College, and I asked about it during

a conversation I had with some people involved in campus ministry because I had been discerning for a few years and was interested in learning more about Holy Cross. I hadn’t heard much about it before that day. Eventually, I ended up talking with Fr. Neil Wack, C.S.C., then came my informal visit to Old College. I wasn’t sure what to expect from the seminarians and Holy Cross priests and brothers I would meet, but my two visits helped me dispel a lot of doubts. The visits were like the chance one gets to test drive a car at a dealership. Beforehand, one can read about the car, its parts, its various reviews, but actually experiencing how the car rides and handles in the test drive usually determines whether a prospective buyer will purchase it or not. While I wasn’t necessarily “shopping” for a seminary, I think getting the chance to experience the life of an Old Collegian helped clarify what Old College is about. The visits inspired me to apply. The seminarians were incredibly welcoming and I felt at home despite not knowing any of them before the weekend.

If you are contemplating Old College like I was, prayer is essential. Don’t be afraid to take baby steps toward something, even if you don’t feel 100% certain. Take small steps toward exploring it and pray often in reflection over those steps to see what your next steps should be.

More about Jacob ...

**Family:** Oldest of three children of Jeff and Amy Gorman

**Home Parish:** Holy Redeemer, Diocese of Evansville

**Education:** Mater Dei High School, 2017; entering Old College through the University of Notre Dame

**Hobbies:** Running, ultimate frisbee, reading, video games, Myers-Briggs personality types



## John Ryan IV

Billerica, Massachusetts

It was my seventh grade religion class ... the teacher walked in and asked, “Who wants to be a priest when they grow up?” Now, at that time, I probably still thought I could be a starting pitcher for the Boston Red Sox. I looked around the room to see if any one of my classmates

already had their life together, and I see everyone was looking at me. I looked in the air and my hand was raised! So it was then that I first heard the call, but it wasn’t until a few years later that I truly thought and prayed about this call and grew in my prayer life and relationship with God.

The person most influential in my decision to explore Holy Cross is definitely Fr. Nate Wills, C.S.C. I remember the first time I met him: five minutes in, I was already saying to myself, “Wow, this is someone I want to be good friends with.” His joy and enthusiasm, his love, his hope - is so contagious. I realized that I wanted something like that for myself. He became for me a window into Holy Cross, and I quickly saw he isn’t the only one! There are so many more Holy Cross priests and seminarians, whose love, joy, and hope are palpable, and left me with a sense of feeling at home in Holy Cross, like this is where I belong. If you experience the same thing, be open! Be willing to see where it is the Lord might take you, as Jesus said to the two

disciples of John the Baptist: “Come and See.” And be patient - it doesn’t happen overnight, or in your time; it always happens in God’s time. And then, above all, pray.

More about Johnny ...

**Family:** Oldest of five children of John and Jean Ryan

**Home Parish:** St. Therese of Lisieux, Diocese of Boston

**Education:** St. Sebastian’s High School, Needham, MA, 2015; University of Notre Dame junior entering Old College, theology and philosophy double major, Catholic social tradition minor

**Hobbies:** Baseball, football, playing guitar and piano, and hanging out with friends and family





# Moving to *Moreau*

After completing their studies at Old College, seniors traditionally move to Moreau Seminary to begin their Postulant year of formation while at the same time completing their undergraduate studies.



## Nicholas Guiney

Hudson, Ohio

I first heard of the Congregation of Holy Cross through a family friend, Br. Ken Haders, C.S.C. He was president of Archbishop Hoban High School, near my home. I also met Fr. John Blazek, C.S.C., who works at Gilmour Academy, another Holy Cross high school in

Cleveland. When I met them, I was struck by their incredible joy and zeal for serving others. When I started looking at religious orders, I couldn't help but think of both Fr. John and Br. Ken's joy when serving others.

I visited Old College in the spring of my junior year and was struck by the community feel of the house. I decided to apply to enter Old College during the fall of senior year. The past three years in Old College have been extremely life giving, I have grown to be a better man, and have grown substantially in my faith. I can honestly say that these past three years hold some of the greatest experiences of my life, and Old College has prepared me well for the Postulant Program. Getting into a rhythm of prayer and continuing it at home and away from Old College helped me grow in my relationship with Christ. Spiritual direction has also been important in my discernment, as has the support of my parents and encouragement from formation staff and fellow seminarians in both Old College and Moreau.

I would encourage people discerning to share your thoughts with others, specifically with a spiritual director or a priest you know. This was extremely helpful during my initial discernment. I also would encourage others to ask for prayers from friends and family! Prayer from others, as well as your own personal prayer is so important during discernment!

More about Nik ...

**Family:** Only child of Liam and Alice Guiney

**Home Parish:** St. Mary's Parish, Hudson, Ohio; Diocese of Cleveland

**Education:** Holy Cross College senior, Notre Dame, IN, theology major, philosophy minor

**Hobbies:** Photography, videography, singing



## Stephen Jakubowski

Grand Rapids, Michigan

The first inklings of a religious vocation came for me in high school out of admiration for the priests in my life and a desire to share the peace and joy I had been given by God through them with others. But I didn't take it very seriously until college, when I saw in Holy Cross

a concrete way of living religious life. I developed in my own spiritual life and awareness of my own potential vocation, and met several Holy Cross priests. Getting to know them through life in the dorms and around campus introduced me to the Congregation more broadly.

I have spent the last two years in Old College getting to know the Holy Cross Community at Notre Dame and cultivating a stronger life of prayer. These experiences above all have prepared me for the Postulant Program. I have been praying for the grace to understand and to follow the will of God as it pertains to my vocation in the coming year. My doubts in discernment to the Postulant Program centered not so much on a fear of the program and life at Moreau Seminary, as much as a fear of missing the opportunity to do other good things. At the end of the day, the overwhelmingly positive experiences and relationships I have made in Old College helped me to overcome this. I love the community I found in Holy Cross and that, together with the personal growth two years in formation

have yielded, gave me the confidence to petition to the Postulant Program. I spent a few years more or less ignoring the call to discern a priestly vocation. I don't recommend this. We must respond to God's call unreservedly, and this requires, among other things, praying about it and talking with others about it. Until we seriously and sincerely confront the question of our vocation, we can't answer it; overcoming the fear of what it might be is a huge first step.

More about Stephen ...

**Family:** Third of five children of Michael and Susan Jakubowski

**Home Parish:** Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Diocese of Grand Rapids

**Education:** University of Notre Dame, B.S. Mathematics, Philosophy Minor, 2017

**Hobbies:** Running, music



## Matthew Rehagen

Jefferson City, Missouri

I started to seriously consider the possibility of a religious vocation during my late years at Helias Catholic High School. I thought that I would wait until after college to explore this calling more. However, after hearing about Holy Cross when my oldest brother entered

formation in 2009, and being around the Congregation during my first year at the University of Notre Dame in Duncan Hall, I decided to enter formation in the Old College Undergraduate Seminary Program. My brother, Fr. Christopher Rehagen, C.S.C., has always been a huge influence on me. His willingness to explore his own vocation opened my eyes to discerning God's call in my own life. Fr. Dennis Strach, C.S.C., and Fr. Bill Miscamble, C.S.C., also helped and encouraged me during my first year at Notre Dame while I was making my visits and applying to the seminary. I have become as open as possible to the will of God in my life while keeping in contact with my family, friends, and vocations office to discuss my discernment. After two years in the Old College Undergraduate Seminary, I am still not sure of my vocation, but I do know that God is calling me to continue my discernment as a Postulant!

What's been helpful for me is keeping in open and honest contact with my spiritual director along with members of the formation staff, my family, and

friends, as well as being open to God's will in my life. Sometimes that can be a lot more difficult than it sounds. His call doesn't always come through as a thunderous voice from the clouds. Sometimes your vocation manifests itself in something as small as a fellow parishoner asking if you've ever thought about priesthood or religious life. Do not be afraid to explore your vocation and follow Christ. It is He who calls.

More about Matthew ...

**Family:** Youngest of four boys of Mark and Susan Rehagen (and youngest brother of Fr. Chris Rehagen, C.S.C.)

**Home Parish:** St. Peter's Catholic Church, Diocese of Jefferson City

**Education:** University of Notre Dame, philosophy/theology major

**Hobbies:** Playing and watching sports. If there is a competition, you can count on me to be there.





# Welcome Postulants

The Postulant Program at Moreau Seminary, located across St. Joseph Lake from the Golden Dome at the University of Notre Dame, is a one-year, pre-novitiate program. It is designed for men ages 21 to 35 who are prepared to immerse themselves in Holy Cross Community life, while continuing their personal discernment, spiritual development and growth in knowledge.

These men have pursued their college studies in various places and have been exploring their religious vocations, often aided by ongoing contact with the Office of Vocations and other members of Holy Cross.



## Geoffrey Burdell

South Bend, Indiana

One of my favorite aspects of Holy Cross is best expressed in a small anecdote. About five or so years ago, while in Phoenix, I returned to my old parish, and decided on a whim to visit the confessional. I proceeded to have the worst experience in the confessional

that I can remember to date - the priest was brash and unfriendly, his admonitions and penance were abrupt and biting. Once I had recovered from the experience, I had a very sudden, enlightening revelation: in the 8 years to that point that I had lived in South Bend, I had been to countless Confessions with Holy Cross priests on Notre Dame's campus, and not once had I ever felt anything but compassion, gentleness, patience, and ultimately, love in the confessional, that was contrasted so starkly with my bewildering experience of Reconciliation in Phoenix. These shows of gentleness, mercy, patience, and love were characteristic of Holy Cross priests in general, not only in the confessional, but in their daily interactions with one another and with students around campus.

As to the question of my vocation, I am still confronted with small doubts that pop up from time to time, but have found three things to be of help: Attending daily Mass and spending time in front of the Blessed Sacrament in Adoration, as well as monthly

Confession. Second, conversing with a trusted spiritual director, someone to whom I can vent my frustrations, worries, and fears, without consequence. And, finally, putting the actual question of seminary in its proper perspective.

More about Geoff ...

**Family:** Youngest of three children of Marc and Jeanette Burdell

**Home Parish:** St. Anthony de Padua Parish, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

**Education:** University of Notre Dame, B.A. Philosophy, Theology Minor, 2015, Cum Laude

**Hobbies:** Running, singing, piano, cooking, reading, watching films, traveling, philosophy, theology, Catholic education



## Edward Dolphin

Wilmington, Delaware

About 3 years ago, one of the readings at Mass was the story of Samuel's calling in the temple. I had read and heard that story dozens of times before, but for some reason after that one specific instance, I felt the Lord's call to follow Him and serve the Church as a religious.

I had been working as a software engineer for 5 years at the time, and I didn't want to give up everything I had in my life in order to answer God's call, but this started to wear on me after a while, so I stopped ignoring the call and started to discern the best way to answer it. Having attended St. Edmond's Academy, which was run by several Holy Cross brothers, I saw how committed the brothers were to the Church, to their mission in education, to our school and to each other. After feeling a vocational call, my first thought was the Congregation of Holy Cross. I wanted to be a part of the group of holy men that served me, my fellow classmates and the Church so well.

I began to dedicate more time to prayer, received the Sacraments more frequently, and spent time talking to religious I knew - sharing my concerns, feelings of unworthiness and doubts, and listening to their experiences with these same obstacles. They helped me realize that no man is worthy of the priesthood, but Christ calls us, with all our strengths, weaknesses and flaws, to

follow and serve Him and His Church.

If you feel a religious vocational call, I recommend that you get more involved at your parish. See how you feel after doing this, and if you feel a sense of comfort and belonging, that is a good sign that maybe God is calling you to continue ministering in this way.

More about Ed ...

**Family:** Second of three children of James Dolphin and Tina Cernugel

**Home Parish:** Church of the Holy Child, Diocese of Wilmington

**Education:** Drexel University, B.S. Information Systems, Business Administration/International Area Studies, 2009

**Hobbies:** Running, photography, traveling, playing guitar



## Luke Donahue

Brentwood, Tennessee

I first found out about Holy Cross through my older brother Eric, a 2015 alumnus of Notre Dame. I followed in his footsteps, starting my freshman year at Notre Dame in Fall 2013. It was there that I really came to know Holy Cross as a community, and felt more

and more called to be a teacher in some role, especially as a professor. At the same time, I couldn't shake the desire to become a religious priest. These two callings come together well in Holy Cross.

When I came to Notre Dame, I met Fr. Jim Gallagher, C.S.C. He helped me to get involved with Holy Cross vocation events and to learn more about the community. I saw the example set by Fr. Jim Gallagher, C.S.C., Fr. Gary Chamberland, C.S.C., and Fr. Greg Haake, C.S.C., as well as by the seminarians. My spiritual director, Fr. Ralph Haag, C.S.C., helped me to sort through the information and follow God's direction.

My informal visit was really helpful for me in terms of my discernment. During this visit, I became more and more confident in my vocation and very much at peace, so I decided to apply.

My advice to anyone discerning a vocation would be to place yourself in the hands of the Blessed Mother. She can help you discern God's will and give you

the courage to respond generously.

More about Luke ...

**Family:** Third of four children of Sean and Janet Donahue

**Home Parish:** Holy Family Catholic Church, Diocese of Nashville

**Education:** University of Notre Dame, B.A. Theology/German, Medieval Studies Minor, 2017, Magna Cum Laude

**Hobbies:** Karate, music, snowskiing, watersports, hiking, running, reading





## Jacob Eifrid

Fort Wayne, Indiana

The first time I felt a serious call to serve the Church in a radical and public way occurred during my senior year of high school. I was attracted to the way that the priests from my home parish lived, interacted with others and ultimately how they preached the Gospel by the

witness of their lives. I carried this interest, attraction and call with me as I began my time at Holy Cross College, where I met priests and brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross, and began to interact more regularly with them.

I began to learn more about religious life in the Congregation of Holy Cross and was mentored by Holy Cross priests and brothers. The familial spirit and community of the priests and brothers inspired me to apply. Their shared sense of mission, life of prayer, and zeal to make God known, loved and served for the sake of saving souls inspired me to apply and join this “great band of men.”

The witness of the saints, especially those in Holy Cross, like St. André Bessette and Blessed Basil Moreau have been helpful in dispelling my doubts. The life and example that these men have left for us to follow has given me much hope in the face of doubt and uncertainty in the discernment of my vocation. Both of these men faced many hardships, but in the end attained the highest victory. I would say praying to

God through their intercession with their exemplary lives of sanctity before me has been very helpful. To any young person discerning a vocation to religious life, pray! Develop a good prayer life. Do not think you have to be perfect, but strive to be faithful to God in your prayer life. His grace is sufficient and He will help you to be unafraid and respond generously should He be calling you to a vocation of religious life.

More about Jacob ...

**Family:** Second of six children of Joseph and Maria Eifrid

**Home Parish:** St. Charles Borromeo, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

**Education:** Holy Cross College, B.A. Theology and Liberal Studies, Global Perspectives minor, 2017



## Andrew Hamaty

Jacksonville, Florida

I've been thinking of a religious vocation off and on since I was young, though it was through my time in Notre Dame's post-graduate transition to teaching program, ACE, that I saw the great witness of many Holy Cross priests. I started to feel the call in my heart

emboldened by the realization that my moments of greatest joy were those of complete service to others, as they were drawn closer to Christ. The mission of Holy Cross just seemed to resonate with my love of being with people and helping them know Christ, and inspired me to apply.

Preparing for the Postulant Program, I have been trying to be the best witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ I can be to my students, coworkers, and community members, while being continually supported by the Sacraments. I believe that knowing oneself and trusting one's story rather than one's momentary feelings are key to dispelling doubts. When I was able to see God's handiwork in my past and my present, I was able to rest easy in knowing He'll be present in my future plans too.

Fr. Lou DelFra, C.S.C., and Fr. Tim Scully, C.S.C., have been incredibly influential in my decision to explore a vocation with Holy Cross, precisely because I could tell that they genuinely wanted to help me discover God's plan for my life,

regardless of if it would be with Holy Cross or not. In addition, I witnessed deep joy that exudes from them - a clear sign that they have not only discovered their true vocation, but are consistently supported by the light of Christ.

More about Andrew ...

**Family:** Second of three children of Anthony and Alison Hamaty

**Home Parish:** St. Paul's Catholic Church, Diocese of St. Augustine

**Education:** University of Central Florida, B.A. History, Leadership Studies minor, 2015; University of Notre Dame, M.Ed., 2017

**Hobbies:** Photography, guitar, cooking, travel, hiking, camping



## Ryan Kerr

Ada, Michigan

I grew up in the Notre Dame family and it was so natural for me to encounter the Congregation of Holy Cross from even an early age. Yet, it was through ND Vision, a five-day summer program offered for high school students at Notre Dame, when they brought guests into

Old College, that I met the Vocations Director at the time, Fr. Jim Gallagher, C.S.C. Also influential to my discernment was Fr. Pat Reidy, C.S.C. Living in residence with him as rector for four years was instrumental in me seeing a life in Holy Cross lived out in joy.

At times, my heart has struggled to long hopefully for the future and it has taken a lot of growth to realize some sense of optimism. Graciously, God has provided where I clearly lacked. At the heart of Holy Cross' hope is the hope of the Cross - a joy amidst and even embracing suffering, and God's hands have worked where mine did not. To prepare for the Postulant Program, I prayed the Hours, developed a devotion to the Holy Family, went to daily Mass, and sought the Sacrament of Reconciliation to begin to appreciate mercy. At times, grace moved me to a place I wasn't even seeking, and brought me to where I am now, even though still feeling unprepared.

My doubts were never in Holy Cross nor the priesthood, only in myself. As a man of faith, I will not assume assurance

and insist that doubt still remains. I do doubt. The difference now is that I feel the desire for the call, for His will to be done in my life. So, when I doubt it does not draw me away from the budding vocation as I continue to discern, but draws me deeper into prayer and confirms the faith I believe in now. I let God be God and trust that He will guide me closer to Him.

More about Ryan ...

**Family:** Youngest of four children of William and Patricia Kerr

**Home Parish:** St. Robert Newminster, Diocese of Grand Rapids

**Education:** University of Notre Dame, B.A. Theology and English/Constitutional Studies and Business Economics, 2017

**Hobbies:** Reading, writing, watching and playing sports, and being with those closest to me



## Colin King

Chicago, Illinois

I am blessed to have attended Catholic schools from kindergarten through Notre Dame, and had the opportunity to learn from Benedictine and Holy Cross priests. During that time, God called me through the examples of priests and other faith-filled individuals, missionary

experiences in South America and East Africa, personal prayer, and the Mass. I am excited to answer that call through the Holy Cross Postulant Program. Holy Cross priests are some of the best men I've met in my life: they are kind, thoughtful, holy, and fun. The sacrifice these men make for God and others inspires me.

As a consultant at an economic development firm called Next Street in Chicago, I didn't have as much time as I would have liked to prepare for the seminary. With the little free time I had, I tried to be intentional about my prayer life and how I treat others, and I read more - gravitating towards spiritual books and Scripture.

In my moments of uncertainty and doubt, I turn to God in prayer. When I prioritize my prayer life I feel called by God and when I prioritize other things I can feel doubt. For me, an active prayer life means intentionally carving out time during the day to pray the Rosary, read Scripture, or have meaningful conversations, and try to incorporate

God into most everything I do. For those discerning vocations, it's difficult deciphering which of the many beautiful life paths is right for you. The best advice I can offer is to be patient with yourself, pray, and listen. God's plan for us is always better than anything we could come up with on our own; so open yourself up to Him and He will deliver.

More about Colin ...

**Family:** Oldest of three children of Kevin and Carole King

**Home Parish:** St. Peter's Geneva, Diocese of Rockford

**Education:** University of Notre Dame, B.B.A. Consulting, Theology, 2013

**Hobbies:** College football, beach volleyball, running





## Tyler Kreipke

Zionsville, Indiana

I first heard the call about three and a half years ago. I was driving to jiu jitsu practice in late winter/early spring, and my initial reaction was panic. But I brought it to some of the Holy Cross priests I knew, and after fielding questions about priesthood, they

directed me to the vocational resources on campus at Notre Dame. From there, it was a slow, gentle draw - there was just something special about Holy Cross. The community seemed to be filled with genuine, authentic people following a calling. Coupled with their charism as educators in the faith, and their balance between apostolic and contemplative ministry, I just felt very at home in the community.

A few people have been incredibly helpful in finding my way to priestly formation with Holy Cross. Fr. John DeRiso, C.S.C., who was pastor at St. Joseph Parish, South Bend, Ind., where I converted, helped a lot with my introductory questions to the faith, and then later to the priesthood. Fr. Thomas McNally, C.S.C., whom I came to know through prison ministry, was a great spiritual role model. Fr. Neil Wack, C.S.C., and Fr. Jim Gallagher, C.S.C., provided a lot of great advice and resources for discernment. And last but not least, Sr. Carmen Gillick of the Sisters for Christian Community, has been my primary spiritual director, and incredibly

insightful in teasing out a lot of the patterns in my life and discernment. She gave a lot of wise advice and helped contextualize my worries. The advice I'd give you in your discernment: Avail yourself of the Sacraments frequently, celebrate daily Mass if you can, and don't stay away from Reconciliation. Those three things will go a long way.

More about Tyler ...

**Family:** Second of two children of Don and Chris Kreipke

**Home Parish:** St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish, Diocese of Lafayette

**Education:** Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, B.S. Biomedical Engineering, German minor, 2011; University of Notre Dame, Ph.D. Bioengineering, 2017

**Hobbies:** Brazilian jiu jitsu, distance running, guitar, skiing, learning languages



## Peter Puleo III

St. Louis, Missouri

When discussing the possibility of a vocation to the priesthood with a friend she mentioned that she could see me as either a Dominican or a Holy Cross priest to which I replied, "what's a Holy Cross priest?"

Afterwards, I started to research the order and learn more about it. I first started to hear God's call to a religious vocation during the second semester of my senior year in college. Thinking about the future and what God was calling me to, made me consider the possibility of a vocation to the priesthood. Further prayer and consideration resulted in a growing desire for a vocation to the religious life, which demanded the pursuit of further discernment.

I was inspired by the profound spirituality of Blessed Basil Moreau, his vision of the religious spirit, what religious life ought to be, and his passion for education in the aftermath of the destruction of Christian society following the French Revolution. This passion is something needed with similar urgency in our world today.

Since being accepted to the Postulant Program, I've prepared myself through prayer. Fr. Jason Doke with his example of priestly ministry at Missouri S&T, has also been a role model, and I've found

encouragement in good friends, through writings and intercession of Blessed Moreau, and Fr. Jarrod Waugh, C.S.C., through many conversations during the inquiry/application process. If you are discerning a call to religious life, what can be very helpful is visiting Moreau Seminary, talking with and getting to know those who are part of Holy Cross, constant prayer, of course, and with utter sincerity and honesty. Be open to how God will change your heart.

More about Peter ...

**Family:** Second (along with his twin sister) of five children of Pete and Melissa Puleo

**Home Parish:** St. Mary Magdalene Parish, Brentwood, Diocese of St. Louis

**Education:** Missouri University of Science and Technology, B.S. Chemical Engineering, Philosophy Minor, 2016

**Hobbies:** Reading, calligraphy



## Abraham Rusch

Davisburg, Michigan

When I was about five years old, I felt a clear and persistent internal call to the priesthood that is very hard to describe. According to the family story, I walked up to my mother one day unprompted and said, "Mom, God wants me to become a priest!" Upon further

questioning, I could produce no reason for that statement besides feeling called. As I became older, I gravitated towards religious communities, since I had a strong desire to live in community and to teach.

Then, as my older brother became a Holy Cross seminarian during his undergraduate years at Notre Dame, I was (not so) secretly jealous of him during his time at Old College and Moreau. Ever since, it has been in the back of my mind that I might one day like to enter Holy Cross, and now here I finally am.

Watching others explore religious life and priesthood has dispelled many of my doubts about entering the Postulant Program, though oddly enough, I was most reassured when I watched my brother leave the seminary after realizing he wasn't called to the religious life at that time. I am confident that this is a place of discernment. If the Lord is indeed calling me to the life of a Holy Cross religious, I know I will figure it out here. St. John Paul II gave the best advice,

"Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ." Trust that Jesus wants what is best for you infinitely more than you want it for yourself. Trust that Jesus will help you choose your vocation if you ask Him. Make bold and holy choices. Most importantly, don't get stuck and don't despair!

More about Abe ...

**Family:** Second of four children of Ryland and Joan Rusch

**Home Parish:** Divine Mercy Parish (now closed), Diocese of Detroit

**Education:** St. Olaf College, B.A. Music, Church Music minor, 2016

**Hobbies:** Distance running, cooking, board games, choral music, reading



## Michael Ryan

Columbus, Ohio

After deciding not to apply to the Postulant Program directly following my undergrad years, I set several goals for myself to accomplish in my work before I would consider applying. After crossing off each goal and being in a good and peaceful mental place, I began praying

more directly asking for clarity in God's will. Visiting Moreau and spending time with seminarians, seeing their routine, and joining them in prayer dispelled my doubts about applying to the seminary. The realization that you only need to take the next step, only put one foot in front of the other, was also very helpful. I got caught up in the final destination which is intimidating when I just needed to trust that God was leading me to apply. Since deciding to apply, I have continued to pray for guidance, receive the Sacraments, and added even a little more prayer! My family has fostered my faith my whole life, and have been supportive of my decision to apply to the Postulant Program, particularly my older brothers Brendan and Brogan.

I have also been fortunate to get to know a number of Holy Cross religious and seminarians very well during my time at Notre Dame and since I graduated, and one thing has always stuck out about the men of Holy Cross - they live with incredible joy in their ministry and community. Seeing them live this joy made the idea of applying to the

seminary that much less frightening. I encourage you to ask where the Lord is calling you to next, not where you'll be years down the road. Pray, talk with friends and mentors, and visit Moreau!

More about Michael ...

**Family:** Ninth of eleven children of Bob and Mary Ginn Ryan (and younger brother of Brogan Ryan, C.S.C., who is Temporarily Professed)

**Home Parish:** St. Catharine of Siena Church, Diocese of Columbus

**Education:** University of Notre Dame, B.S. Civil Engineering, 2012

**Hobbies:** Watching and playing sports, spending time with friends and family, entertaining my nieces and nephews, building things/taking things apart to see how they work





## Richard Sharpe

Bexley, Ohio

I initially discerned a call to the priesthood in both elementary and high school, then responded to this call by entering the diocesan seminary in my hometown, though I chose to leave formation after several years. I intended to become a lay academic and start a

family, but the subtle (and, at times, not so subtle) pull to continue discerning the call to priesthood persisted. In a search for religious orders devoted to education, Holy Cross stood out to me immediately in three ways: 1) Education of a person in all dimensions (devotion to parish ministry, mission to those in need, a life of fulfilling service to God and others), 2) Uplifting spirituality and motto, as ours is a world in need of Christ's message of hope, and 3) They struck me as a group marked by authentic joy. Upon visiting Holy Cross, this was confirmed for me to be true.

If you are thinking you may have a vocation, two pieces of advice come to mind. First, at a certain point, one must stop simply "thinking about" it: one must act. Even if this is merely emailing or calling a vocation director, the choice to reach out will help you learn if this is a true calling, rather than a mere idea. Second, fundamentally ground your discernment in prayer. Society tends to view one's job, marriage, etc. as practical and convenient choices, but God may not be calling you to a commonplace life.

Even if prayer leads you to discover you are not called to be a priest, the wisdom you gain and strengthened relationship with God are worth it.

More about Richard ...

**Family:** Second of two children of Bill and Barbara Sharpe

**Home Parish:** St. Pius X, Diocese of Columbus

**Education:** Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio, B.A. Philosophy and Classics, 2011; Duquesne University, M.A. Philosophy, 2016

**Hobbies:** Reading, running, boxing, drumming and playing piano, cooking, gardening



## Brian Vetter

Dublin, Ohio

Coming to Notre Dame as an undergraduate was my first exposure to Holy Cross, but whenever I would hear or feel something in my heart telling me to consider the priesthood, I would ignore it. However, one late night in February of my sophomore year, I was

praying alone in the chapel of Alumni Hall during the middle of a rough week. I once again felt a deep pull in my heart telling me to consider the priesthood. Because I was in such a bad mood, I angrily and mockingly yelled at God in my head, "If you want me to be a priest, then fine! I don't care!" No more than ten seconds later, Fr. George Rozum, C.S.C., my rector, walked in and invited me to Corby Night, the vocation open house event for Holy Cross. This completely lowered all of my defenses, and I had to give it to God. He really had a sense of humor about the situation.

One of the most important things I did before entering Moreau was work as an RA in Alumni Hall. The values of Holy Cross come to fruition in the model of the Notre Dame dorm system, and the role of an RA is to pastorally facilitate community building in the spirit of Holy Cross. I also asked myself some important questions: "When am I my best self?" and "When does my heart experience the most authentic joy?" I realized that the answer to these two questions is found in community.

Living in Alumni Hall allowed me to understand that I am my best self and am the most joyful when I love and am loved by a community of people who accept me for both my strengths and my flaws.

Discerning a vocation has been the most challenging thing I have ever done, but it also has become a source of profound peace and joy. I learned that you must take all concerns to prayer and close loved ones.

More about Brian ...

**Family:** Third of three children of John and Patty Vetter

**Home Parish:** St. Brigid of Kildare, Diocese of Columbus

**Education:** University of Notre Dame, B.S. Pre-Medicine and Theology, Anthropology Minor, 2017

**Hobbies:** Running, basketball, hiking, reading



# Welcome Fr. Tim Mouton, C.S.C.

Fr. Tim Mouton, C.S.C., was a good sport and sat down with *Ave Crux* (AC) to answer a few questions, and give those discerning an idea of where he can be spotted around the campus of the University of Notre Dame. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself to Fr. Tim, who comes to Notre Dame from Stonehill College, where he's been in chaplaincy for the college's athletic teams for the past two years, just after his Ordination.

**AC:** It's always reassuring and refreshing to hear from Holy Cross priests from the standpoint of being in the shoes of those discerning and those in formation. It wasn't long ago was it, Fr. Tim, that you were here at Moreau?

**Fr. Tim:** It's a big transition going from the seminary into work. I started as a freshman here, so it was eight years of growth and moving forward, but always with the same support system, always with the same structure and the same goal, and those things become ingrained in you - the prayer schedule, community life, the common table ... it was amazing for me, because when I'd have a rough day, I'd go home, have dinner, and detox with my brothers at Stonehill College - just as you do with your fellow seminarians during Old College and in the Postulant Program. It was almost shocking how much carries over.

**AC:** How does your work as an Associate Director of Vocations differ from the chaplaincy at Stonehill College?

**Fr. Tim:** The journey of faith that the guys here are on is powerful. It's almost sacramental. It's not me walking with these young people - Fr. Tim Mouton is not in the picture - if I'm doing well, they are walking with Jesus, and I get myself out of the way. It's God's will we're trying to find. Having been a chaplain for the athletic teams at Stonehill College definitely gives me a level of comfort with our students and student-athletes here at the University of Notre Dame.

**AC:** Where might people be able to find you around campus?

**Fr. Tim:** I'll be living in Fisher Hall, but, it's my hope to be all over the place on this campus. To meet with campus ministry, figure out how I can plug in, and forge connections like Fr. Pat Reidy, C.S.C., and Fr. Matt Kuczora, C.S.C., have, and bring what I have to the table which is a little different, because we're all very different people.

**AC:** We'd be remiss if we didn't remind readers of your discernment to religious life in the Congregation of Holy Cross. Can you walk us through that briefly?

**Fr. Tim:** I joined right out of high school. I had an experience my junior year when I received Confirmation. We had this elaborate evening that ended in Adoration. It was in that moment I really came to understand that in the Eucharist God is fully present. The answer to every question I had, the strength, and everything that I would ever need is there. I was set to go to Texas Tech and was fluctuating on what I wanted to do, so I built his little plan with the help of my mom, but at the end of the summer before my senior year, we started over, because I just didn't know yet if it was right. Then she said, "Well what about the seminary? Being a priest?" I decided to come up here



and visit, and I fell in love with it. It was just normal guys, not anything I expected the seminary to be. So I applied to Old College; was accepted; and, it was one of the best decisions I ever made. I fell in love with my faith. It's surprising in a sense; it feels like I've been doing it forever. But also, every day feels like, that same joy, that same excitement of day one.

More about Fr. Tim ...

**Family:** Fr. Tim is the fourth of six children of Marty and Paula Mouton

**Home Parish:** St. Justin Martyr Parish, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

**Education:** Notre Dame, B.A. Philosophy-Theology, 2010; Notre Dame, M.Div., 2014

**Hobbies:** Baseball, golf, fishing

**Fun Facts:** Two of my uncles are Holy Cross priests; Fr. Jeffrey Allison, C.S.C., and Fr. Daniel Panchot, C.S.C.!

**Favorite Book:** "A Tale of Two Cities," by Charles Dickens

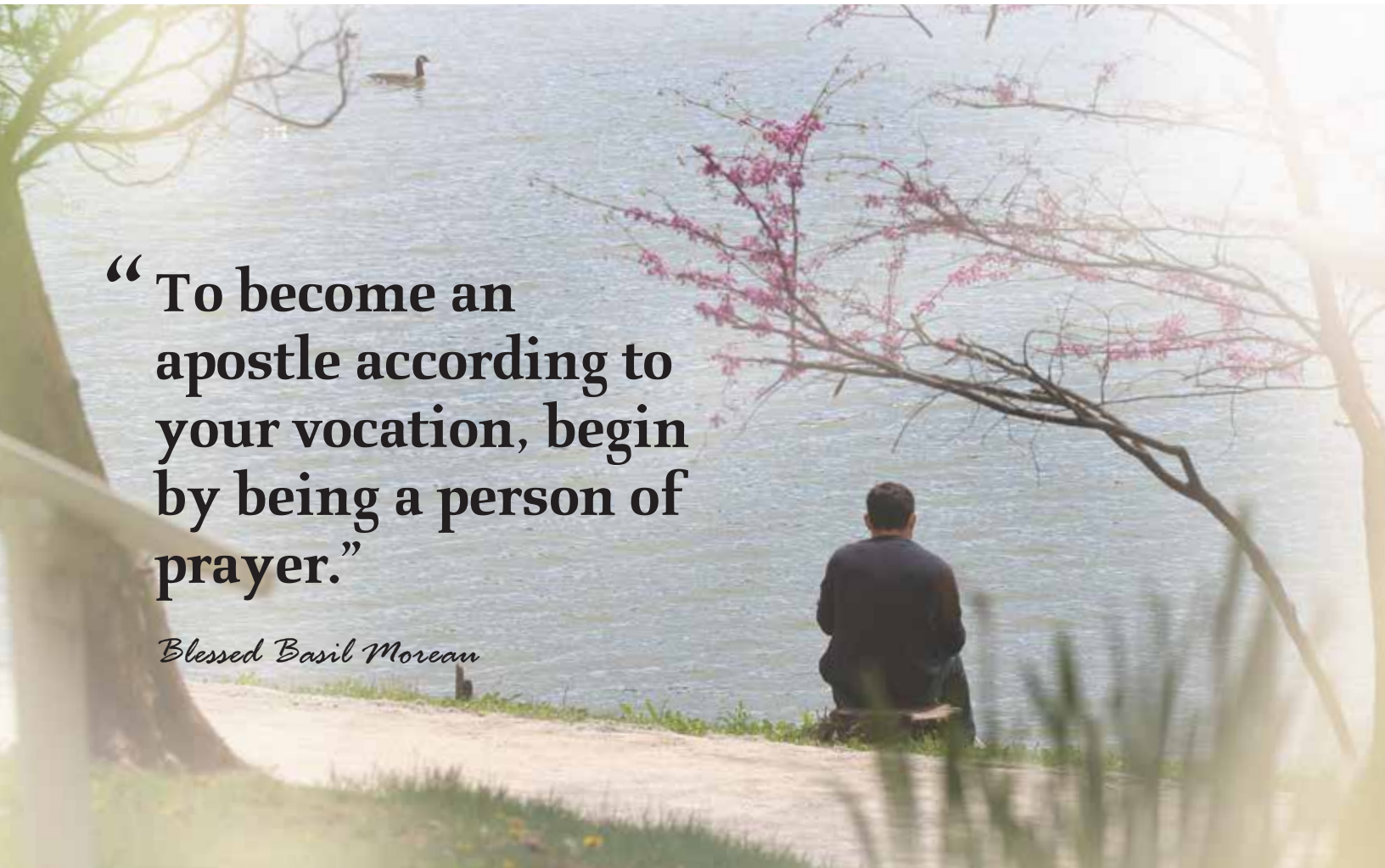
**Music on Fr. Tim's playlist:** Tim McGraw, Taylor Swift, Celtic Woman, Miranda Lambert, Zac Brown Band, Saving Abel, and Trick Pony



Fr. Tim Mouton, C.S.C., preaches at his First Mass at St. Joseph Parish, South Bend, Indiana.

**“To become an apostle according to your vocation, begin by being a person of prayer.”**

*Blessed Basil Moreau*





# CONGREGATION *of* HOLY CROSS

UNITED STATES PROVINCE OF PRIESTS AND BROTHERS

Office of Vocations

P.O. Box 541

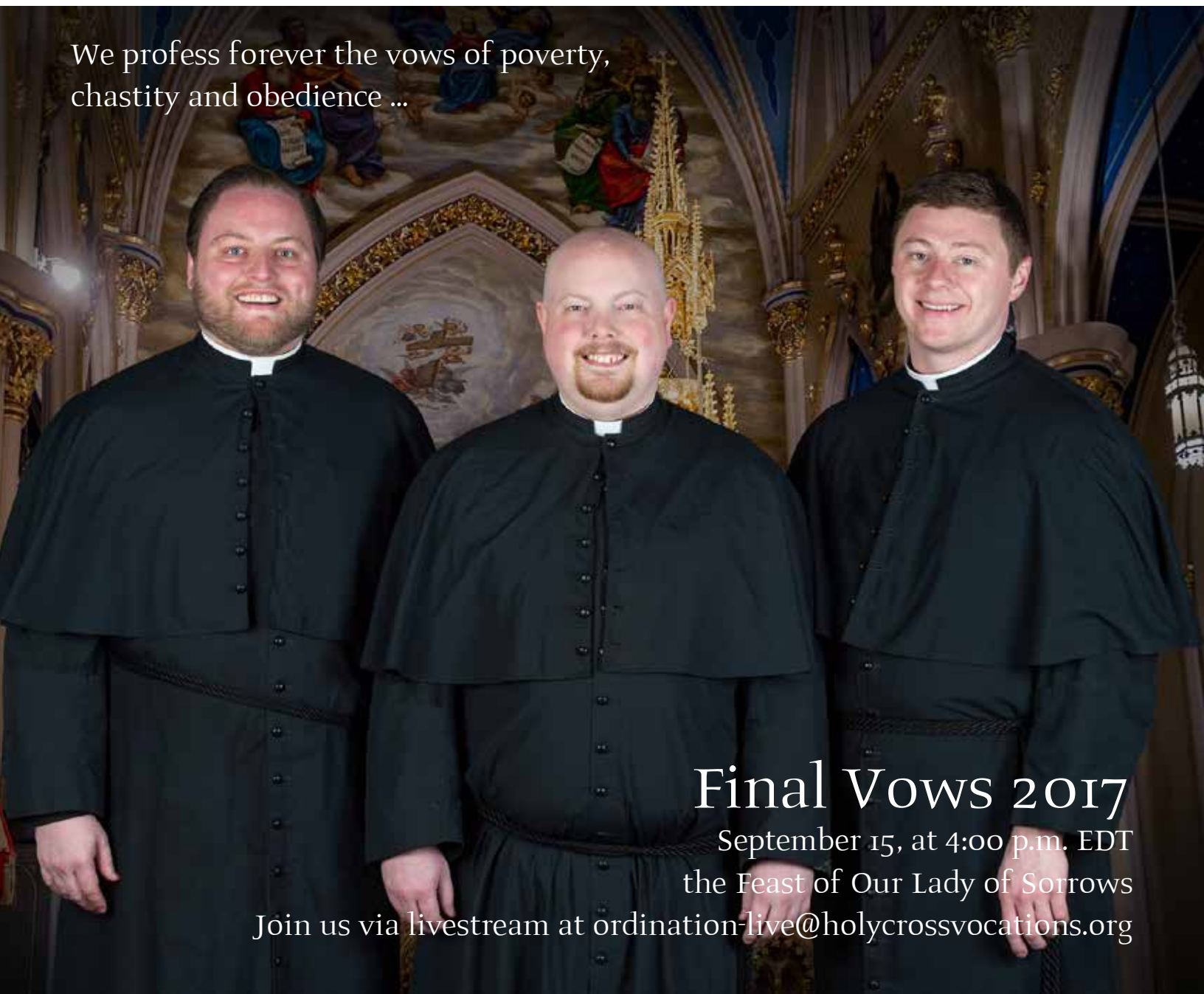
Notre Dame, IN 46556

(574) 631-6385

[vocations@holycrossusa.org](mailto:vocations@holycrossusa.org)

[holycrossvocations.org](http://holycrossvocations.org)

We profess forever the vows of poverty,  
chastity and obedience ...



## Final Vows 2017

September 15, at 4:00 p.m. EDT  
the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows

Join us via livestream at [ordination-live@holycrossvocations.org](http://ordination-live@holycrossvocations.org)

Chris Brennan, C.S.C., Timothy Weed, C.S.C., and Brendan McAleer, C.S.C., who are preparing to profess their Final Vows on September 15, 2017.

Front Cover Photo: Fr. Jeffrey Cooper, C.S.C., director of the Postulant Program, greets postulant Geoffrey Burdell upon his arrival at Moreau Seminary.