

EDUCATORS IN THE FAITH

Ave✠Crux



Volume 5 Issue 1 | Brothers in Christ

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 vocation 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
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Being a Brother

When I was in formation at Moreau Seminary, there were six Holy Cross brothers in residence with us: Brothers James Edwin, Bob Ewald, Richard Kyle, James Lakofka, John Platte, and Chester Ziemba. For us seminarians, these men were models of holiness, of fidelity, and of community. Their presence (at daily Mass, at community prayer, and at common table), their gentle spirit, and their hard work (even in their old age) taught us men in formation valuable lessons about brotherhood, about mission, and about the consecrated life; lessons that have helped me to thrive as a priest and as a religious.

On one occasion, I recall going through a particularly difficult time in formation. Beset with worry and uncertainty, I wondered if I were intelligent enough, talented enough, and, most importantly, holy enough for this life. The self-doubt was weighing me down. Without knowing it, I was looking for someone to be a brother to me – someone to encourage me, reassure me, and uphold me. It was Brother Chester, who, perhaps sensing that I was in need of a boost, left a note in my mailbox. He wrote to tell me that I was doing well, that I was showing progress, and that the community was glad to have me. That note, from a Brother of Holy Cross, strengthened me for the journey and taught me how I might, in turn, be a brother for others.

Still today, Brothers of Holy Cross continue the venerable tradition begun by Fr. Jacques Dujarié and entrusted to Blessed Basil Moreau. They go as educators in the faith, witnessing to the love of Christ by their lives of communion as consecrated religious. Many in today's world are looking for someone to be a brother to them. Will you answer the call?

Yours, in Christ,

Fr. John M. DeRiso, C.S.C.

Fr. John DeRiso, C.S.C., is director of vocations for the U.S. Province of the Congregation of Holy Cross. He resides in Siegfried Hall on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, presiding at Mass and serving as a pastoral presence for the men of the dorm. Prior to his assignment in the vocations office, Fr. John served as rector of the Shrine of Blessed Basil Moreau in Le Mans, France. He has also served as pastor of Our Lady of Holy Cross Parish (Le Mans) and of Saint Joseph Parish (South Bend). Fr. John received his B.A. and his M.Div. from the University of Notre Dame. He professed his Final Vows in September of 2001 and was ordained a priest in April of 2002.





The finally professed and temporarily professed Holy Cross brothers in attendance at the 2019 Final Vows Mass. First Row: Br. Thomas Giumenta, C.S.C., Br. James Henke, C.S.C., Br. Donald Stabrowski, C.S.C. Second Row: Br. Jacob Eifrid, C.S.C., Br. Robert Ackerman, C.S.C., Br. Joseph DeAgostino, C.S.C., and Br. Matthew Rehagen, C.S.C.



Br. Thomas Giumenta, C.S.C.

Professed Perpetual Vows
August 21, 1976

Currently serving as Learning Assistance
Coordinator at the University of
Portland, and Pastoral Resident at
Shipstad Hall.

Mystery, Mission, and Communion

That title almost sounds like a series on Amazon Prime video! I hope that putting some flesh on the bones of these words – mystery, mission, and communion – will help explain the title.

All three key concepts come from the 2015 document, *The Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother*. Mixing the three concepts together in the same stew might make the flavors indistinguishable, so I am treating each one separately.

Mystery - I have listened to many vocation stories in the last 51 years and each has its uniqueness. Some stories seem to have a certain logic. Those are the ones where the person considering religious life has an uncle who is a priest, a cousin who is a nun, and two or three other family members who, at one time, entered religious life. There are families

who prayed the Rosary every night, fasted during Lent, and were very regular at Sunday Mass attendance. None of that happened in my case, which puts me squarely into mystery. I came from a good family, but not a religious one. I guess that means that as a teenager, I could rebel against my parents and do some religious things! Many were very surprised when I told them that I was going to “try” the formation program in Holy Cross. God is the greatest mystery author, isn’t He? Writing such varied stories with oft times surprise twists! The beauty of mystery in discerning your vocation is that you aren’t expected to know exactly how things will turn out. As in a great literary mystery, you might be kept guessing, but that shouldn’t prevent you from starting an exciting chapter.

Mission - I don't remember too many great lines from my religious formation in Holy Cross, but I do remember one. It was said by a very spiritual religious of Holy Cross who informed us as young men that, "Brothers of Holy Cross are to be sacraments to others." That line really made me rethink spirituality. Suddenly, the development of a relationship with God was not just a fulfillment of rules, but a necessity, as I would, in turn, help others with their relationship to God. This relationship with God would form my identity and shape who I was to become, as it will also do for you; hence, why so many Holy Cross religious advise those discerning to lead with prayer. The mission of a religious brother is to allow Christ to form His image upon him so that whatever ministry he is engaged in, Christ is experienced by others as in a kind of sacrament.

Communion - The only word that comes to mind when I think about communion is community. The Holy Cross Community is, quite simply, a family. We have our differences and opinions, as

all families do, but I sometimes shudder to think of how my personality would have evolved if it had not been for both the easy and hard experiences that I have had in living with so many other Holy Cross religious during these last five decades. I have learned to appreciate diversity of style and culture, have developed patience living and bearing the joys and sorrows of my brothers, and have enjoyed the mysterious beauty of 50-year-old friendships. Communion and community are a part of the grace of redemption and they save us from the constant threat of egoism, as they keep us focused on our family and on those we serve.

Ultimately, it seems that mystery, mission, and communion are divine gifts or graces that God has given me for reasons that I may only understand in the afterlife; but, I am quite sure, and I indeed understand, that receiving these graces and gifts from God has given me a sense of joy and energy, and made my life very fulfilling.

“

The vocation of the Brother is not only intended to be that of a recipient of God's love, but also of being a witness and mediator of that same gift, of the project of communion which God has for humanity and which is based in the Trinitarian communion. This project, the Mystery which has been revealed to us in Christ, seeks to establish a horizontal relationship between God and humankind at the very heart of humanity, precisely where God wants to be present.”

Excerpt from: Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church, The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life



Br. James
Henke, C.S.C.

Second Year Temporarily
Professed Brother

Brotherhood in Holy Cross

If you were to ask a Holy Cross religious why they first joined Holy Cross and why they made Final Vows, you will often receive two different answers. Our first attractions to life in Holy Cross don't go away, but through our time in formation we discover a reason that touches us more deeply than our first impressions. As I was discerning religious life, I was looking for a way to give myself radically, completely to the Gospel. So many different communities and ways of life offer that opportunity, but as I began to look at brotherhood in Holy Cross, two characteristics of this life first popped out at me. For one, I was excited by the internationality of Holy Cross. I've always been strongly attracted by the missionary life. The thought that I could be a part of an international community of men who

shared the same mission in a number of communities and cultures around the world very much excited me. The second distinctive characteristic that attracted me was the community life I witnessed. I saw that the life these men shared together brought them great joy. Watching them live and love each other as brothers showed me that religious life in Holy Cross meant joining a family. Both the mission and the community life of Holy Cross spoke to my heart and offered me a vision of the life of a brother in Holy Cross which could be both joyful and fulfilling.

Since I entered formation a little over five years ago, I have found something even greater than I could see from the outside. There are so many reasons why I love being a brother in Holy Cross,

many of which remain a mystery even to me. When I reflect on my journey, and where I am now as a brother, it feels like a love story, and I cannot point to one defining reason for why God has invited me into this relationship with Him. One aspect of this singular call to become a Holy Cross brother that touches me most profoundly is the unique relationship with God to which I am invited. As a brother in Holy Cross, I have a particular availability to God in my prayer life and in my apostolic work. It is this unique relationship with God that feeds all that I do and love about

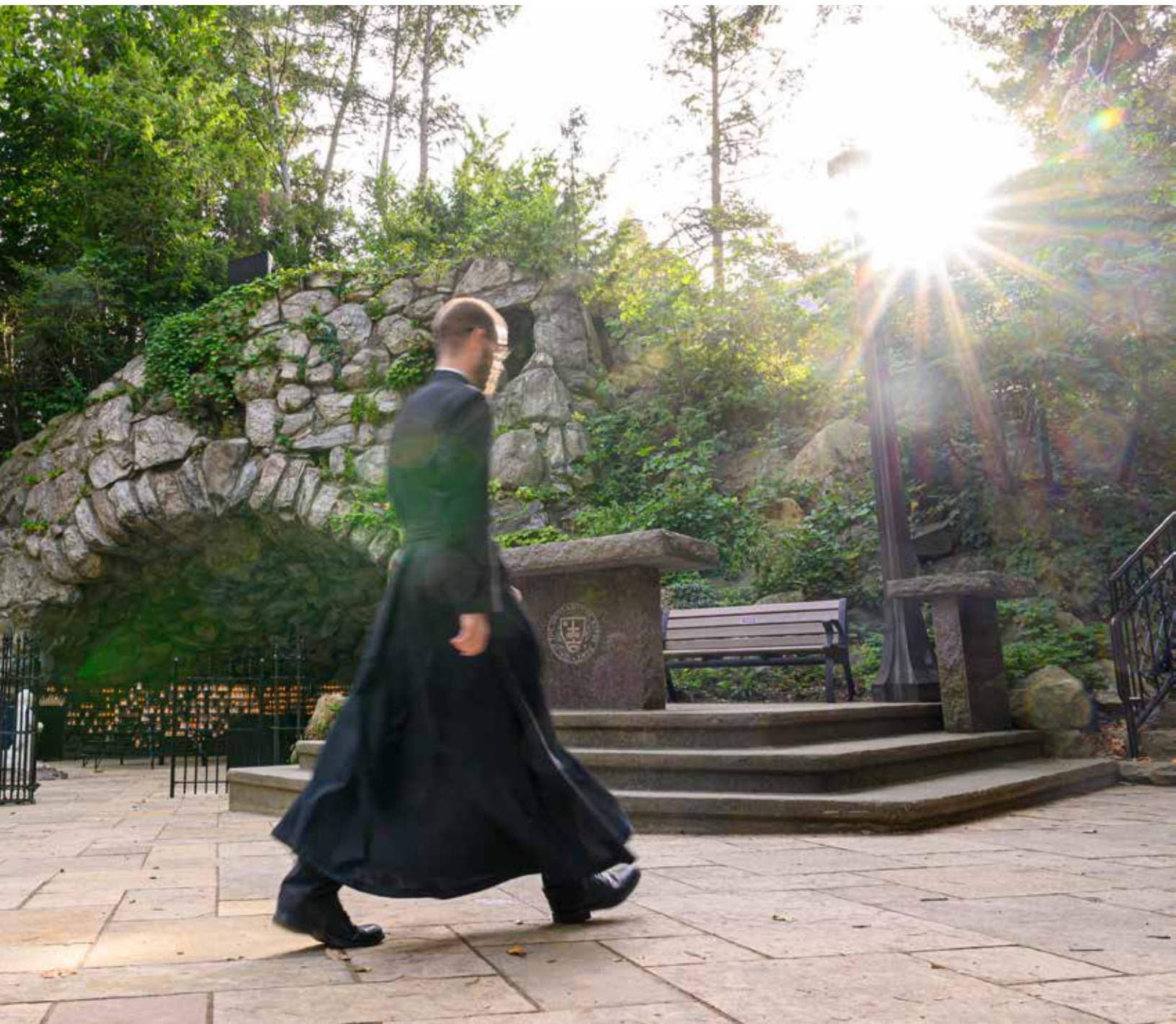
Holy Cross. I have come to discern that this is the way I was created to love in the world. Rather than diminish my earlier attractions to Holy Cross, I have found that my mission and community life have been transformed by this relationship with God that is unique to the Holy Cross brother. Jesus is my brother and I am His brotherly presence to the world.

“

The vocation of the Brother is part of the answer that God gives to the absence of brotherhood which is wounding the world today.”

Excerpt from: Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church, The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

Br. James Henke, C.S.C., walking by the Grotto on the campus of the University of Notre Dame.





Humble Beginnings, *Grand Destiny*

Approximately 50 kilometers to the southeast of Le Mans, France, is the village of Ruillé-sur-Loir. It was here, in 1820, that the parish pastor, Abbé Jacques-François Dujarié founded the Brothers of Saint Joseph - precursor to the Brothers of Holy Cross.

As curé of the parish of Ruillé-sur-Loir, Father Dujarié had firsthand knowledge of the religious ignorance into which a large portion of the French countryside population had fallen since the French Revolution. The bishop of Le Mans (Msgr Michel-Joseph von Pidoll), also concerned about this issue, had raised the subject at a meeting with the clergy of his diocese in 1818. It was at this very meeting that Abbé Dujarié was proposed as the one to address it.

Father Dujarié created a community of teaching brothers, which he entrusted to the patronage of Saint Joseph. He housed the early arrivals to his community wherever he could

in the presbytery at Ruillé until the eventual construction of “Le Grand Saint-Joseph.” Father Dujarié quickly succeeded in gaining legal recognition for his institute, which was classified as a charitable association dedicated to serving primary schools in the region.

Father Dujarié intended that the “Brothers” serve as schoolteachers, instructing children in reading, writing, arithmetic, and the catechism. He exhorted the Brothers to form the children in virtue, and to teach them to love and to serve God.

The humble curé of Ruillé was devoted to his Brothers of Saint Joseph as a father to his children. He encouraged them in their own sanctification and in their zeal for the glory of God.

The responsibilities of management caused Father Dujarié great suffering and began to take their toll. It became increasingly clear that for the work to

survive, it would need to be entrusted to a successor who would be animated by the same zeal and who would continue the work in the same spirit. Providence designated Father Basil Anthony Moreau for this mission.

In a ceremony held in the chapel of Le Grand Saint-Joseph on August 31, 1835, and attended by Msgr Jean-Baptiste Bouvier, Bishop of Le Mans, Father Dujarié stated:

“Abbé Moreau, I beg of you to accept the direction of the little Congregation of the Brothers of St. Joseph which I have just given up because of my infirmities, which make it impossible for me to look after it and provide for its needs. I place it entirely in your hands; I entrust it to you, confident that you will from this point forward be its father and protector. Yes, I entrust to you my children; please accept them as my most treasured possession, and as a trust for which you will have to render an account to the Prince of Shepherds. I want them to look upon you henceforth as their father, and to have for you all the love, submission, and confidence which they owe you as a father.”

It was clear that for Father Dujarié, Father Basil Moreau was the zealous and worthy successor he had sought and prayed for. For his part, Father Moreau accepted the mission entrusted to him in a spirit of humility and devotion.

Father Moreau transferred the Brothers of Saint Joseph from Ruillé-sur-Loir to the property at Sainte-Croix, where he was in the process of establishing a school. On March 1, 1837, at Sainte-Croix, Father Moreau united the Brothers of Saint Joseph with a group of “auxiliary priests” that he had only recently assembled in the Diocese of Le Mans for the mission of re-evangelization through preaching and teaching. This one association would eventually become the Congregation of Holy Cross.

Information taken from Le Très Révérend Père Basile-Antoine Moreau et ses oeuvres, by Abbé Charles Moreau, and from Basil Anthony Mary Moreau, by Canon Étienne Catta and Tony Catta (English translation by Edward L. Heston, C.S.C.).



Father Jacques-François Dujarié (1767-1838), ordained a priest while in hiding in Paris in 1795, was the clandestine and courageous apostle to the faithful of the French countryside during the closing months of the Reign of Terror. Named curé of the parish of Ruillé-sur-Loir in 1803, Father Dujarié was the founder of the Sisters of Providence (1806) and of the Brothers of Saint Joseph (1820). In 1835, his advanced age and various infirmities compelled him to entrust the direction of the Brothers of Saint Joseph to his friend and confrère, Father Basil Moreau.

This window in the church of Notre-Dame de Sainte-Croix (Le Mans) depicts the scene which took place in the chapel of Le Grand Saint-Joseph (Ruillé-sur-Loir) on August 31, 1835. Father Dujarié, his left hand leaning on a cane and his right on the altar, addresses Father Moreau, saying: "I want that the Brothers should look upon you henceforth as their Father." Monseigneur Jean-Baptiste Bouvier, Bishop of Le Mans from 1834 to 1854, responds: "I cannot but approve the choice of Monsieur Moreau." Father Moreau declares, "Our mission is to form children of God."

Father Jacques François Dujarié, the venerable priest of Christ and beloved father to his Brothers of Saint Joseph, died on February 17, 1838 at Notre-Dame de Sainte-Croix, where he had come to live out the remainder of his days. The tomb of this very good and very beloved father is housed in the chapel of the motherhouse of the Sisters of Providence at Ruillé-sur-Loir.

Information taken from Le Père Dujarié (1767-1838), Fondateur des Sœurs de la Providence de Ruillé-sur-Loir et des Frères de Saint-Joseph Maintenant Frères de Sainte-Croix, by Tony Catta.

Upper Left: Photo of the parish in Ruillé-sur-Loir where Fr. Dujarié served as pastor.



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Lord, you have chosen
Holy Cross brother, Saint André
Bessette, to spread devotion to Saint
Joseph and to dedicate himself to
all those who are poor and afflicted.
Grant through his intercession the
favor that we now request ...
Grant us the grace to imitate his
piety and charity so that, with him,
we may share the reward promised
to all who care for their neighbors
out of love for you.
We make this prayer in the name of
Jesus the Lord.
Amen.



Front Cover Photo: Fr. Bryan Williams, C.S.C., and Fr. Brogan Ryan, C.S.C., with newly perpetually professed Holy Cross brother, Br. Joseph DeAgostino, C.S.C.

Back Cover Photo: Statue of St. André Bessette at St. Joseph's Oratory (Montreal, Canada). Prayer from the *Directory of Devotional Prayer* for the Congregation of Holy Cross.