

CHOICES

FROM THE CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

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New Candidates 2010–11

Following God's Call



The Holy Cross Vocation Team: Fr. Jim Gallagher, C.S.C., and Fr. Drew Gawrych, C.S.C.

The fall is always an exciting time of year at Moreau Seminary and Old College when the seminarians return from their summer jobs and ministries full of stories and renewed energy for the school year. Those we have worked with through the application process are now here and ready to take that next step in following God's call. There is great hope for the year ahead and everyone is ready to get to it.

The excitement is heightened this year with the anticipation of October 17, when Brother André Bessette, C.S.C., will be canonized and become the first Holy Cross saint. There is much to learn about this saintly religious, so after reading this issue of CHOICES, please go online where we have more about his life and canonization on our blog cscpriestsandbrothers.blogspot.com and website brotherandre.org.

Also in this issue of CHOICES we feature the men who are taking the next step in following God's call. As you read about these young men who are entering the Old College and Candidate programs, you can see that they are all keenly aware that it is not easy to know exactly what God is calling them to, yet they have found the courage to trust the gut feelings, hunches, and promptings of the Spirit that have pointed them in this direction. They trust that God is at work in their lives and has led them to Holy Cross.

They are right in acknowledging that it is not easy to know what God is asking, yet as we trust, we allow the Lord to do amazing things with our lives. This truth has been evident in Holy Cross since its beginning and can be seen in the lives of Fr. Drew Gawrych, C.S.C., Fr. Steve Lacroix, C.S.C., and Deacon Alfredo Olvera Ledezma, C.S.C., whom you will also learn about in this issue.

If you or anyone you know has a sense that God may be calling him to the religious life or to the priesthood, encourage him to be in touch with us so that we might help in his discovery of God's call.

In Holy Cross,
Rev. James T. Gallagher, C.S.C.
Director, Office of Vocations

Moreau Seminary

ENTERING THE CANDIDATE PROGRAM

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

The men profiled here 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.



Jacob A. Cress



Michael T. Gonzalez

JACOB A. CRESS

A native of Ohio with a bachelor's degree from the University of Dayton, Jacob came to Notre Dame in 2005 to pursue a Ph.D. in aerospace engineering. This pursuit put him on the path to the life-shaping experiences he has had in the past five years, which have led him to the Candidate Program.

The course that led him to discernment of a priestly vocation in Holy Cross began with his participation in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) at Notre Dame and being received into the Catholic Church. This process brought Jacob into contact with Holy Cross priests, as did his service as an assistant rector in one of the Notre Dame residence halls.

What was it about Holy Cross that attracted him to the formation program? "Front and center, of course, is the commitment that the Congregation of Holy Cross has to serve the Church and the community of Christians," says Jacob. "But the desire to educate the mind and the heart at the numerous colleges and schools around the country and the world is what ultimately inspired me to apply."

His decision to enter the program was affirmed

by prayerfully seeking God's will, as well as meeting the men currently in formation at Moreau Seminary. He saw that they are "normal people" with whom he would be comfortable living, learning, and working.

MICHAEL T. GONZALEZ

The Holy Cross emphasis on brotherhood in Christ has reinforced Michael's decision to enter the Candidate Program at Moreau Seminary only months after graduating from Notre Dame with a degree in accountancy. Living in a residence hall as an undergraduate, he built a friendship with the rector, a Holy Cross priest, and this community experience was a window into the priestly vocation of "unconditional love shown to all."

Another important element in making the decision was plenty of discussion with friends, both inside and outside the Congregation. A focus on developing his prayer life was also key. Michael, who grew up in Texas, says the support and kindness he has received within the Holy Cross community "really dispelled a lot of the doubts" about taking this step into formation.

What advice would he give about seeking one's call from God? "I would tell someone discerning a vocation to trust in their gut feeling and not force anything," he says. "This shouldn't be some sacrificial lifestyle in the sense that you would be unhappy. Rather, God works through natural affinities, so trust in what makes you genuinely happy and fulfilled."



Christopher D. Labadie



Dennis A. Strach II

CHRISTOPHER D. LABADIE

Christopher takes note of "the way Holy Cross is willing to go into just about any situation, assess the needs of the community, and put everything possible into fulfilling those needs for the people of God." This native of Michigan and 2009 graduate of Notre Dame has shown his own penchant for action across a range of communities, venturing into new experiences while sensing that there is a solid foundation amid the busyness.

While a Notre Dame student, he double



"Come.

Follow me."

It was the Lord
Jesus calling us.

Constitutions of
the Congregation
of Holy Cross

maored in theology and philosophy and minored in liturgical music. He was a soloist in the Notre Dame Folk Choir and officer in the campus Knights of Columbus council. He started out in the Old College Undergraduate Seminary but chose to leave that program after two years.

Now, after graduating and spending one year in Ireland as the liturgical musician for a parish, he has applied for and received readmission to Holy Cross in the Candidate Program. His time in Ireland prompted him to reinvigorate his prayer life.

The support Christopher has received from his family and numerous members of the Congregation of Holy Cross has been invaluable. He has gained confidence in his journey of discernment through daily Mass and Eucharistic Adoration—receiving the Lord's encouragement through many "whisper" moments rather than more sensational "burning bush" moments.

DENNIS A. STRACH II

"I always felt like a priority with the members of Holy Cross," says this Michigander who recently received his bachelor's degree in music from Oakland University. Dennis received much support from the Congregation during three years of discernment while he was pursuing his studies and developing his talents in piano, organ, choral music, and opera.

Music has served as his passion and his ministry to date. He has been a music director for a parish near his hometown of Oakland, Mich. During the past year, while focusing on his decision to enter the Candidate Program at Moreau Seminary, he expanded the range of his ministries, bringing the Eucharist to the sick and homebound, helping a young man prepare for Confirmation at his parish, and organizing a retreat at his high school alma mater.

He has come to see the supportiveness of one Holy Cross priest who helped guide his discernment as reflective of the "friendship and genuineness" shared by the broader Holy Cross community. "There were so many instances when I thought that I couldn't take the next step and apply to the seminary, but every time I doubted, a situation would occur that would show me that I was ready and able," he recalls.

Dennis advises others not to talk themselves out of the formation process by demanding certitude. Entering a seminary program "means that you care about God's will enough to take the time to see what vocation God is calling you to, given all of your gifts and talents."

JOSEPH T. WYSOCKI

Joseph's life as an undergraduate at Notre Dame included participation in the Old College Seminary Program during his freshman and sophomore years.

As well, he worked in the violence prevention program for youths at Notre Dame's Robinson Community Learning Center, and he taught Sunday school at a local parish.

After graduation in 2007, he lived in Uganda for 20 months, teaching English and computer skills to students at Holy Cross schools. He later learned some Spanish on a three-month trip to Guatemala. "Now, after a few years away getting a little bit more life experience, I am excited to devote myself wholly to discerning a vocation as a Holy Cross religious."

Joseph, who grew up in a family of nine children in Illinois, has come to see Holy Cross as a distinctive international family of priests, sisters, and brothers. All three groups have had an impact on his journey with their examples of faithfulness and service.

He is thankful for the support of his family and friends in helping to dispel doubts about entering the Candidate Program. He has done much praying before the Blessed Sacrament. Of course, there are still doubts and questions, but anyone seriously discerning their life's course will confront these, and he affirms that this is time well-spent, whatever one is called to be.

**CONTINUING FORMATION**

The men profiled here are advancing in the structured formation program that is available to University of Notre Dame and Holy Cross College students who enter the Old College Undergraduate Seminary Program. They move to the Candidate Program at Moreau Seminary during their senior year or upon completing their undergraduate degree and share in the above-mentioned immersion in Holy Cross community life.

JOHN D. AHEARN

John discovered the Old College Undergraduate Seminary Program when, as a high-school



Joseph T. Wysocki



The perfection of this life stands out particularly in the purity of intention which seeks not self, but God alone.

Blessed Basil
Moreau, C.S.C.



John D. Ahearn



Matthew E. Hovde

senior in Los Angeles, he visited Notre Dame for a football weekend. He applied and was accepted to enter Old College the following year, and his three years there have been a time of great growth in his prayer life.

Central to that growth is his love of the Eucharist and his devotion to the Blessed Mother; John prays the Rosary every day and strives to attend daily Mass. He attributes his confidence in pursuing further formation in the Candidate Program at Moreau Seminary to his "complete trust in God and Mary."

His years as a Notre Dame undergraduate, majoring in theology, have also allowed John to become familiar with the "welcoming and warm environment" of the Holy Cross community, whose members develop not only as great priests, he says, but also as "great people in general."

The community of seminarians at Old College has also been important to John. His conversations with other Old Collegians—which continued even during the summers when they scattered like all undergraduates—were key to his discernment. The priest-director of Old College was likewise crucial to his preparation as he "helped me in my prayer life greatly with devotion to the Eucharist."

MATTHEW E. HOVDE

This Floridian whose hobbies include guitar and iconography began his conversations with members of Holy Cross as a high-school sophomore who came to Notre Dame during the summer as part of the NDVision vocation discernment program. The community members Matthew met impressed him with their zeal, and he remained in contact with them.

"The more I learned of the spirituality of Holy Cross, the more I saw myself fitting into it," says this Notre Dame senior who is moving on to Moreau Seminary to complete the undergraduate seminary program. "I have to say that daily Eucharistic Adoration, which is part of the Old College schedule, has been so important to me in

my vocation discernment.”

His commitment to place the formation process in the safekeeping of the Holy Spirit has helped Matthew dispel doubts about continuing his journey toward priesthood as a Candidate at Moreau Seminary. That journey included a semester at the American College seminary in Leuven, Belgium, as an Old Collegian during his junior year.

What is Matthew's advice for those discerning their vocation? He recommends speaking with others and learning from those who have gone through a similar experience. Also, “it is so important to allow the Spirit room to guide them so that, whatever they do, they can do it well and in holiness.”



Joshua W. Leeuw



Michael P. Palmer

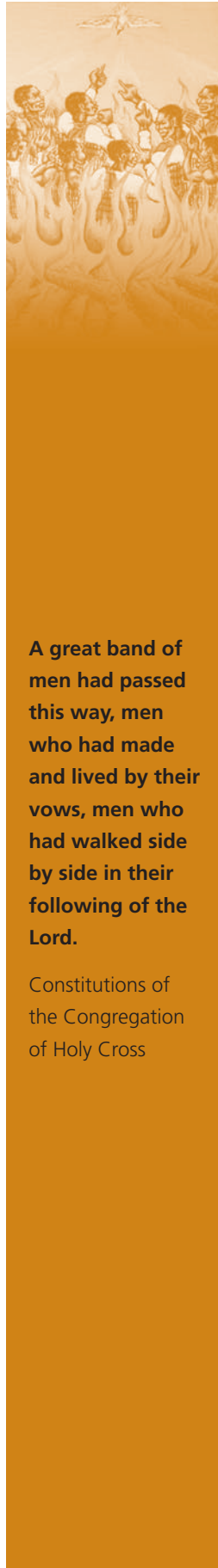
JOSHUA W. LEEUW

As a freshman at Holy Cross College, across the highway from Notre Dame, Joshua had never thought about a vocation to the priesthood. Then this northern Indiana native discovered the community of Holy Cross priests and brothers and was impressed with the fraternal spirit that marked the life of people at every stage of preparation for membership in the Congregation.

He applied to the Old College Undergraduate Seminary program and lived in that community during his junior and senior years, finding “several very positive influences in my discernment process,” including the rector of that community. The rector, Rev. Kevin Russeau, C.S.C., was instrumental in “helping me change and adapt to community living.”

The time of preparation that has now led Joshua to the Candidate Program at Moreau Seminary included much prayer and even the personal initiative to participate in retreats at Benedictine and Trappist communities in the region.

“My advice would be to pray over your vocation, but more importantly do not be afraid to talk to men already in the formation program and professed religious,” he says.



A great band of men had passed this way, men who had made and lived by their vows, men who had walked side by side in their following of the Lord.

Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross

MICHAEL P. PALMER

The experience of growing up with six brothers helped Michael to see the strong family interactions that characterized the Congregation of Holy Cross when he arrived at Notre Dame. He had grown up in Michigan and attended a Jesuit high school in Detroit, but he was introduced to Holy Cross through a priest in his parish.

“I felt a great sense of unity and charity among these men,” he recalls, adding that their prayerfulness also caught his attention. He could tell that others remembered “what it was like to be in my place.” He was also able to immerse himself in growth and service opportunities offered at Notre Dame, joining the campus Knights of Columbus and the student Right to Life organization. He also served as a music minister in a Catholic summer camp.

After discussions with many people, including his rector at Old College and his family and friends, Michael is confident that his next step into the Candidate Program at Moreau Seminary represents “truly listening” to the will of God for his life.

RYAN J. PIETROCARLO

A “welcoming atmosphere” and genuine, warm people laid the groundwork for Ryan's process of formation in the Congregation of Holy Cross. The Old College Undergraduate Seminary Program was a time for personal and spiritual growth, preparing the way for the Candidate Program at Moreau Seminary now that he is a senior at Notre Dame.

Ryan hails from Rochester, N.Y., and loves science, reading, dancing, and running. A trip to Notre Dame with his high school track team was actually his introduction to the Holy Cross community. For this young man who had considered a teaching career, the zeal of these priests and brothers as educators in the faith attracted him.

He thanks his family and friends for their support and encouragement during these first years of discernment. The pastoral staff at Old College has provided inspiration along with the basic orientation to seminary life and the spirituality of Holy Cross.

The journey toward a possible priestly vocation now intensifies. “The most important thing for me,” he says, “is to not be afraid to be open to the possibility and explore it. You won't know for sure unless you take action and see for yourself what the priesthood is all about.”



Ryan J. Pietrocarlo



Frs. Lacroix and Gawrych on the day of their ordination.

The Office of Vocations and Old College welcome two new staff members who will bring a deep love of God and boundless energy to the joyful work of supporting men in the discernment of God's call in their lives. These priests, both ordained in 2008 as members of the same seminary class, also bring a love for the Congregation of Holy Cross that is born of their own experiences of community and formation, their parish-based service to the people of God, and their in-depth study of the Holy Cross charism.

Rev. Andrew Gawrych, C.S.C., is a new associate director for the Office of Vocations. This native of Michigan who attended high school in Kansas has spent the past two years as associate pastor at St. John Vianney Parish in Goodyear, Ariz. Father Drew, who holds an M.Div. from the University of Notre Dame, is an avid student of the tradition and spirituality of Holy Cross. In his time at St. John Vianney Parish, Fr. Drew helped to bring to life a vocation committee for the parish and worked with a group of men in discernment. He brings great enthusiasm for vocation ministry and will serve well as a mentor for young men considering a call.

Rev. Stephen Lacroix, C.S.C., is the new rector of the Old College program at the University of Notre Dame. He has spent the past two years as associate pastor at Christ the King Parish in South Bend, Ind. He initially pursued a career in information systems and earned an MBA from the University of Arizona. Born in Massachusetts and raised in Texas, Fr. Steve holds an M.Div. from Notre Dame. During his studies at Notre Dame he served as the assistant rector of Old College and returns now as a mentor and guide to the men in our undergraduate seminary.

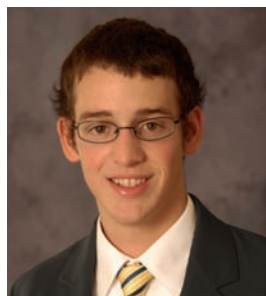
Our zeal is always guided by charity, and everything is done with strength and gentleness: strength because we are courageous and unshakable in the midst of pain, difficulty and trials...and with gentleness because we have the tenderness of our Divine Model.

Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C.

NEW OLD COLLEGIANS

The Old College Program is housed in the Notre Dame campus' original building, constructed in 1843. It remains a wonderful place for residential community and 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.



Joshua P. Bathon



Karlo M. Leonor

JOSHUA P. BATHON

Joshua comes to Notre Dame and the Old College Undergraduate Seminary Program from a high school in South Carolina. He grew up in South Bend, Ind., where he lived in a Holy Cross-administered parish and had a chance to learn about the Congregation. Indeed, this choir member and practitioner of "ultimate Frisbee" doubted that he was a good fit for them until his interviews with the staff at Old College.

"My interviews dispelled many doubts as to the Catholic identity of the Holy Cross order and the University of Notre Dame," he says. "My conversations in the interviews changed my mind and allowed me to fall in love with Old College." This revelation was strengthened by prayer, contemplation, and consultation with a spiritual director, all helping him to conclude that "the teaching, obedience, and community aspects of Holy Cross are what God is calling me to at this point in my life."

He urges other young people in his position to "be honest with yourself," not to feel pressured to enter a seminary program if it does not feel right, but not to let fear stop you if you do feel called by God.

KARLO M. LEONOR

"As long as I can remember, I have always wanted to become a priest," Karlo says. As for how this native of Seattle, Wash., came to join the Notre Dame Class of 2011, embrace the University's rich Catholic culture, and thus become familiar with the Congregation of Holy Cross, he notes: "I trust that Divine Providence knows better than I."

The residence hall where Karlo has lived prior to joining the Old College Undergraduate Seminary program was a good first step in getting to know the on-campus Holy Cross community, since there were three priests residing in the dorm. But he has also been attracted by "reading the adventurous and colorful lives" of such Holy Cross legends as Blessed Brother André Bessette, C.S.C., to be canonized a saint in October 2010; Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C., founder of the Congregation, beatified in 2007; and Rev. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., beloved "Rosary priest" whose message, "the family who prays together, stays together," was spread worldwide through the media in the 20th century.

"I think the most important thing I've been doing to prepare for Old College has been keeping a regular routine of prayer, especially the Liturgy of the Hours, daily meditation, and my devotion to the Blessed Virgin," says this philosophy and theology major. "Every day, I ask Our Lady and my patron saints to help me stay faithful to the vocation Christ wants for me in life."



Christian N. Mocek



Vincent H. Nguyen

CHRISTIAN N. MOCEK

His first contact with Holy Cross came in a letter Christian received from the Office of Vocations during his junior year at a Catholic high school in Ohio. As he became acquainted with the vocations staff and the students of Old College, he saw that "they were joyful individuals who were in love with their community and God, and I found that inspiring."

Through prayer, he decided to apply to the Old College Undergraduate Seminary Program. Many



The face of every human being who suffers is for us the face of Jesus who mounted the cross to take the sting out of death. Ours must be the same cross and the same hope.

Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross

conversations with friends, priests, and others discerning their own vocations gave him the confidence to take that step. "The visit to Old College for my interviews was also very helpful," he says. "The kindness and hospitality given to me and my parents was something we still remember well and was something that solidified my choice of Holy Cross."

Christian advises that prayer is absolutely essential for anyone discerning a vocation. "If you do not have a good relationship with God, you cannot tell what His plans are for you." One thing's for sure, he adds: "God has great plans for each of us."

VINCENT H. NGUYEN

A Come and See weekend gave Vincent his introduction to the Congregation of Holy Cross when he was a high school junior in Georgia. "There was some gut feeling that drew me to Holy Cross because it felt right," he says. "Whenever I think about Holy Cross it feels like home."

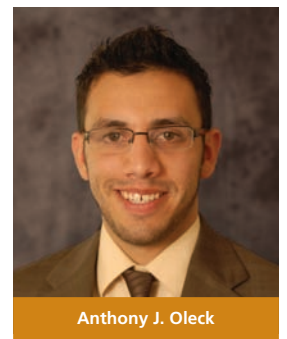
The Old College Undergraduate Seminary program at Notre Dame will be home for Vincent, and one might expect that college life will also give him opportunities to continue exercising his talents in piano and singing, as well as his interests in reading and video games. There has been another abiding interest: "Praying daily has always been a part of my life, but in order to prepare for the program I found myself praying more often throughout the day and praying specifically for my vocation." He also began participating more in events at his parish.

Listening to the stories of priests and their own discernment process has helped to give him more confidence about this early step in formation. "Others have gone through the same experiences, thoughts, and doubts."

ANTHONY J. OLECK

How does a teenager confront his doubts about joining a vocation discernment program as he begins his college life? Anthony, who attended a Catholic high school in Grand Rapids, Mich., has several answers to that question.

One is the encouragement from his parents and siblings and spiritual director. Another is



Anthony J. Oleck

participation in discernment programs like the Come and See weekend and the NDVision experiences he attended at Notre Dame. Another is the development of his prayer life—praying a daily Rosary, attending daily Masses, and reading spiritual books like those written by Pope Benedict XVI. Yet another is reading about spiritual exemplars like Blessed Brother André Bessette, C.S.C., and Saint John Vianney, the patron saint of priests. There is one more that Anthony mentions: “God’s grace.” He recalls that, through grace, even “the weakest of Christ’s flock are able to become shepherds.”

As for the particular decision to apply to the Old College Undergraduate Seminary program to discern his vocation, he has gained confidence from the “sense of peace” he brings back from his contacts with the Congregation of Holy Cross. “The sense of community, the priests and seminarians I met, and the ideals held by Holy Cross all influenced my decision.”

KYLE T. SMITH

Kyle’s readings of the Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross attract him through the embrace of community life and the focus on faith-filled education. But he gives much credit for his entry into the Old College program to a wide variety of supportive people.

As this Notre Dame sophomore enters the undergraduate seminary program, he sends a message of thanks to: Holy Cross priests who have been part of his application and early discernment process; diocesan priests from his Michigan parish; family and friends who have been supportive; and residents of Old College who reassured him that this was a place where “I could comfortably and successfully discern God’s plan while getting to know some great friends.”

Kyle puts God at the top of his gratitude list. “I have made sure to spend extra time in prayer, and the Lord has blessed me with graces to rid me of doubt in my discernment,” he says. “I have made it especially important to include the sacraments in my day-to-day life, going to daily Mass, receiving the Holy Eucharist, and frequenting the confessionals around campus to remain resolute in the discerning of my vocation.”



Kyle T. Smith

Try, then, to become perfect copies of the Divine Model, and nothing will ever shake your vocation. Not only will you carry whatever crosses you encounter in accomplishing the duties of your holy state, but you will love these crosses.

Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C.



Alfredo Ledezma, C.S.C., taking his final vows in Holy Cross

ORDINATION IN MEXICO

For Alfredo Olvera Ledezma, C.S.C., the personal journey through the Holy Cross formation process in Mexico is culminating in a cause for personal and community-wide celebration. He will be ordained a priest in the Congregation of Holy Cross on Sept. 18, 2010, in Monterrey, Mexico.

He started sensing God’s call at the age of 8 or 9, he remembers. His parish in the state of San Luis Potosi, which is geographically in the middle of Mexico, was served by Holy Cross priests. “They were very dedicated to their ministry, and they were for me the image of who I wanted to be.”

As Alfredo grew older and participated in parish youth retreats, the priests put him in contact with the vocation director and the larger Holy Cross community in the neighboring state of Nuevo León. He stayed in contact with members of the community, and his discernment continued.

This maturity led to his entering a formal formation process in the Candidate Program in Monterrey which included assisting in a Holy Cross parish. After two and a half years of study in Mexico, Alfredo entered the Holy Cross novitiate in Lima, Peru, “where I had a wonderful experience that reaffirmed my vocation and identity with the community.” He returned to Mexico for philosophy and theology studies and prepared for ordination.

“I believe that the presence of Our Lord has continuously been in my life,” Alfredo says, “and that is what has been the motivation for me to continue discovering what His will is in my life.”

East Africa

In East Africa, the Holy Cross prenovitiate candidate program spans three years. The participants are young men from Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania who have completed their secondary level of education and are considering a vocation to religious life. The program has both priest-seminarian and brother-scholastic candidates. They attend college in Jinja, Uganda, although several have already entered higher education, even earning degrees.



Alioni Isaac



Aroho Aaron

ALIONI ISAAC

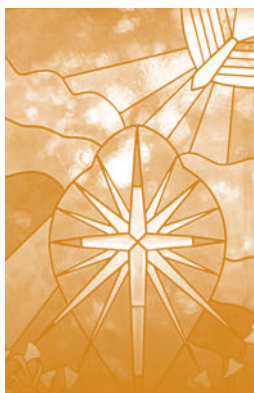
The Holy Cross charism to be “educators in the faith” inspired Isaac to pursue this vocation because he wants to help form others who will spread the Catholic faith through service. This college graduate from Uganda, who loves soccer, feels called to minister to families, which he says “promotes evangelization at the grass roots.” The chaplains at his high school and in Young Christian Student (YCS) helped to nurture Isaac’s vocation, as did contact with a Holy Cross priest in Uganda. He says discernment includes being “open to the spirit of God” who instructs people on “how best they can serve God.”

AROHO AARON

Spreading the Gospel to others “improves my worship to God,” says Aaron. He was drawn to find out more about Holy Cross because he saw the good news embodied in Holy Cross brothers who taught in the minor seminary that he attended in Uganda. These men were “kind, welcoming, and spiritual,” he recalls. Inspired by such exemplars, Aaron turned to his parents, a vocation director, and his parish priest for a lengthy time of prayer for God’s guidance, which has led him to continue his journey of discernment. “Remain focused, and always have trust in prayer” is the advice he draws from his own experience.

It was a call that comes to us from without, but also one that rose up within us, as from his Spirit.

Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross



Kivilu Nthuku Joseph



Kiwanuka Rudovic

KIVILU NTHUKU JOSEPH

“I would like to share my talents and gifts with God’s people,” says Joseph, a Kenyan who has earned certificates in computers and in English. His interests include music, volleyball, and badminton. He is attracted to teaching and to parish work. Prayer and the guidance of his family and friends have prompted him to explore a call to the priesthood in the Congregation of Holy Cross as a path toward those ministries.

KIWANUKA RUDOVIC

After earning a diploma in education from the National Teachers College in Kampala, Uganda, this seventh of 14 children embraces the idea of learning as “a life process.” Through his college chaplain, he met members of the Congregation of Holy Cross for whom the ministry of education has included a love of learning. It is the same kind of open-minded enthusiasm that is making him “ready to grow in self-knowledge” as part of his formation program. Rudovic is thankful for his parents, relatives, and friends to whom he listened and to whom he turned for support at early phases of his discernment of a vocation in the Lord’s service.

KIYAGA JULIUS

The chaplains at St. Balikuddembe Secondary School in Uganda provided Julius with a first invitation to explore a priestly vocation. Meeting members of Holy Cross and being impressed by the simplicity of their community prompted him to consider joining the Congregation. Reading spiritual books has become one of his hobbies. Born in 1982, Julius holds a diploma in education from Nkozi National Teachers’ College and desires to “preach the Gospel” in a parish setting.



Kiyaga Julius



Musoke Ronald



Mwenda Ikiao Martin

MUSOKE RONALD

The Holy Cross commitment to community and family as firm foundations for faith and kindness resonated with Ronald. He has a diploma in social work from Nsamizi Training Institute of Social Development in Uganda. His parish priest, parents, and friends all supported his desire to explore a program of priestly formation. Asked what advice he would give to other young people discerning a vocation, he says seeking advice is an important first step. "Then, pray about it because prayer works."

MWENDA IKIAO MARTIN

Martin has always wanted to teach. While studying at a minor seminary several years ago, he took on multiple leadership roles at the same time, including the directing of sports and debate club activities. But Martin, whose hometown is Nairobi, Kenya, is also a good listener who enjoys meeting new people. He says that a number of people, including Br. John Bailanda, C.S.C., from his Holy Cross-administered parish and seminarians with whom he talked, along with his parents, influenced his decision to come experience the community of Holy Cross. He discovered that "Holy Cross is a family" that properly combines leadership and listening, teaching, and learning. "It is the Lord calling us!"

MWESIGE FELIX

Holy Cross Family Ministries, encouraging families to stay strong together in prayer, inspires Felix because he sees such family unity as "the source of good people in society." Excelling in table tennis and chess during his teen years, he met Br. Alan Harrod, C.S.C., in whom he recognized a visible "goodness."



Mwesige Felix



How sweet it is to abandon ourselves to the love of our Father who is in heaven and to seek His holy will.

Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C.

Approaching the formation process, he has listened to his heart and has taken a trusting stance of openness to the action of the Lord. "I felt there was a lot that was going to happen which I could not imagine."



Owori Joseph



Ssegujja Emmanuel

OWORI JOSEPH

Born ninth among 19 children, Joseph's experience of family life and of the vibrant life in his Holy Cross-administered parish family in Uganda helped to reaffirm "the power of community spirit." The community of the faithful "had a great impact on me," with particular priests' virtues of service and simplicity attracting him. He prepared for seminary formation by reading literature about Holy Cross founder Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C., and about Blessed Brother André Bessette, C.S.C., the humble servant of the poor. Joseph, an avid reader, musician, and athlete, sees discernment in the context of a Scriptural promise: "Seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

SSEGUJJA EMMANUEL

Emmanuel has earned a bachelor's degree in political science and public administration from Uganda's Makerere University, and he wants to have an impact on society by "increasing laborers for the harvest" through a vocation to the priesthood. He "did a lot of Internet research on the Congregation of Holy Cross" and was drawn to its support of parishes and their call to prayer—sharing his "devotion to Mother Mary"—in support of the institution of the family. Among his hobbies and interests, Emmanuel lists volunteering, community outreach, and praise and worship.

IRUMBA SUNDAY DEOGRATIUS

Deo was taught by Holy Cross brothers as he grew up in Uganda, and he was always impressed by their hospitality. This fan of music and spiritual reading has continued to be accompanied by supportive members of the Congregation of Holy Cross as the journey of formation has begun. Deo, who has allowed his character to be shaped by the Church, says the ministry of education attracts him because of the ability to shape the leaders of tomorrow. In preparing for formation, he says, "I opened my life to new encounters and discoveries."



Irumba Sunday Deogratius

TUMWEBAZE NOAH

Noah's father has encouraged his exploration of a priestly vocation from the start. That exploration prompted Internet research about the Congregation of Holy Cross as well as the longer process of working with a spiritual director. The education ministry and life in community are two major attractions of Holy Cross for Noah, who enjoys reading novels, socializing with friends, and listening to music. He aspires to make his faith in God a positive influence on young people's lives.



Tumwebaze Noah

BROTHER ANDRÉ BESSETTE, C.S.C.,

is set to be named the first saint from the Congregation of Holy Cross with his canonization in Rome on October 17, 2010. This humble porter gained great notoriety and was dubbed the Miracle Man of Montreal because of the many miraculous healings that were attributed to his prayers.

Alongside the miraculous, one can also see in this simple man of prayer and service a reflection of the charisma, character, and values of the Congregation that helped to form him. Brother André was steeped in the Holy Cross virtues as they were imparted to the Congregation by its founder, Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C.

- Brother André had a special devotion to Saint Joseph. He often presented his sick visitors with medals of the saint and anointed them with "Saint Joseph's oil" that he extracted from a lamp burning next to a statue of the foster father of Jesus. Blessed Basil Moreau invoked the assistance of Saint Joseph as one of the patrons of the Congregation he founded; the other two are the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Mother under her title of Our Lady of Sorrows, thereby constituting the Holy Family and undergirding the Congregation's special focus on community.
- Brother André supported and embodied the Congregation's foundational commitment to be "educators in the faith." He never served formally as a teacher, but he seized countless opportunities to teach people the faith. He talked with thousands of people about Saint Joseph and about the Lord's Passion, praying with the sick and poor to open their eyes and hearts to experience God's love.
- Despite his lifelong physical frailty, Brother André performed an exhausting array of community duties. Later, as his ministry to the sick and poor grew, his schedule was even more rigorous, reaching out to people in hospitals, homes, the local trolley station, and wherever suffering souls summoned him. This reflected Blessed Basil Moreau's call for selfless responsiveness to emerging needs and for boundless zeal—that is, a "burning desire to make God known, loved, and served."
- Brother André shared the Congregation's dynamic trust in Divine Providence. This man of fervent prayer was the founder of Saint

Joseph's Oratory, which is today a magnificent basilica on Mount Royal overlooking the city of Montreal. The shrine to his beloved St. Joseph started out small, and he encountered many obstacles in his efforts to begin and expand its construction, yet he trusted that this project was God's will. He not only affirmed to others that God's grace was in control of all situations, but he also humbly deflected all praise and credit that came his way when miracles and mercies arose, instead attributing these to Saint Joseph's intercession.

- Brother André lived out the spiritual motto that Blessed Basil Moreau gave to the Congregation he founded. That motto, drawn from a hymn, was "Ave Crux, Spes Unica"—or "Hail the Cross, Our Only Hope." He carried many crosses in his own life, and he helped countless marginalized people to carry their own crosses. Likewise, he shared the Holy Cross insight into the Easter hope that springs forth from the cross of Christ. Indeed, today's Holy Cross priests and brothers refer to themselves as "men with hope to bring," and André personified this gift every time he walked alongside others in their difficult journeys—especially in cases where faith and prayer cleared the way for physical or spiritual healings.

Just as the Congregation helped to form Brother André with these attributes, the recognition of this Holy Cross brother as a canonized saint helps to inspire today's members and friends of Holy Cross, reminding us all that God confounds the powerful by working through the weak and the pure of heart.

Learn more about the life of this "truly astonishing man" at brotherandre.org; by searching for "Brother André" videos at youtube.com; and by reading the recently published book, *Brother André: Friend of the Suffering, Apostle of Saint Joseph*, by Jean-Guy Dubuc and published by Ave Maria Press, a Holy Cross apostolate.



Fr. André C.S.C.

Celebrating a Saint



BROTHER ANDRÉ BESSETTE, C.S.C. CANONIZATION / OCTOBER 17



CONGREGATION OF
HOLY CROSS
EDUCATION • PARISH • MISSION

Join us in celebrating the canonization of Brother André Bessette, C.S.C. This humble man, the first Holy Cross religious to be officially recognized as a saint, gave his life to the Lord and to the people of God, especially to the sick and afflicted. Through him many came to know of God's healing grace. **Does God have similar plans for you?**

holycrossvocations.org

brotherandre.org