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But they did not trudge; they strode. for they had the hope. Page 8

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Notre Dame

Rev. James B. King, C.S.C., religious superior of Holy Cross priests and brothers at Notre Dame, has been appointed director of the University of Notre Dame’s Office of Campus Ministry by Rev. Thomas P. Doyle, C.S.C., vice president for student affairs, effective April 2.

King, who is also a trustee and fellow of the University, has ministerial responsibility for the 60 Holy Cross religious at Notre Dame. Before his appointment to that position in 2010, he had served for seven years as rector of the Sorin College residence hall.

As director of Campus Ministry, King will oversee a staff of some 30 clerical, religious and lay ministers tending to the spiritual needs of all Notre Dame students. He will replace Rev. Joseph Carey, C.S.C., campus minister and priest in residence at Notre Dame, who has served as interim director of Campus Ministry since August 2010. As the division responsible for pastoral care and sacramental life on campus, the Office of Campus Ministry has a central role in the Catholic mission of the University.

King will continue in his role as religious superior and as associate director of the Holy Cross Mission Center, which supports the Congregation’s work overseas. He also is the author of “Known by Name: Inside the Halls of Notre Dame” an autobiographical account of his ministry to Notre Dame students.

Rev. William M. Lies, C.S.C., executive director of the Center for Social Concerns, will take on the new position of vice president for mission engagement and church affairs. In his new role, Father Lies will take on some key responsibilities previously assigned to the Office of the Counselor to the President, which Rev. James Mc Don ald, C.S.C., led in recent years. He will coordinate and strengthen the many ways in which Notre Dame serves the Catholic Church, connecting with Church leaders and working to sustain and enhance the critical contribution of the Congregation of Holy Cross to Notre Dame. He also will have specific responsibility for the ecclesial role of the University’s Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem.

Community Cemetery

There have been some repairs to the Community Cemetery. The front section of the fence, which is over 100 years old, has been refurbished. Also the original gates and large decorative posts at the ends have been restored. The large section of fence which runs parallel to the Annex (old Holy Cross classroom building) was restored a year ago after being damaged by a tree, felled by severe thunderstorms that hit the campus in the summer of 2010.
Hispanic Ministry

Since 1977, Holy Cross priests, brothers, and sisters (and their lay collaborators) who work with Hispanics in North America have been meeting to share experiences, learn more about this ministry, and to look for ways to collaborate. They meet in various parts of the country so that the people who live in the area can more easily attend. This year they met in Scottsdale, near Phoenix, AZ. The primary topic of discussion was the issue of immigration.

Holy Cross Family Ministries

Nearly 100 people turned out for the Healing Mass on the Feast of St. André Bessette at The Father Peyton Center in North Easton, MA.

Concelebrants, Father Leo Polselli, C.S.C., Chaplain of the Center, and Father John Phalen, C.S.C., President of Holy Cross Family Ministries, blessed those in attendance with a St. André relic and anointed them with St. Joseph oil from the Oratory in Montreal, Canada.

When St. André died in 1937, at the age of 91, he was known as a healer and the "Miracle Man of Montreal" where he founded the Oratory of Saint Joseph. One million people paid their respects at his death. He was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 17, 2010, and is the first member of the Congregation of Holy Cross to be declared a saint.

Rev. Paul V. Kollman, C.S.C., associate professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, has been appointed executive director of the University’s Center for Social Concerns, effective July 1. Father Kollman has worked with the Center since 2004.


The 2012 participants in the Intercongregational Hispanic Ministry Committee Meeting
Colorado Springs

Christmas came a few days early for the Novitiate community in Cascade, CO this year! After Brother Tom Krieter’s sudden death last June, the Novitiate had been without a Holy Cross Brother on staff. On Wednesday January 21, 2011 Brother James Blaszak, C.S.C., pulled into the driveway in his loaded Ford S10, ready to begin a new chapter in his religious life.

Brother James did not have to drive all the way from Indiana to Cascade by himself. He was accompanied by Roger Grott, a friend and parishioner of Sacred Heart Parish in LaPorte, Indiana where James had been a volunteer since 1978 and had served on staff since 1996. While Brother James is surely missed at Sacred Heart, he is appreciated greatly by the novices and staff alike. He told Sacred Heart parishioners that he is going to the novitiate where he will be a “big brother” to the young members of the community.

Since the novices heard that Brother James likes Polish food, and since many novices and their staff have Polish heritage, over 400 pierogies were prepared for Christmas Eve dinner. Pictured here is part of the “assembly line” that was used to make them!

Portland

Fr. John Dougherty, C.S.C., pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish in Portland, OR participated in the Bike and Walk to School Month.
South Bend

St. Augustine Church

Father Len Collins, C.S.C, pastor of St. Augustine’s (right) listens to the presentation.

On February 4, 2012, St. Augustine’s parishioners in South Bend held an event—Celebrating Black Catholic Faith and Culture: Reviewing the Past, Examining the Present, Planning the Future. The event was held in preparation for the upcoming National Black Catholic Congress XI. The day consisted of breakout sessions, parish histories, personal time for prayer and reflection, and music.

Holy Cross Parish

Milestone birthdays are usually observed with a certain amount of fanfare, and Holy Cross-St. Stanislaus Parish in South Bend is no exception. On the evening of March 23rd, over 500 parishioners and school families gathered to celebrate the 40th birthday of their pastor, Fr. Michael Mathews, C.S.C. Dinner, cake and dancing were on the night’s agenda, with a few surprises thrown in. The third grade music class sang a few specially written songs, and parishioner Mark McDonnell gave a nice tribute along with the cake presentation. Fr. Michael’s mother even flew in from California to join in the fun!

East Africa

In January, McCauley Formation House in Nairobi bode farewell to Fr. Pat Neary, C.S.C. The temporary professed organized a party for Fr. Pat. Everyone praised him as a very hardworking and organized formation director for the past 1 ½ years. As the newly elected District Superior, he has moved to Kampala where the district headquarters are located. Fr. Tom Smith has replaced him as Director of Post-Novitiate Formation for this semester; Fr. Frank Murphy will take over that assignment in July.


Fr. Pat uses his famous gesture while giving a farewell speech.
King’s College was founded in 1946 to educate the sons of miners and mill workers in eastern Pennsylvania. While much has changed over the years, its commitment to provide a solid foundation in the liberal arts, along with the professional tools to enjoy a successful career in a number of fields, continues to this day.

King’s offers more than just a tradition of excellence. It offers the strength of a community rooted in the Congregation of Holy Cross. When you step foot on campus, you experience the warmth of a caring, nurturing environment.

Guided by principles of faith and trust, students of all faiths and backgrounds benefit from a curriculum that’s as focused on the mind as it is the soul.
Depending on the weather, the priests and brothers from Holy Cross House go out to the LaPorte property for Mass and dinner. They often help in preparing part of the dinner. Afterwards, they play cards or just enjoy the surroundings before returning to Holy Cross House.

They also have outings to other places, such as the Farmers Market, the credit union, area stores and so forth.
Obituaries

Rev. Paul J. Duff, C.S.C., passed away on the evening of Jan. 18, 2012 at Holy Cross House, Notre Dame, IN, after a slow decline related to various health issues. He was 88-years-old.

Fr. Duff, one of three children, was born on April 27, 1923 to Daniel and Mary (Salzer) Duff in Queens, NY, both deceased. He is preceded in death by his sister Rita Cashin and his brother Daniel V. Duff. He is survived by his sister-in-law, Priscilla Duff, 9 nieces and nephews, 27 grandnieces and grandnephews, and 18 great-grandnieces and great-grandnephews.

Fr. Duff received his B.S. in Sociology from the college of the Holy Cross College, Worcester, MA, in 1948. He entered the Congregation of Holy Cross’ Novitiate in North Dartmouth, MA, on August 15, 1950 and made his First Profession on August 16, 1951. He made his Final Profession on August 16, 1954 and was ordained a priest on June 4, 1955 in Philadelphia.

Following his Ordination, Fr. Duff served as part the Holy Cross Fathers Mission Band. From 1957 to 1959, he worked for the Provincial Administration’s Office of Development fundraising for the community. From 1959 to 1973, he served at Stonehill College in North Easton, MA, in various roles, including Dean of Students, Athletic Director, and in the Office of Development. Fr. Duff served as a Chaplain at the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY, from 1979 to 1980, at which point he also served as a Pastor at St. Mary’s Parish in Manhasset, NY, until 1979. Fr. Duff’s other parish assignments over the years include St. Joseph’s Parish, Martinsville, VA (1980-82), and Holy Cross Parish, South Easton, MA (1983-85).

From 1979 to 1980, Fr. Duff worked at the University of Notre Dame in the Renewal Program for Clergy and also as Rector in a student residence hall. Fr. Duff worked as a counselor at Iona Preparatory School, New Rochelle, NY for the 1982 academic year. In 1985, he became Chaplain at Marymount College, Tarrytown, NY, until his return to Stonehill College as local superior of the Holy Cross Community in June 1993. He retired from full time active ministry in 1997 and moved to Holy Cross House, Notre Dame, IN, in July 2007, where he resided until his death.

Eulogy for Fr. Paul Duff, C.S.C.
by Rev. Rudy Carchidi, C.S.C.

Not many years ago, after Paul Duff and I had attended the Vigil Service of one of our confreres, Paul said to me: “If you live longer than me and give the eulogy at my wake service, please, present me as I really was in life. Half the time I cannot make a connection between the guy in the casket and what the eulogist says.” And then he added “Be sure the eulogy is short.” I have attempted to obey the former part of his decree; but not the latter. This eulogy is a collection of my thoughts of Paul Duff. So brace yourselves and feel free to walk out at any time.

I met Paul Duff for the first time in August of 1951. We both entered Holy Cross College, our theology house in Washington D.C. at the same time. Because our class was so large, seminarians did not get single rooms until their 4th year of theology. I lucked out; Paul Duff was assigned as my roommate. And thus began our enigmatic friendship. I say our friendship was an enigma because we were so unalike.

I was a naïve, sensitive, thin-skinned, neurotic emotional Southern Italian, who enjoyed watching a lot a sports, but did not like to participate in any contact sports. I excelled only in downhill skiing. Paul was a street-wise, thick-skinned, Irishman from New York. He was Naval veteran of WWII, and he was a jock, an avid golfer with a low handicap.

When I first met Paul Duff’s sister, Rita, she did not say, “Hi, Rudy” or “I have heard a lot about you” or “Very happy to meet you”. Instead, she pointed at Paul and said to me, “Isn’t he a pain?” To which I replied, “I will not argue with your assessment of your brother.”

I am sure many of us were victims of his candid remarks. “Candid” is putting it mildly out of respect for his dead body in front of us. Once we were at the dinner table with a person, I will call “Sam,” who had ordered soup. As soon as the soup was placed in front of Sam, his head went down, and he began slurping the soup into his mouth; his head never came up. Finally, Paul said, “Hey, Sam, when are you coming up for air?” On another occasion I had been invited to spend a week with married friends of mine, Tom and Chris Tipton, who live on the Monterey Peninsula in California. They agreed that I could bring a friend. So I invited Paul to come along.

I introduced Paul to Tom and Chris; they said they were taking us out to dinner. Two other couples joined us for dinner. At the dinner table Paul was sitting next to me, and Chris was across from us. He said to Chris,
“You know, Chris, you would be a very pretty woman, if you would lose some weight”. Remember, he had just met these people. After dinner he said to me, “Why did you kick me under the table? I was attempting to give her some constructive advice.” Believe it or not, by the end of the week, both Chris and Tom were in love with Paul.

Patience was not one of Paul’s virtues. One evening Paul and I decided to go to Bertucci’s for dinner. He did the driving. We got stopped at a red light directly in front of the entrance to Stonehill College. When the light turned green, none of the cars in front of us moved. So Paul began honking the horn. The man in the car in front of us told us a turtle was crossing the road – everyone was waiting for the turtle to get to the other side. Paul put the car in reverse, backed up a bit, then went forward avoiding all the cars in front of us. When he saw the turtle, he swerved so he would not hurt the turtle and we proceeded to Bertucci’s. Everyday we went out to dinner and were seated by the hostess, I would pray that the waiter would be there to take our drink order within 30 seconds; if they were not there to take his “Dewars on the rocks” order within 30 seconds, I knew Paul would create a scene with one of his smart-mouthed remarks. If you described to Paul something that happened to you that day, he would invariably say, “Will you please get to the point?”

I mention these anecdotes of his sarcasm and impatience, because they were a part of Paul Duff. But they pale in contrast to what was good in the Paul Duff I dearly love and miss so much it hurts.

Paul Duff was a very wise person; he had a strong bond with his nieces and nephews; he loved being a priest; he loved the Congregation of Holy Cross; he took great pride in the accomplishments of his fellow priests, he led a simple life, and he was a holy man; he was a holy priest.

The Congregation of Holy Cross and his priesthood were Paul’s most prized possessions. If you read his obituary you know that he took on a variety of apostolates. He never questioned a change in apostolate ordered by a Provincial. While at Stonehill he wore many hats: Dean of Students, Athletic Director, Office of Development for the College, Rector of O’Hara Hall, which at that time was an all male dorm. While he was Dean of Students and at the same time Rector of O’Hara Hall, he was demanding but fair with the students. The word among the students was “either you loved Father Duff or you were scared to death of him.” If an infraction occurred in the dorm that displeased him, he would have the entire dorm up the next morning at 5:00 o’clock, picking up papers around the entire campus. In spite of his demands as Dean and Rector, the student body dedicated the 1969 Year Book to Father Paul Duff. Let me read a brief passage of that dedication.

“This yearbook is dedicated to a special kind of person, who is warm and responsive - the essence of what we find to be Stonehill. He approaches his position as Dean of Students with a unique talent that commands both respect and affection……The class of ’69 is pleased to make their dedication as a testimony of their appreciation to Father Paul J. Duff.”

His bond with his 9 nieces and nephews was very strong. He officiated at all of their 9 weddings and even a few of the weddings of his grand nieces and nephews. I must tell you a brief story Paul told me when is nephew David married Angie. They could not afford a grand honeymoon. Because of Paul’s position here at Stonehill, he had connections with some big honcho at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. With his smooth talk and convincing argument, he was able to get David and Angie a complimentary suite at the Waldorf Astoria. Something only Paul could pull off!!!!

Caroline, Stephen, and Liz graduated from Stonehill College. Stephen’s son is now a student here at Stonehill. Liz and Pricilla, who live in the area, would come rather frequently to take him to lunch. Liz is married to Joe McCarthy, who is also an alumn of Stonehill; Pricilla is married to Bill Perkins, who is not an alum of Stonehill. Because I was Paul’s friend, I would be invited to Thanksgiving and Easter gatherings at either the McCarthy and Perkins home. After dinner Paul would say thanks for the great dinner, but the meat was cold.

Unlike me, Paul was not big on showing emotion. Only twice in 60 years did I see him tear up. Brian Conway had called me to tell me that his Dad had died. Brian’s Dad, Jim, was Paul’s closest friend; they had known each other as students at Holy Cross College. When I relayed Brian’s message to Paul, Paul teared up and said, “Jim is now with God.” Then he asked me to join him in the chapel to say a prayer for Jim. The other time I saw tears in Paul’s eyes is when he related to me the scene after the funeral of Tim Coughlin, who had died in the World Trade Center catastrophe. Tim was an alumnus of Stonehill and had endeared himself to Paul. He told me that the scene of all Jim’s friends hugging and consoling each other was very moving for him and caused him to choke up.

Paul took great pride in the accomplishments of members in the Congregation. When John Denning became a vice-president, he said, “Finally, someone has noticed his talents.” When I received the Louise Hegarty award for Excellence in Teaching at the commencement ceremony of 1997, he said that I brought honor to the Congregation of Holy Cross.
When Hugh Cleary was elected Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross, he said, “Wow”. He was especially proud of the accomplishments of Kevin Spicer – how someone so young could accomplish so much in such a short period of time amazed him. Kevin is now Chair of the History Department at Stonehill. While Kevin was a visiting professor at the University of Notre Dame, he took care of Paul’s needs at Holy Cross House and took Paul out to dinner every week.

In June of 2011 all Holy Cross priests and brothers gathered at Notre Dame to celebrate the formation of the United States Province of Priests and Brothers. One evening Kevin came over to Holy Cross House to take me and Paul out to dinner. The tender way Kevin lifted Paul from wheelchair to car and from car to wheelchair, while at the same time gently saying to Paul “Paul, this is going to be easy. Just put your arms on my shoulders, and we will have you in the restaurant in no time.” This maneuver was for me a tender and sobering moment. The body Kevin was lifting was no longer the person I met back in 1951. I now understood the comment made by Saint Teresa of Avila – “God, no wonder you have no friends; look at the way you treat them”. For a period of time, God and I were not on good terms.

Paul’s physical problems began several years ago. He had poor circulation in his legs; the by-pass surgery on his legs was not successful. Then the macular degeneris set in to the point where I typed the entire Mass for Paul, using font 24. He could then sit on a stool to officiate at the 5 o’clock Mass. As some of you know, Paul was an avid reader. He would read at least 5 books a week, Golf magazine and Sports Illustrated cover to cover. Throughout his entire illness, both here and at Holy Cross House, even though he could barely walk and hardly see, he never once complained or hinted that his life was the pits. He was always upbeat every time I talked to him on the phone.

Paul led a very simple life. A night on the town with Paul meant we went to Doyle’s Bar and Grille because he liked the fried clams, or Nocera’s in Stoughton because they always had angle hair pasta, or the Chateau, because they offered lazy man’s lobster. In his closet you would see two pair of pants, a jacket, and 4 or 5 shirts. Whenever we traveled, whether it was for a weekend in New York or two weeks in Ireland, he carried only a canvas duffle bag containing all he needed for the trip.

But for me, his most endearing quality was his holiness. Once, because the hotel room was so expensive, we decided to share a room. At bedtime, Paul got down on his knees and said a brief prayer. When I asked him what he prays for he simply said he prays that God will make him a good priest and that God will watch over and guide his fellow priests. He added, I do not ask for anything else; God knows more than I do what the needs of my family and friends are.

I visited him when he was a chaplain at West Point; I attended the Mass at which he officiated that Sunday. On my way back to the rectory, a cadet came up to me; after he learned that I was a friend of Paul’s, he said that more cadets go to Paul’s Masses because his homilies are short but powerful and made you think of how to change your life. Then the cadet added: Father Duff is a holy priest. Throughout various parishes in the New York area and at Marymont College Paul was noted for his brief, but thought-filled homilies.

When my nephew Joe was in his last stages of ALS, Lou Gerhig disease, he agreed to see a priest. Joe had not been to the sacraments for over 30 years. Paul readily agreed to see Joe. The following week, when I went to see Joe, Joe said, “Father Duff is a very holy man.”

When Paul was here with the Stonehill Community, we had a 5:00 o’clock Mass. Paul, Bob Kruse, Tom Campbell and I would each take a day in the week to preside. We could choose to say a few words after the gospel or choose not to. What I remember most of Paul’s reflections after the gospel reading is that they always centered on the same theme: “What we can do to be better people, holier priests.”

This is the Paul Duff I knew. I love this Paul Duff, and I want all of you to love him also. He is now in the place that this evening’s Gospel says Jesus has prepared for him. May this place have an 18 hole Golf Course and a huge flat screen TV, because now Paul can walk and see.
Funeral Homily for Fr. Paul Duff, C.S.C.
by Rev. Robert Kruse, C.S.C.

Fr. Paul Duff was from the borough of Queens in New York City. The city left its imprint on him. He always remained a New Yorker. Early evidence of Paul’s intelligence was his being chosen to matriculate at the Jesuits’ Regis High School, all of whose students were there on scholarships. After the Second World War Paul studied at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA.

For almost 3 years during the Second World War (1943-45) Paul served in the Navy. He was part of a gun crew on a small merchant ship. He thought you hadn’t experienced cold if you hadn’t stood watch at night on the North Atlantic in winter. Most often his ship plied the waters of the Mediterranean, the Red Sea by way of Suez, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

Paul liked to tell the story of the New Year’s Eve mail call (1943-44) on his ship, part of a convoy going from the Persian Gulf to Bari in southern Italy with fuel for planes. This was the first mail-call in months. There were all kinds of letters to guys from Brooklyn, Maine, the Midwest. Especially letters from girlfriends – SWAK: sealed with a kiss. Paul got the very last letter. It was the parish bulletin from St. Andrew Avellino on Northern Blvd. in Flushing. Now he knew just when the next meeting of the Rosary Society would take place and who had won at bingo. Sometimes, he attributed his vocation to that letter!

Paul was quick of mind and of tongue. I recall one instance with special clarity. Feb. 15, 2005. A few of us were accustomed to gathering for Mass at five in the afternoon in Our Lady of Holy Cross chapel by the Barn. On the occasion I have in mind Fr. MacPhaidin was reflecting on the passage in Isaiah: “So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty.” (Isaiah 55,11)

Bartley had made some observations about Pope John Paul II and had gotten into this question - Do we love with a love we understand or with a love we don’t understand? He commented at some length on what St. Thomas Aquinas had to say on this matter. He was just beginning to quote St. Paul when his cell phone began ringing. Ring, ring. As he fumbled in his pocket, for his phone, Paul blurted out from his place in the pews... “It’s Thomas Aquinas.” To which Bartley responded in some confusion: “No, it’s St. Paul.” What a wonderful liturgy of the word in which everyone from Pope John Paul to the Apostle Paul to Paul Duff was involved.

On another occasion - over 60 years ago when Paul and I were in the novitate, all 25 or so of us were in the classroom writing down our meditation reflections – in holy silence. Meanwhile, outside but very much within ear shot, Fr. Paul D. Doherty and a Brother Candidate Tom McAndrews had fallen into song together. In high piercing voices that carried to our quiet classroom we heard: “A little bit of heaven fell from out the sky one day.” At which Paul exclaimed: “It’s the end of the world.” It was certainly the end of our meditation reflections. Paul was quick of tongue.

Over a long lifetime Paul exercised a fruitful pastoral ministry in a variety of settings, but mostly on college campuses and in parishes where he served. He had a knack for ministering to all kinds of people, not least to the sophisticated and successful type not generally inclined to seek spiritual counsel. Paul brought to his ministry a broad experience of life. When he sent out the twelve apostles, Jesus told them: “I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” (Matthew 10,16). Paul was as wise as a serpent, and for all I know, innocent as a dove, as well.

I remember a homily he gave on listening - - its importance and its rarity. He criticized our tendency to think that our own experience is paramount. He noted how in conversation we often hurry others or interrupt them. A favorite gesture of his was to extend his hand - - like a traffic signal to slow down and to listen. Listening was Paul’s basic way of respecting others. His readiness to ask what others thought and to listen to them was a key to his pastoral effectiveness.

Two of Paul’s homilies delivered to the little flock at the five o’clock mass have remained lodged in my memory. In the first he spoke very movingly of our need for personal union with Jesus. It was for such a union that he had entered religious life. Religious life was to liken us more perfectly to Jesus who had called us to follow him. What most struck me was the intimate tone with which this reflection was suffused. One sensed clearly that it was attachment to Jesus that was the ground of Paul’s vocation to the priesthood. And he saw his ministry as bringing others to Jesus. I think Paul’s occasional cavalier ways masked an idealism that never left him.

I recall a particular homily of Paul’s in which he brought a passage to read which he had copied out from John XXIII. That was very extraordinary as he rarely made use of such materials. But this passage meant a whole lot to him and I think it tells us a lot about him. Pope John had written: “Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible to do.”

Paul commented on this passage that we need to
let go of our past. If we remain prisoners of our past, we have lost hope, the trademark virtue of Holy Cross. We need to construct our lives around our charisms and gifts rather than our needs and compulsions. Be ready for new beginnings, ready to start over.

Paul was faithful to that vision throughout his long and fruitful ministry. He did not allow the past to control his days. Even when sickness had severely restricted his possibilities, he made the decision to move to Holy Cross House, to try something new, to explore yet another way in which to follow the Lord Jesus calling him.

Paul has returned now to the Lord he so faithfully served over a lifetime. As we express our thanks for his long and varied ministry, and as we thank his family for sharing him with us, we pray the Lord to grant him well-earned rest and lasting joy in the company of the loved ones who went before him in faith and in the company of all the saints. Amen.

**Rev. Andrew M. Sebesta, C.S.C.**

**Eulogy by Rev. Dan Parrish, C.S.C.**

In many ways, it was a typical Easter Saturday here at Notre Dame. The sun streamed through the stained glass, painting the congregation in splotches of blue and gold. The Folk Choir sang and prayed up in the loft. The concelebrants processed in, followed by the bishop. And the ordination mass began. But this Easter Saturday was different, because the two men who knelt here that day had overcome great obstacles in their lives.

One had lost his mother the week prior to cancer, and the other had just begun a seven-year battle with a brain tumor. Yet, by God’s grace and the force of their own will, Andy Sebesta and Kevin Sandberg surrendered themselves to priesthood in Holy Cross and knelt before this altar.

The bishop and then the concelebrants quietly processed to lay hands on our brothers. The laying on of hands is always a highlight of the ordination rite, but this time it was even more special. We were laying our hands directly onto Andy’s deepest and most vicious scar, still healing from his brain surgery only months before. The deep symbolism of the moment was not lost on any who were there—which was most of us who are here today.

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Here were two men who came before the Lord seeking to serve not because they were strong, but precisely because they were weak; not because they
were worthy, but because they were willing to be transformed. For those of us who took our turn laying hands on Andy’s head that day, it was a profound moment of confronting the frailty of our humanity, and the gift and humility that should characterize every priest’s service.

After Andy and Kevin were ordained, after they were anointed and vested, they joined us behind the altar to concelebrate their first Mass. But this Easter Saturday still had more to teach us. As Communion finished and the servers were clearing the altar, the Folk Choir sang their glorious Easter anthem, “Out of Darkness.” And with the last words of the last verse, “This is Resurrection Day,” still soaring in the Basilica rafters, the bishop stood and announced that Pope John Paul II had just died. One great priest has just laid down his life, the bishop noted, as these two new priests have also laid down theirs.

Often we just charge through our lives, going from one thing to the next, and we miss the profound symbolism of what is taking place. But it didn’t happen that day. On April 2, 2005, this Basilica was filled with a congregation overcome by the rich symbolism of the day.

The reality of suffering, and the power of courage. Service not through one’s strength, but from the depths of one’s weakness. The imminence of death, and the hope of resurrection.

Andy and Kevin knelt before us that afternoon and called out the best of what we hope to be as Christians, as religious, and as priests. We gather here, a short seven years later, to thank God for the life and witness of Fr. Andy Sebesta, and to commend our son, our uncle, our friend, and our brother to the Father’s eternal care.

Just as at Andy’s ordination, when we were overcome by the immediacy of God’s grace, so we who gather here this morning can reflect on other ways that Andy’s life was symbolic for us. St. Paul writes to the Romans that our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. Andy always believed this, and he committed himself in quiet, often private ways, to living a holy life. He once had a metal bracelet made when we were in formation. It said simply, “Armor of light.” It was a daily reminder to him that salvation is near—our God is near—and that he had best be ready. And so he wouldn’t drink, and, if you can believe it, he never swore, in his entire life. Andy knew how close the Lord was—how close the Lord is—and he lived in that presence. He also bore his share of crosses over the years.

Sure, there is the obvious one—the cross of his health, fighting that awful cancer, a cross he bore with real dignity and surprising patience. But he bore other crosses as well. The cross of not getting accepted to Rice University—twice! The cross of watching the Irish, the Lastros, the Horns and Aggies and Cougars muddle about in mediocrity for so doggone long! The cross of watching the Notre Dame valedictory address being delivered most years by another Arts and Letters major—instead of an engineering major, or anyone from the hard sciences, for that matter, where grades are based on objective criteria and a 4.0 actually means something!

He bore the cross of living so far away from his family and his Texas homeland. And the cross of playing trivia with people like his mother Jeanette who would, incomprehensibly, try to have conversations during the game when they should be focusing on the job at hand. You can talk later during the break!

Andy bore the cross of his health, the cross of not being able to concelebrate liturgies with his brothers, for fear of making a scene. And he bore the cross of spending so little time with his niece Veronica, the light of his life.

But we would be missing the profound symbolism in Andy’s life and priesthood if we only focused on the crosses he bore. Yes, Andy’s steps left deep footprints, because he was carrying heavy burdens. But he did not trudge; he strode.

For he had the hope. He experienced this hope in Sugar Land, Texas, where with his parents Ed and Jeanette, and his sister Karen, he first came to believe. He grew in hope here at Our Lady’s University, and began to ask how he might offer his life, and his life’s work. Ultimately, he knelt here in this Basilica and committed himself to be a sign of hope for the world, a manifestation that everyone who sees the Son and
believes in him may have eternal life.

Andy’s life was not just about suffering and bearing the cross. It was about the audacity of hope and its power to transform us. It was about embracing weakness and surrendering autonomy for the sake of the Kingdom. It was about never taking yourself too seriously and having a sense of humor to the end. And it was about looking death straight in the eye and refusing to be afraid.

In his life, and in his death, Andy provides for us a rich and enduring embodiment of the motto of the Congregation of Holy Cross:

*Ave Crux, Spes Unica - Hail the Cross, our Only Hope*

As we bid farewell to this faithful son of Moreau, we give thanks for his example and pledge ourselves to be, not only humble bearers of our own crosses, but prophetic witnesses of the hope they contain.

**Rev. Robert M. Hoffman, C.S.C.,** passed away on February 13, 2012 at Holy Cross House in Notre Dame, IN. He was 90 years old.

Fr. Hoffman was born in Toledo, OH to George C. and Louise (Comes) Hoffman on May 31, 1921 and was baptized at the church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, where he later attended grade school. In 1938 Fr. Hoffman graduated from Central Catholic High School. Inspired by the mission work of the Congregation of Holy Cross, Fr. Hoffman entered the seminary in Notre Dame, IN, after graduating from high school. He went to St. Joseph’s Novitiate in Rolling Prairie, IN, in August 1940. Following his First Profession of Vows in 1941, he returned to Notre Dame and Moreau Seminary, graduating in 1943. After theological studies at the Holy Cross Foreign Mission Seminary in Washington, D.C., he was ordained to the priesthood in Sacred Heart Church, on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, on June 13, 1947.

After ordination, Fr. Hoffman served in what was then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, in various assignments, most of which were spent among the indigenous Garo tribe. In 1955, he was assigned to the Foreign Mission Seminary to do fundraising and development for the Bengal Missions. Three years later he returned to East Pakistan, but in 1965 Fr. Hoffman came back to Notre Dame to the Holy Cross Mission House and worked on the Mission Band for the next two years. In 1967, he was named Director of Fatima Retreat Center, Notre Dame, IN, a position he held for the next two years.

In 1969, Fr. Hoffman began what would become a 19-year ministry in hospital ministry, spending three years each at St. Joseph’s Hospital in South Bend, IN, and at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Mishawaka, IN. The next 13 years were in hospitals in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Fr. Hoffman established Pastoral Care Departments at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Mishawaka, and Columbus Hospital and St. Elizabeth’s Hospitals in Chicago. Fr. Hoffman helped usher in health care’s transition from traditional hospital ministry, one of purely a sacramental service, to a broader approach that involved crisis counseling and support. While at Alexian Brothers Medical Center, Elk Grove Village, IL, he was elected to a two-year term as president of the Chicago Association of Catholic Chaplains.

In 1988, Fr. Hoffman returned to South Bend and helped at the Faith, Hope and Charity Chapel in downtown South Bend for one year. Next he was appointed administrator and then pastor of St. Patrick’s Parish, South Bend, IN, where he served until 1995 when he moved to Holy Cross Mission House. Fr. Hoffman remained active, helping out at area parishes, convents, and nursing homes. In 2002, he entered Holy Cross House, Notre Dame, IN.
I first met Bob when he returned to the Foreign Mission Seminary to pack and ship to Bengal all that had accumulated during the past year. It was 1947; Bob had been ordained in June and I was a new student of theology. Many boxes of supplies for the Bengalese had been prepared for shipment with the boxes of the men going by boat that year. They had to open every package and list its contents, and repack in wooden boxes that could stand the trip. The next time we met, in 1953, he was assistant pastor at the Cathedral in Dacca, and I was the new professor of physics at Notre Dame College. He was the Master Of Ceremonies for the Bishop. I offered to help and sub for him. He was a busy man and so concerned with the needs of others.

On the occasion of his 50th anniversary as a priest, Fr. Bob put together a collection of stories from his past, titled That Reminds Me. An early story was about his vocation. People were telling him that he should become a priest. He was much undecided while in high school, but one day a seminarian from the parish was sharing his life, and he mentioned that they had ice cream every day. Bob decided that was the life for him. Another story was about his trip to India. They were on a freighter out of New York. Their quarters, newly decorated, were on the fan-tail. Along with ship smells, especially the phenol used to swab the floor, the ship began to roll. He lost his dinner. Remembering the admonition of his brothers, “Dry heaves are worst than wet,” he went to eat anyway.

Bob soon left Dacca and was assigned as chaplain to the Leprosarium near Mymensingh. There he became the chief builder and gun-man for the neighborhood. He had a shotgun which according to law he kept locked in his bedroom. He used it mostly for snakes, especially cobras. One showed up in church, so he shot it. Next day he was bragging a bit before some men. They said: “O, cobras are easy to kill, when they lift up to sting you, slap them with a stick.” One time, a pig, a big sow, got loose in the compound, and they were all scared. So he got his gun, loaded it with birdshot and went out to shoot the sow. He knew he had to hit it in the eye. But it wouldn’t hold still. He shot it a couple times; finally one of the sisters took the gun and shot. Still no luck. They found it a few hours later, dead in the water. The sisters immediately butchered it. In gratitude for his shooting they sent him a big chunk of head cheese. He checked each bite for lead, but he only found a couple of shot. Terrible shooting.

Bob had a bad stroke in his eighties, and his left side was completely paralyzed. But he was determined to get better. He worked hard with our Physical Therapist, Mary Pat. So I asked her help in putting this together. She wrote: “Fr. Bob was a positive presence at Holy Cross House, always looking at what he could do and never considering his limitations. He made significant impact in the house by being the head of the welcoming committee, making sure birthday signs were posted, stopping and visiting with the staff to tell humorous stories from his many experiences, and laughing with that sparkle in his eyes.” Humor in life was very prominent as he lived his life for others.

Determination and perseverance dominated Fr. Bob’s daily life. His motto was “no mountain is too high to climb.” He would set a goal and go after it. After his stroke, he worked his way from not being able to sit on the side of the bed without falling over, to driving to Toledo a year later by himself, to surprise his family. (Of course he told the staff of his travels after he got home.)

Before the therapeutic pool was built, Fr. Bob would take his towel and buoyant vest in the scooter and go down to the dock on St. Joseph’s Lake for an afternoon swim in the summer. Exercise helped him reach his goals of walking and independence. Two days after getting his prosthetic leg, he was walking with a cane. Little did he realize how he inspired and encouraged others in the house!

Fr. Bob was compassionate, as he cared wholeheartedly about his brothers, his family and friends and the staff. He was always there to lend a hand, give words of support, and just to listen.

In his book That Reminds Me he wrote: “I’ve been blessed with a green thumb. Green thumbs were encouraged in our family.” He had many plants he cared for throughout the house.

And a final quote from Fr. Jim Trepanier: “He taught me how to suffer.”
Please pray for those who have died

Sr. M. Helen Anthony (Kieszkowski), C.S.C.
Bro. Eduardo (Stanley) Michalik, C.S.C. (MW)
Sr. M. Theodora (Abreu), C.S.C.
Rev. Paul J. Duff, C.S.C.
Mr. John A. Herman, Sr., the father of Rev. John A. Herman, C.S.C.
Mr. Raymond Raja, the nephew of Rev. John Britto, C.S.C.
Bro. Paul-Émile Letendre, C.S.C. (C)
Sr. Charlotte Marie Bayhouse, C.S.C.
Sr. Edward Ann (Wetzel), C.S.C.
Luisa Mallea, sister of Rev. Jorge Mallea, C.S.C.
Sr. Mary Zagorc, O.S.U., the sister of Rev. Frank Zagorc, C.S.C.
Rev. Andrew Sebesta, C.S.C.
Rev. Robert Hofman, C.S.C.
Rev. Cajetan Holland, C.S.C.
Rev. Joseph Walter, C.S.C.
Sr. Margaret Lorraine Devine, C.S.C.
Rev. Chester S. Prusynski, C.S.C.