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As part of an art contest, this colorful picture of the Holy Family was created by Maggie Barrett, a student at St. Joseph Grade School, South Bend, Ind. – one of 19 Holy Cross parish schools around the world.

Pillars

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States Province

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Issue 25

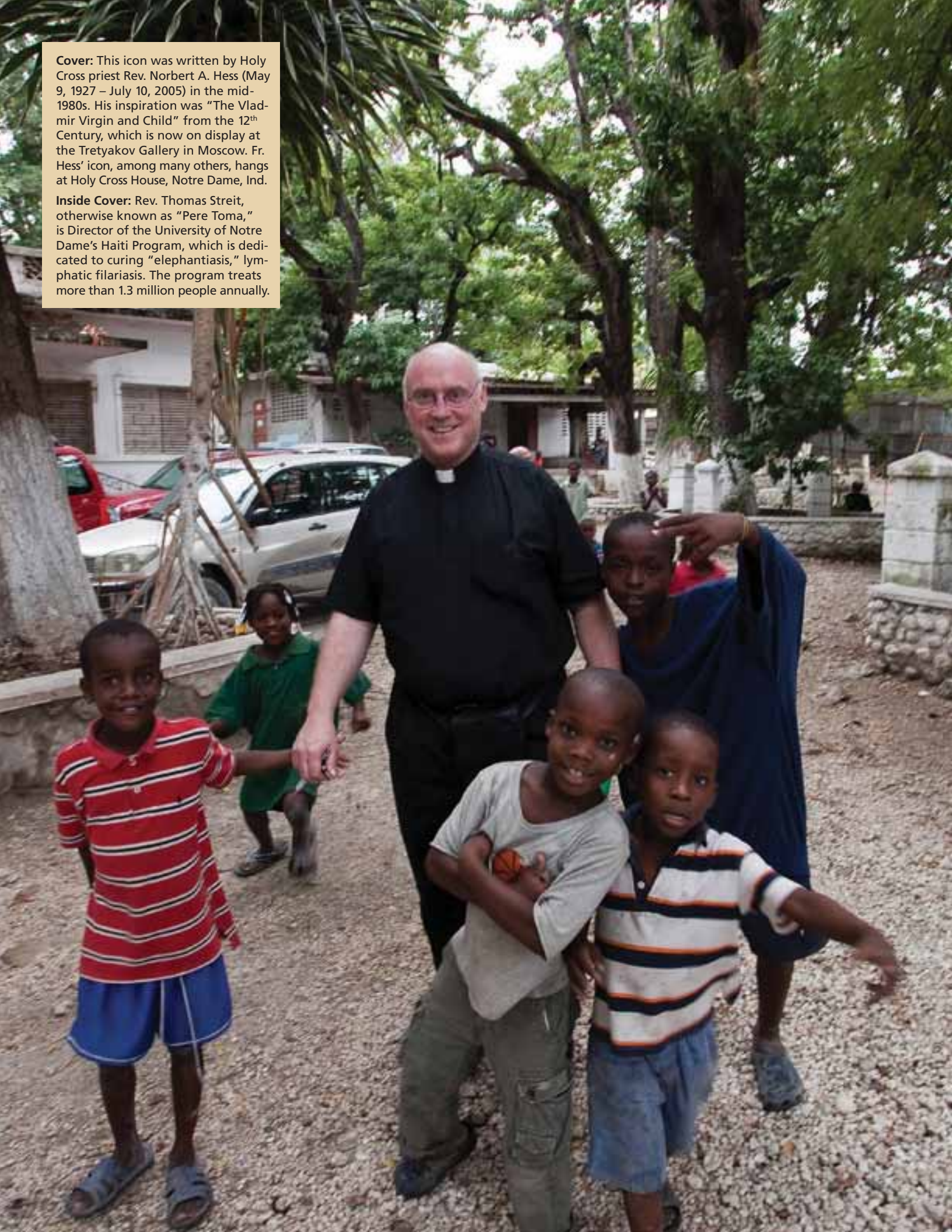
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Our Philanthropic Mission: Uniting those who are called to be witnesses of Christ's love and stewards of His gifts, with our mission to proclaim the Kingdom of God to all.

Cover: This icon was written by Holy Cross priest Rev. Norbert A. Hess (May 9, 1927 – July 10, 2005) in the mid-1980s. His inspiration was “The Vladimir Virgin and Child” from the 12th Century, which is now on display at the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. Fr. Hess’ icon, among many others, hangs at Holy Cross House, Notre Dame, Ind.

Inside Cover: Rev. Thomas Streit, otherwise known as “Pere Toma,” is Director of the University of Notre Dame’s Haiti Program, which is dedicated to curing “elephantiasis,” lymphatic filariasis. The program treats more than 1.3 million people annually.



From the Provincial Superior ...

The Uniqueness of Holy Cross

by Rev. Thomas J. O'Hara, C.S.C.

My dear friends in Christ,

On behalf of the Province, I extend heartfelt wishes for a blessed and joy filled Christmas season to you and your families. This is indeed a season sacred to our Church as we celebrate the Word made Flesh – our light, our hope and our salvation.

The importance of this season for us is reflected not by a single day which most of our country commemorates, December 25th, but in a Liturgical calendar beginning with the vigil Masses on Christmas Eve and concluding on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. During these 21 days, we are called to celebrate Christ's birth and reflect on the meaning of His gift of salvation. Just as you do with your own families, the Holy Cross Community also comes together as a family to collectively share in the joy and love of this most holy gift.

I'm convinced the best gifts we will ever receive are those we can share with others. Think of the joy we experience in accepting a gift and how that joy is multiplied when we invite our friends, family or even strangers to take part. This spirit of giving is at the core of Holy Cross' mission as we follow the command of Jesus to proclaim His Kingdom throughout the world. This is what we do – witness to Christ's gift of salvation through the Sacraments, by teaching, caring for the poor and ministering to those who knowingly and unknowingly thirst for the truth.

Sometimes the form of ministry in which we engage evolves from unique needs or circumstances in which we, as a religious community or as individual members of Holy Cross, find ourselves. This reflects a pioneering attitude among the Holy Cross Community which throughout our history has produced great educational institutions, created parishes and flourishing missions in foreign lands. It has also produced less-heralded, but equally important missionary accomplishments – such as groundbreaking ministry to Hispanic populations, curing diseases in Haiti and providing conduits for economic self-sufficiency in Uganda.

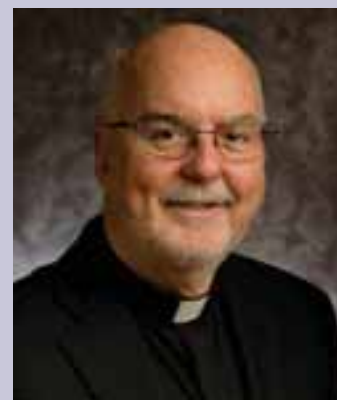
In this issue of Pillars, you will be introduced to a few of our unique ministries and how we live Blessed Basil Moreau's call to cross borders of *every sort* to accomplish our mission. The world of professional athletics and the reality of the homeless are separated by countless opportunities and millions of dollars and yet in the eyes of Christ there is no division. For God

wants all creation to receive the gift of Salvation. So with confidence and a spirit of giving, Holy Cross crosses socioeconomic borders of every sort to reach those our culture would proclaim as heroes and icons with the same welcome we give to those our culture tends to forget. Why and how are explained in more detail in the following pages.

I've used the word “ministry” a few times in reference to how we serve others. Ministry is derived from the Latin “ministri” from which we also have the word “minister,” or those called to serve. Fr. Charlie Gordon, C.S.C., provides a heartfelt and moving explanation as to “Why I am a Priest,” in which he shares his love of service, the Church and Holy Cross. Fr. Charlie's essay embodies some recurring themes shared by many of us in the Holy Cross family.

The best gifts we receive are those we share. It is a privilege for the Congregation of Holy Cross to share our gift of faith and God's gift of Salvation with you, as it is for us to be the grateful beneficiaries of the gifts you offer us. On behalf of the United States Province, I thank you and assure you that your gifts to Holy Cross are gladly shared with those to whom we are in humble service.

May God continue to bless you throughout this season of Christmas and throughout the coming year.



Rev. Thomas J. O'Hara, C.S.C.

Christmas in the Community

by Br. Dennis J. Fleming, C.S.C.

I was only a teenager when I entered the Congregation of Holy Cross. I'm sure most of the 38 men who entered with me were concerned about how they would be able to live a life of poverty, chastity and obedience; but for me, one of my major concerns was how could I survive without spending the Christmas holidays with my family.

You see, back then, Community life was lived differently than it is today. We had all kinds of regulations and restrictions on visiting, letter writing, silence, prayer schedule and work periods. We now joke that we entered in the “days of the giants.”

In their wisdom, the Superiors knew to keep all of us young men busy to help stave off loneliness and homesickness. Christmas season provided lots of opportunities for activities. We lived in a very large residence with all kinds of rooms to decorate for Christmas: Chapels, a dining room, two recreation rooms and visiting parlors. Every corner you turned there seemed to be a huge Christmas tree; all were decorated beautifully. Extra assistance was solicited in the kitchen. The brothers in charge created wonderful meals with everything from “soup to nuts.”

We all learned early in our religious life that Holy Cross was a family that marked Christmas and other feasts with great care and celebration.

As times changed, we were able to choose to go home and be with our biological families for Christmas (it is important to spend time with your immediate family while they are still with you). But even these circumstances change with time: Family members have commitments with in-laws, gathering space become limited as parents move out of the homestead and distance separates family members.

But in the family of Holy Cross, we always have each other. There is always a core group that will gather to share in the festivities and celebrate the miracle of the birth of our Lord. Even our notion of the “family of Holy Cross” is greater now. For the past 10 years, I lived in Cocoa Beach, Fla., with as many as 12 priests and brothers of the Congregation, as well as four Sisters of the Holy Cross who minister in the West Palm Beach area. The sisters, priests and brothers all gather at Christopher Lodge for our Community Christmas celebration. We pray together, we share



Br. Dennis in front of the Community Christmas Tree at Christopher Lodge, Cocoa Beach, Fla., (circa 2006).

stories, we laugh and share wonderful meals together for several days. How happy Blessed Basile Moreau must be seeing his sons and daughters (priests, brothers and sisters) sharing their common life and heritage together!

Holy Cross Religious generally live in Community. Sometimes, due to a special ministry or studies here or abroad, we live apart from a local community. Regardless, all Holy Cross men and women know that they are always welcome to share the holidays in any C.S.C. Community around the world. We are always welcome to share prayer and table on these festive occasions, further signs of our strong family bonds. ■

After 10 years as Religious Superior of Christopher Lodge Community in Cocoa Beach, Fla., Br. Dennis Flemming, C.S.C., was assigned to Notre Dame, Ind., and in the fall was named one of the Assistant Superiors of the Holy Cross Community at the University of Notre Dame.



Fr. William Donahue and Fr. Harold Bride seen here in 2007 making Christmas decorations with student volunteers for Holy Cross House (Fr. Bride died in 2010).

Culture & Poverty

by Rev. Eric J. Schimmel, C.S.C.

As a young man discerning my vocation, I felt something in my heart that said that I should seriously look into becoming a priest. Although I have told my vocation story many times, most people focus and ask questions about why I became a priest. Just as important to me is the question: Why Holy Cross?

I joined Holy Cross for several reasons. One big reason was because I saw incredible hope and possibilities given that Holy Cross people work in education, parishes and the missions. I was attracted to the fact that as a Holy Cross priest I could cross borders of every sort.

While in the seminary, my formation directors encouraged and supported me to choose ministry sites that challenged and stretched me to move out of my comfort zone. I also had the privilege of spending a year and a half in East Africa. The experience was challenging, yet enriching. I carried many crosses, but had experiences of Resurrection. I learned a lot about myself and about how to cross borders. But as I returned home, I did not feel called to be a missionary.

I now see that my definition of being a missionary has changed. As a priest, I have served in three different parishes in three different cities, two of which are bilingual parishes with large Hispanic populations. In those parishes, I drew upon my experience living in a foreign country to empathize with the struggles of the recent immigrants sitting before me, most of them trying to find hope and opportunity for their families. My overseas experiences also helped teach me how to understand the different cultural perspectives of the people in the parishes. To my surprise, I found just as many different cultural perspectives among the English-speaking community, who are no less homogenous than the Hispanic populations.

Roughly five years ago, I took over as the Director of André House. André House is a ministry of hospitality offering basic-



Fr. Eric washes the feet of an André House resident on Holy Thursday.

needs services to people experiencing homelessness in the downtown Phoenix area. André House was founded in 1984 as a small house to offer a place for homeless people to stay. It is based on the Catholic Worker model of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. In true Holy Cross fashion, as the needs of the people have changed, André House grew and adapted to help meet the needs. People donated turkeys to us our first year around the holidays, so we made turkey soup — thus starting our soup line. People donated clothing, so we have a clothing closet, etc. Today on our soup line, we average more than 600 meals a night, six nights a week. More than 150 people use our clothing closet each

week. We also added a transitional house for women.

Serving so many meals a night, I have learned a lot about food. We order some food in bulk, but the majority we get from St. Mary's Food Bank. There is nothing like starting the day by heading off to the food bank to pick up several hundred pounds of food!

Most people know that different cultures have their own preferences for foods, which is why ethnic restaurants are so popular. In my ministry at André House, I have experienced something I was taught while in the seminary, namely that people have different expectations for food based on their socioeconomic class.

For example, if you ever watch cooking shows on TV, especially those involving competition, you may hear the judges talk about presentation because we feast with our eyes before we feast with our mouths. Some focus on proper “plating” of the food. Our guests at André House do not necessarily focus on presentation. This does not mean that we ignore it, but I have had to explain to volunteers who come to help serve at André House that it is OK to cut around bad parts of a piece of fruit or vegetable rather than throwing the whole thing out.

The other two levels of expectation for food based on socioeconomic class would be taste and quantity (if there is enough food). We try to pay attention to these at André House. In the process of using food from the food bank and being limited by what we can find there, I have found that I now have different habits

and expectations around food. For example, I do not judge a food product by its “best by” or expiration date. We rejoice when we find dairy products at the food bank not past their “best by” date. So, I now habitually smell my milk before using it and I’ve eaten many bowls of cereal with water because we did not have milk. Crossing socioeconomic borders has affected how I approach something as simple as food.

Entering the culture of those experiencing homelessness also has given me a different perspective on fear. Many of our guests live in a relatively constant state of fear. Therefore, my experiences with people living on the streets have helped me to become more conscious of how many people live in fear. I see parents worry about their children’s safety. At airports, we are all vigilant of suspicious activity. Some people fear losing a job or the results of



André House resident’s personal handcrafted Holy Cross cross and anchors medallion.

medical tests. And there’s the fear that is projected ... I have wondered whether people recognize the fear that is transmitted by gated communities and home security systems.

Life on the streets is rough and with more apparent danger. Many people experiencing homelessness struggle with mental illness and/or addictions. These issues can make for unpredictable behavior. Recently, I was doing something in the laundry room at the beginning of the soup line and I heard a woman shouting. Initially I wanted to go out to see the cause of the commotion. Then I heard the voice again and I recognized it as Martha, who goes through periods in which she shouts horrendous things. Usually her screams are aimed at people only she can see. When I recognized her voice, I calmed down knowing that we did not have an immediate crisis with potential confrontation. Instead, we had another situation aptly described by another one of our guests who said, “Poor Martha. She is battling her demons again.”

Living and working at André House has forced me to live and work in an area where many publically battle their demons. The battles make people more uncomfortable in an already uncomfortable situation.



People line up outside of André House in Phoenix for services.

As our guests desperately try to cling to a sense of dignity, many feel that to make it through another day they have to remain constantly vigilant. That vigilance can entail keeping watch to make sure no one steals their backpack that contains almost all of their worldly possessions or avoiding the person down the street pushing drugs because they know today they feel weak.

Every once in a while, an actual fight breaks out. At André House, I have learned ways to defuse tense situations. Often the simplest way is to remain calm and think, “How can I offer a way for everyone to feel like they can save face?”

Most people do not want to fight, but on the streets you have to present yourself as being strong. In my five years at André House, I have noticed that I actually become calmer when the shouting starts and gets louder. I hear in the raised tone of voice someone crying out “Look at me! I am strong! I have no fear!” while often the person trembles inside. Most fights involving punches had little-to-no preamble of shouting.

As tensions rise, I try to provide a way for both parties to show their fearlessness, but exit the situation with dignity. And when it is all done, I sometimes wonder

what the real difference is between the bravado of threatening to throw a punch and the bravado sometimes on display in a board room or the trash talk on the athletic field. Crossing the border to live with people struggling to meet basic needs has helped me to realize the commonality that many people live in fear. As we push to get ahead in the world, many feel they have to do so by projecting themselves as better than others – intellectually, creatively or otherwise. At their core, many struggles people face in all walks of life stem from people trying to raise themselves by diminishing another.

At André House, we try to provide a place of hospitality and safety. We try to affirm people and build self-esteem in ways that do not diminish others. We want to build connections in a world where people have a hard time trusting because they have been taken advantage of so often by so many. In our phone office, we have a sign someone made in crayon that says, “Everyone wears an invisible sign reading ‘Notice me! Make me feel special.’”

Recently one of our Core Staff members wrote about this need in our newsletter. She told the story of a guest named William. She asked William if he had any friends

outside the walls of André House, to which he responded, “Nope!” As William sat in the phone office, the staff member did her best to be attentive to the needs of all. Meanwhile, he wrote her a note saying, “It’s good to know you, it’s nice to know you care. ... A kind word will never go unheard. Too often they go unsaid. You always have a warm smile and a kind word and I thank you for that. I will always be your friend.”

What we do at André House is part of what we do as Holy Cross. We cross borders of every sort, making ourselves at home in different cultures. We do so knowing that we all have the same basic needs. Most fundamental to that is the need to be loved, to feel and share the love that God has for every person. ■



The U.S. Province has two social justice ministries in the United States and it’s no coincidence that both are named after Holy Cross’ St. André, who comforted the sick and disenfranchised. Learn more about the great work that Fr. Eric Schimmel, C.S.C., Fr. Duane Balcerski, C.S.C., and Br. Richard Armstrong, C.S.C. (Midwest Province), staff and volunteers do every day at André House by visiting www.andrehouse.org. And also visit www.saintandrechurch.org to learn more about how Holy Cross Religious at Saint André Bessette Catholic Church ministers to the souls and nourishes the bodies of the homeless of Portland, Ore.

Why I Am A Priest

by Rev. Charles Gordon, C.S.C.

I love being a priest for all the usual reasons, which are excellent, and I revere them, but here are some other reasons.

I love being a priest because it is great to be something that has been around so long that it is practically hard-wired into the human brain. There have probably been people recognizable as priests about as long as there have been people recognizable as people. If a guy wandered out of the Pleistocene epoch and into a church and saw me behind the altar, he'd likely have a pretty good idea what I was and what I was doing. This matters to me because I'm a romantic by nature and find it moving to think about. More importantly, because a priest is such an ancient thing to be, an encounter with one touches very deep chords in the human mind and heart.

Once you are known to be a priest, you are treated differently. Walk through an airport in clerical dress: A stranger might pull you aside and pour out a story of joy, grief or repentance; and moments later you might receive from another passer-by a glance of such unfathomable loathing

that it makes you miss a step. Despite the unpleasant aspects, the thing I love about all this is that my meetings with other people are freighted with possibility. The energy is there, at some level, for almost anything to happen. And God willing, what happens might be full of grace.

I love being a priest because right now there are more than a billion people in the world for whom I'm not only a priest but also *their* priest. On the off chance that we ever meet, they will know what to make of me and I will have a way to be with them.

I love being a priest because I hear about miracles. Many people think miracles don't happen or are very rare, but this is only because people tend not to tell each other about their miracles. But they'll tell a priest.

I know a woman who was comforted by an angel and a man who was visited by the Blessed Virgin Mary. I know a woman whose beloved father died when she was barely out of her teens. When it happened, she turned to the Scriptures for solace. She opened her Bible at random and read,

"In place of your fathers will be your sons." She was single then. Now she is married and has four children, all of them boys. That is her miracle.

And then there are the conversion stories. I know a fellow who, when he was a graduate student, was teetering on the brink of faith. One night, while walking past the darkened shop windows of a deserted city street, he offered up a silent prayer: "God, if you are there, and if you care, please give me some kind of sign." At that moment, a shabbily dressed man on a bicycle came around the corner riding in the opposite direction. As he passed, he looked the student in the eye and said, "God loves you." Game, set and match!

I've spoken to a Chinese physicist who converted from atheism to Christianity because ice floats. He told me that every other liquid sinks when it freezes. If water sank when it froze, he assured me, the earth would be entirely lifeless. We exist because water behaves in this odd way. That, he said, cannot be a coincidence and so he believes in our Creator.

I hear stories like these because people feel it's OK to tell a priest things they would find awkward to say in public. Happily, there is a corollary to this instinct: It's OK for a priest to say in public things that would be awkward for other people to say. As a priest, I have a kind of diplomatic immunity from the social taboos against talking about God or anything else that really matters in polite company. When I speak up, I will at worst see an expression on someone's face that seems to say, "Oh well, what do you expect? He is, after all, a priest." I can speak badly, or I can speak deftly, but at least I'm free to have a go. What I love most about this special priestly license is the freedom it gives me to speak without irony. I love not joking. I love being able to speak about God simply and freely from the heart. I love being a priest because, years after the event, people will come up to me and tell me that some-



Provincial Superior Fr. Tom O'Hara enjoys a laugh with seminarians Mr. Tim Mouton (middle) and Mr. Matt Hovde (right).

thing I said changed their lives. And more often than not, if I can remember the occasion they are referring to, what they heard is not what I meant to say. I suppose I could be bemused or even annoyed by this; instead, I take it as welcome evidence that the Holy Spirit is using me as an instrument through which people hear what God wants them to hear.

Akin to this are occasions when I manage to say something useful during a pastoral encounter that I am dead certain I couldn't have come up with on my own. Again, in those moments, the presence of the Holy Spirit seems palpable. And when I preside at the Eucharist I am the instrument of Christ, who is the real Priest. I love being a priest because the Mass is a distillation of what it is to be human.

I was ordained at a time when people were having difficulty saying just what a priest was. Some of us were told we would have to go and find out for ourselves. I found my answers in the parishes where I served. My teachers were devout women who had been members of their local churches for decades. They were spiritual heirs of the prophetess Anna and of the "widows" of New Testament times who practically constituted a distinct office in the Church. In their day, these women had seen any number of priests come and go. If anyone knew what a priest was, they did. I set out to benefit from their wisdom. If they were pleased with me, I couldn't

be going far wrong. I love being a priest because of them.

And I love my order, my particular tribe of priests. I love the Congregation of Holy Cross because when you sit down to dinner in Community, there will be someone in the room who knows the answer to just about any question you can imagine. I love Holy Cross because in our Community, there are conversations and arguments that have been going on for 30 years or more. I love Holy Cross because the familiar, unprepossessing fellow sitting next to you is sometimes a world authority in his field or has poured out his life in selfless service to the people of God, or both. I love Holy Cross because, in a crisis, a fellow with whom you've had an apparently casual, friendly relationship will be revealed as a well of wisdom and compassion. I love that several hundred good men have my back. I love the way we honor each other's fathers and mothers and families. I love that Holy Cross hospitality is legendary. I love that Holy Cross men seem to know instinctively that you do not have to stand on your dignity in order to have dignity. We spend the greater part of our time together talking about sports or the next movie we want to see, but we are having those conversations with men who have given their lives over to service of Christ and his Church with unqualified generosity. They have known success and had their share of failures, but they are still here and they are still Christ's men. I love spending time with men who are very different than me in the ways the world cares about, but with whom I am in deep agreement on the things that really matter. I love the high regard we have for good, hard work. I love to sing the "Salve Regina" with my Holy Cross brothers. I love the way you often discover, after knowing someone for a long time, that they have a profound devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I've found over the years that this turns out to

be true of most of the best of us. I love the transformation that seems to come over someone you think you know well, and perhaps have taken for granted, when you have the privilege of seeing him minister to God's people, particularly in a moment of tragedy or great joy. I love the stories about the old days and the great and colorful men who did so much to make us who we are, but who now sleep in Christ. I love that we remember our beloved dead in prayer by name on the anniversary of their deaths. I love that a hundred years after I'm gone someone will be mentioning my name aloud in prayer. I love being able to visit the Community cemetery where I will one day be buried myself. I love being able to work in places where we have been so long that the lifeblood of our community is in the bricks. I love to visit a Holy Cross community and its members somewhere in the world for the first time and feel instantly at home. I love the way that members of Holy Cross parishes and schools and universities feel about their priests. I love to visit our seminary and meet young people who remind me of Holy Cross men who have gone before, almost as if there were some kind of spiritually transmitted Holy Cross genetic code ... ■



Fr. Charlie.

Fr. Charlie Gordon, C.S.C., is an Assistant Professor of Theology at the University of Portland. This is a portion of Fr. Charlie's full article that first ran in **Portland Magazine**, Autumn 2011 issue.



Holy Cross priests and brothers at the University of Portland on the steps of West Hall (circa 1950).

Around *the* Province

Br. Donald Stabrowski, C.S.C., was honored for his 24 years of service as a political science and history Professor, Dean, Vice President and Provost at the University of Portland in September. Br. Stabrowski was named Third Assistant Provincial and Secretary of the U.S. Province in June.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
The University in September sponsored a sacred music conference and a series of concerts in conjunction with the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows and the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of Holy Cross.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND
UP has been named among the top schools in the country for service, according to *Washington Monthly's* annual college rankings. Among 682 "master's universities," the University was recognized as the third best nationally for its commitment to community service.

KING'S COLLEGE
King's College and the **University of Notre Dame** are teaming up to offer a five-year, dual-degree engineering program. Qualifying students will spend three years at King's taking math, science and pre-engineering classes and will then transfer to Notre Dame for two years to finish engineering classes in their discipline.

STONEHILL COLLEGE
The **Stonehill** community was electric on Oct. 18 when the football team played a nationally televised Thursday night game at home against Number 3-ranked University of New Haven. The game was close, with New Haven rallying late to beat the Skyhawks, 45 to 41.

INDIANA
Sacred Heart Parish, Notre Dame
As part of the parish's social justice ministry, every third Friday, parishioners at **Sacred Heart Parish** help serve breakfast to men and women living on the streets through Our Lady of the Road Drop-in Center in downtown South Bend.

St. Joseph Parish, South Bend
St. Joe's recently launched a \$4 million campaign – "Living Our Faith, Building Our Future." Projects include modest refurbishment of the church interior, an addition to the school, a Parish Life Center with additional space for a pre-school and reconfiguration of parish grounds.

Holy Cross and St. Stanislaus Parish, South Bend
The church's Father Corby Ministry Brigade collected items again this year for military care packages to be shipped for the holidays. The Brigade also is providing financial assistance to Miller's Veterans Center in South Bend and Blue Star Mothers of St. Joseph Valley.

St. Adalbert/St. Casimir Parish, South Bend
St. Adalbert School has seen a dramatic increase in enrollment and tuition dollars because of Indiana's 2011 School Choice law, with almost all of the new students from parish families. Enrollment is 223, with 85 of those students receiving vouchers.

Christ the King Church, South Bend
"Son of the parish," **Rev. James Gallagher, C.S.C.,** found a presider's chair in storage at the University of Notre Dame and presented it to **Christ the King** Pastor **Rev. Neil Wack, C.S.C.,** to use in the Sanctuary. It was refinished by parishioner Chris Blanchard.

TEXAS
St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic Church, Austin
Founded in 1937, **St. Ignatius Martyr** is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. The school has full enrollment, there are more than 60 official ministries, Mass is offered in English and Spanish and is also interpreted for the deaf each week.

VERMONT
Sacred Heart St. Francis de Sales Parish, Bennington
The Knights of Columbus sponsored a fundraising dinner Oct. 13 at the parish to support the area veterans' ruck-up house, a non-profit facility that offers veterans career consulting, advocacy, homeless outreach and coordination of services.

MASSACHUSETTS
Holy Cross Parish, South Easton
Holy Cross Parish once again kicked off the "new" year with a celebration of its patronal feast day, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, September 15-16. After each Mass, parishioners enjoyed a reception and the annual stewardship fair on the front lawn.

ARIZONA
St. John Vianney Parish, Goodyear
The parish school welcomed five new teachers this fall, including two from the **University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education Program.** Ryan Castello is teaching middle-school social studies and Carolyn Garcia is the third-grade teacher.

COLORADO
Tri-Community Parishes, Colorado Springs
Jamie Boswell, a parishioner at **Holy Rosary Chapel,** went to

Cambodia on Oct. 15 to again visit the orphanage run by the sisters of the Missionaries of Charity. He took clothing, children's over-the-counter medicines and cash donations to the orphanage.

FLORIDA
St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Viera
Rev. John Britto Antony, C.S.C., took over as the associate pastor of St. John's in early October. He previously served at **Sacred Heart-St. Francis de Sales** and **St. John the Baptist Church** in Bennington/North Bennington, Vt.

OREGON
Saint André Bessette Catholic Church, Portland
The church conducted a 10-week series on Vatican. Participants also discussed what needs to be done to complete the work and vision of the council. Increasing educational opportunities for parishioners was a major item in the parish plan developed a year ago. Bible studies and outside ministries have also been added.

Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, Portland
The school celebrated International Bike + Walk to School Day on Oct. 5. **Rev. John Dougherty, C.S.C.,** blessed bikes, scooters and shoes for all the students who gathered early before school at Peninsula Park with their parents and then traveled together the remaining three blocks to the building.

HOLY CROSS MISSION CENTER
The Center for Social Concerns at the **University of Notre Dame** hosted its annual service fair in September and the **Mission Center's Overseas Lay Ministry Program** participated.

HOLY CROSS FAMILY MINISTRIES
A Holy Relic of St. André Bessette was included in a Healing Mass and Blessing at St. Joseph Chapel at the **Father Peyton Center** in Easton, Mass., near the second anniversary of the Canonization of Holy Cross' first Saint. St. André was Canonized on Oct. 17, 2010. The Mass and blessing were conducted in both English and French and included a procession, Rosary, anointing with Holy Oil, blessing with the relic and the Eucharist.

AVE MARIA PRESS
Books of interest recently published by **Ave Maria Press** include: "Congregation of Holy Cross Directory of Devotional Prayer," published for the first time in more than 60 years; "The Seven Deadly Sins: A Visitor's Guide" by Lawrence S. Cunningham, a 2012 recipient of the Spirit of Holy Cross Award; and "New for Advent from **Rev. Ronald Patrick Raab, C.S.C.**" is the newest lectionary based resource for Advent.

ANDRÉ HOUSE, PHOENIX
A group of Boy Scouts spent a fall Saturday working around the C.S.C. house in Phoenix, capping and painting the wall around the property as part of an Eagle Scout project. The house was purchased at the beginning of the year in order to reduce overhead.

DISTRICT OF CHILE
Nuestra Señora de Andacollo has completed a year-long project as the parish celebrates its 100-year anniversary. Pastor **Rev. Chris Cox, C.S.C.,** and the Parish Council commissioned a project for four, new stained-glass windows with the images of St. André Bessette, Blessed Basil Moreau, St. Alberto Hurtado and St. Teresita de los

Andes – two Chilean saints. St. Alberto Hurtado was a parishioner and studied at the school when he was young.

DISTRICT OF EAST AFRICA
Rev. Frank Murphy, C.S.C., became the new Rector of McCauley Formation House in Nairobi, Kenya, in September. **Rev. Prosper Tesha, C.S.C.,** was installed as the new Pastor of St. Brendan's Parish in Kitete, Tanzania, on Sept. 29 in a Mass at which 688 children were confirmed by Bishop Beatus Kinaiya of Mbulu Diocese, Tanzania.

DISTRICT OF PERÚ
Rev. Aníbal Niño Loarte, C.S.C., Superior of the **District of Perú,** inaugurated the year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Holy Cross in Perú in 1963 recently. During the year, monthly lectures will touch on aspects of Holy Cross charism and conclude with a Eucharist on the Solemnity of Our Lady of Sorrows in 2013.

REGION OF MÉXICO
In response to the needs of youth living within **La Luz Parish,** the parish's youth ministry has begun youth nights each Wednesday. The program allows youths to strengthen their relationship with God and to help them face the challenges that are a part of life in Mexico.

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From the Seminary to the Ballpark

by Rev. Wilfred J. Raymond, C.S.C.

“Crossing borders of every sort” is a good description for the path my ministry in Holy Cross has taken from the beginning.

When I was 15 years old, I literally crossed the international border between the United States and Canada to enroll at Saint Joseph’s University near Moncton, New Brunswick, conducted by the Holy Cross priests and brothers of the Acadian Province. After high school and two years of college at Saint Joseph’s, with support from Fr. Roland Soucie, C.S.C., my spiritual director, I applied to the Diocese of Portland, Maine. I was accepted and assigned to study at the Grand Seminary in Montreal, Quebec. My older brother Octave drove me. As we reached the suburbs of Montreal, some 5 hours away from home in Maine, I told him to stop the car; I had changed my mind! We returned home and everyone was surprised to see me back so soon, especially my local pastor. I began to explain to him that while I loved and was inspired by the good priests in my home parish, I was drawn to the special quality about the Holy Cross men that I had gotten to know at Saint Joseph’s. They were joyful, hospitable, holy and bright. I wanted to be a part of that kind of religious community. Within two weeks, I crossed another border into the Seminary of Stonehill College.

Holy Cross and Seminary formation were not what I expected, they were much more! Entering Holy Cross brought me across spiritual and theological borders of the mind and heart that allowed me to discover the worldwide Church and the modest, but important role the Congregation of Holy Cross played and continues to play today.

Ordination to the priesthood on April 3, 1971, led to crossing another border into active ministry as a high school religion teacher, track and field coach, Vocations Director and later campus minister and college administrator at Stonehill College. An unexpected and challenging border crossing was the step into Provincial Ad-

ministration, first as Assistant Provincial Superior of the former Eastern Province of Holy Cross and then as Provincial. Nothing adequately prepares one for this task, yet nothing is more consoling than the edifying glimpse into the soul of Holy Cross. The work of leadership in Holy Cross also led to frequent border crossings into Bangladesh, the northeast of India, Perú, Chile, México and all parts of the United States.

Finally, the most surprising border crossing of all was into chaplaincy of the Los Angeles Dodgers. Chaplaincy activities center on the Saturday vigil Mass when the team is playing at home. Vin Scully, the voice of the Dodgers for 63 years, is a regular lector at Mass, along with right fielder Andre Ethier. Both are regular attendees, but more importantly, participants. Vin, one of the best sports broadcasters of all time, is a Lector. In 2011, Palm Sunday was a home game for the Dodgers and Vin read the Passion narrative with his distinctive voice, moving visiting coach from the Saint Louis Cardinals to remark, “I have never paid such attention to the Passion in my life. I will never forget this Palm Sunday Mass.”

Since we started the Mass at Dodger Stadium, Andre has also been a regular participant, lector and extraordinary minister of the Eucharist. He is now married with two little sons. He is one of many Major League Baseball players whose Catholic faith keeps him focused on what is most important in life ... God, family

and then career.

Encountering the players, coaches and staff where they are is a special ministry. I try to develop ways of ministering to them as they face the unique challenges of dealing with sudden wealth and fame in a healthy way in order to preserve their families. These encounters are humbling, not because they are celebrities, but because I’m crossing a socioeconomic border of a different sort to bring the Sacraments and the Gospel into the world of professional sports. In a world where religion is not the norm, I’m humbled by the faithful who practice their faith openly and with zeal.

I am eternally grateful to God, my family and our Holy Cross family, with its rich spiritual heritage, for equipping me with the tools needed to cross many borders and always discover that I am not a stranger in a strange land, but a pilgrim who has hope to bring through the blessed Cross of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our only Hope. ■

Along with being Chaplain for the LA Dodgers, Fr. Willy Raymond, C.S.C. is also the National Director of Family Theater Productions (Hollywood), part of Holy Cross Family Ministries, which is celebrating 65 years of spreading the Gospel through film, radio, TV, video and now online. Visit www.family-theater.org to find out about “Rosary Stars: Praying the Gospel,” a video prayer of the Rosary that features major league baseball players and others.



From left to right: Joe Torre (former Dodgers manager), Fr. Willy, Brian Golden (sports columnist), Manny Mota (hitting coach), and Andre Ethier (right fielder).

Unique Ministries of Holy Cross



1 Fr. Joe Corpora is the Director of ACE's Catholic School Advantage Campaign — working to improve educational opportunities for Latino children.

2 Fr. Robert Antonelli, who has been the archivist at UP since 1999 and also served as the first Archivist for Holy Cross in Rome, is retiring this year.

3 Fr. Genaro Aguilar, Athletic Chaplain for King's College, poses with the volleyball team.

4 Br. Clarence Brientenbach (left) and Br. Tom Tucker (right) work in the Holy Cross Community Cemetery at the University of Notre Dame.

5 Fr. Leo Polselli is Chaplain of Holy Cross Family Ministries and works in the HCFM store.

6 Fr. Paul Doyle, Rector at Dillon Hall at ND, "crowd-surfs" at a pep rally.

7 Fr. Thomas McNally, a volunteer Chaplain at the Indiana State Prison, prays with an inmate.

8 Fr. William Dorwart is Catholic Chaplain for the Naval District in Washington, D.C. In this 2010 photo, he was a Lieutenant presiding at Mass aboard the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan.



Your questions answered ...

Plain!Speaking

by Rev. Herbert C. Yost, C.S.C.

Was Jesus really born on December 25th? I heard that He wasn't and it upsets me. Why celebrate Christmas then?

—S.C. from Canada

You're not going to like my answer, S.C., but the Biblical and historical evidence is insufficient. There's simply not enough information to pinpoint the date precisely. However, we can get an approximate idea.

First, Matthew's Gospel (2:15) notes that Jesus' birth happened before the death of Herod the Great, which occurred in the spring of 4 B.C. So a possible time for Jesus' birth could range from any time in 5 B.C. to the late winter of 4 B.C. (Remember: when dealing with B.C. years, one counts backward from zero instead of forward). Some point to the angels' appearance to the shepherds in winter, but nowhere in either Luke or Matthew is the season of the year mentioned.

Secondly, the Gospel of Luke records that Zachariah, John the Baptist's father, was serving in the Temple as a priest of the Division of Abijah, which was the 8th of 24 priestly divisions. Since Jewish calendars and historical records are still quite accurate, Zechariah's service would have ended around May 20 in 6 B.C. Jewish law at the time was very strict about sexual contact before, during and after one's term of service. This would have resulted in a likely birth of John the Baptist sometime in February of 5 B.C. Mary visited Elizabeth immediately after the Annunciation, when the latter was six months pregnant, and stayed for three months. This would mean Jesus' birth would have likely occurred near the end of August or early September of 5 B.C. Take my math with a grain of salt ...

I got Ds in that subject from grade school through college!!!

Some would point to the census of Quirinius, mentioned in Luke. Historically, Quirinius actually ruled Syria on two separate occasions and there were actually two censuses taken. The "first census" mentioned in Luke 2:2 occurred during Quirinius' first term as governor, but no actual date for that census is given.

So the available evidence seems to indicate that Jesus was not born on Dec. 25. So what now? Let's look at the civic record ...

Dec. 25 marked the Roman date of the Winter Solstice. That day was celebrated as the birth date of the Persian sun god Mithras, who was widely worshipped in the Roman Empire, particularly among soldiers. The Emperor Constantine was among those who worshiped Mithras before his conversion. When the church became flooded with pagan converts, a huge problem arose. The converted pagans did not want to give up the Winter Solstice festival, as it was a time of much celebrating. The Church basically followed the old saying, "If you can't beat them, join them," and decreed that Dec. 25 should not be celebrated as the birth date of the sun god, but rather as the birth date of the Son of God!!!

Of even greater interest is the fact that Christmas was not celebrated by the Church until the 3rd century. The primary celebration of early Christianity was Easter. Paul, for example, never mentions anything unusual about the birth of Jesus. All he says is that Jesus was "born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4) and "according to the flesh" He was "descended from the House of David" (Romans 1:3). Paul never mentions the names of Mary or Joseph. The only reference he

makes to a member of the family of Jesus was to James, whom he called "the Lord's brother." The Gospels of Mark and John make no mention of Jesus' birth.

Historically, it looks like the celebration of Christmas or "Christ's Mass," began in the 3rd Century. The earliest mention of some sort of observance on Dec. 25 is in the Philoclian Calendar of the year 336 A.D. That calendar represented the practice of the Church of Rome. Christmas celebrations did not gain widespread prominence until the Middle Ages, around 400 A.D. That was the time when the mystery plays achieved great prominence as a way to educate the laity about the events of the Gospels. From the mystery plays arose all the popular embellishments surrounding the Birth of Jesus on Christmas Day.

Now all this might make some folks uncomfortable because it seems to shoot down cherished beliefs or practices. But what is important is not the date of Jesus' birth, but that the Son of God actually did become a flesh-and-blood human being, like us in all things but sin. This is the event the entire Old Testament points to and the words and works of Jesus the Messiah are the subject of the entire New Testament.

Questions for Fr. Herb? Send to:

Plain!Speaking

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If you want to read Fr. Herb's weekly Gospel reading reflections, please visit us online at: **reflections.holycrossusa.org**



*"Do not be afraid;
for behold, I proclaim
to you good news
of great joy that will be
for all the people."*

Luke 2:10

Time, place and circumstances may differ, but the mission of the Congregation of Holy Cross remains urgently the same: to proclaim the Kingdom of God!

We are truly blessed by those who, as good and faithful stewards of their resources, share in our mission by their prayers, talents and financial gifts. What Holy Cross receives it, in turn, gives in its service to God's people toward the fulfillment of its mission.

During this holy season of Christmas, we invite you to prayerfully consider a gift at year-end in support of our mission and ministries. Whether caring for the poor in the United States, providing essential health services in East Africa or forming the next generation of good and faithful religious, your prayers and your financial gifts inspire and propel our work.

Visit **donate.holycrossusa.org** to make your gift online, or send your gift to **Congregation of Holy Cross, United States Province, P.O. Box 765, Notre Dame, IN 46556-0765.**



Thank you, and God's blessings to you this Christmas season and throughout the coming year.