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.
My dear friends in Christ,

Pope Benedict XVI recently reflected on the consecrated life, stating "...the consecrated person, exists 'for' others, is given to others. Giving to God means no longer existing for oneself, but for everyone." (General Audience, January 25, 2012). These words of Pope Benedict could not have more accurately described or set the tone for the theme of this issue of Pillars.

In October 2011, the Congregation of Holy Cross proclaimed the “Year of the Brother,” an opportunity to honor the history and tradition of this great vocation, and to celebrate this unique call and the men who have selflessly responded.

To try and quantify the number of times I’ve been told of the impact of Holy Cross brothers, by those who have served with them, been educated by them, and even disciplined by them, is nothing short of impossible. Qualifying the impact with words like “gratitude,” “having been formed in the faith,” “determined that I become my best,” “firm, but fair and compassionate,” “tireless, hardworking men,” are phrases that begin to help describe the witness of Holy Cross brothers, but even these only begin to touch the surface.

Hearing from others about the role of brothers in their lives affirms my own experience of living, working and praying with them. Being a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross and part of the living legacy of this community, I know how our institutions of learning, our parishes, our missions, our membership, and our Church, have been built on the selfless labor and intellect of our brothers. From instruction in classrooms to feeding the livestock that at one time occupied a good part of the Notre Dame campus, Holy Cross brothers have, and continue to, live out their vows with a most authentic commitment to Christ and his Church.

The following pages will provide you a glimpse of the history of Holy Cross brothers, dating back to 1820, and will take you into the lives of four humble and dedicated servants who, after a collective 233 years of active ministry, remain zealous for Christ, for His Church, and for Holy Cross. Additionally, Rev. John Dougherty, C.S.C., shares his heartfelt reflection on the impact his uncle, Br. Fulgence Dougherty, C.S.C., had on his life and on his vocation.

While my heart bears tremendous appreciation for the roles the brothers have played in the life of the Church and in particular with the history of Holy Cross, it also carries a bit of sadness that our younger generations have likely never benefited from the tutelage of a religious brother, or engaged in a relationship with a brother, as the vocation has waned in the past 40 to 50 years.

My hope through this issue of Pillars is twofold: first, that those whose history has been positively affected by a relationship with a brother find affirmation in the stories presented, sharing in my appreciation of the gift that is brotherhood; second, that more will come to understand and value the uniqueness of this vocation, and perhaps in their own journey, consider the life of a religious brother.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church provides for us a beautiful and inspiring reflection on the consecrated life that captures what all professed religious believe and aspire to achieve through their vows. “The state of consecrated life is thus one way of experiencing a ‘more intimate’ consecration, rooted in Baptism and dedicated totally to God. In the consecrated life, Christ’s faithful, moved by the Holy Spirit, propose to follow Christ more nearly, to give themselves to God who is loved above all and, pursuing the perfection of charity in the service of the Kingdom, to signify and proclaim in the Church the glory of the world to come.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Paragraph 4. Christ’s Faithful-Hierarchy, Laity, Consecrated Life: 916”).

Holy Cross brothers embody this statement, and in doing so, serve as a witness of selfless service in proclaiming the Kingdom of God. Join us in celebrating this “Year of the Brother.”
Since the dawn of monastic communities in the third and fourth centuries, many of the faithful felt called to abandon the temporal world to live a life of prayer and fasting focused on Christ. The majority of these men were not priests, and had no aspirations to be ordained.

A more formal distinction between “lay brothers” and priests can be traced to the early 11th century in Italy and France, under the institution of Saint John Gualbert in Italy, and Saint Alberic and Saint Stephen of Murat in France. Lay brothers were first associated with monasteries, and their primary role was to contribute “by their toil to the prosperity of the house or order of their vocation” (Catholic Encyclopedia: Lay Brothers). Lay Brothers are men who take religious vows in community, but do not intend to be ordained.

In post-revolutionary France, with the Church decimated and an educational system, particularly one for education in the faith, in disarray, Rev. Jacques-François Dujarié was charged in 1818 with establishing an association of teaching brothers for his diocese. The intention was to follow the example of the 17th century community of brothers like the Christian Brothers. Successful in establishing the Sisters of Providence in 1806, hope was placed in Fr. Dujarié’s experience, determination, and wisdom in creating this new association.

In 1820, the first of the Brothers of Saint Joseph were installed in Fr. Dujarié’s rectory. Fr. Dujarié was 53 years of age when he installed the brothers, and was in ill health, but his personal circumstances did not deter his commitment. Between 1820 and 1828 the brothers grew to 105 in membership, serving in 48 different establishments.

Given Fr. Dujarié’s declining health during this period, he recognized the need for assistance in developing the Brothers of Saint Joseph, and sought more formal support from Rev. Basil Moreau, C.S.C., who had been serving as confessor and spiritual director to the brothers. In 1835, Fr. Moreau became the religious superior of the brothers, who at the time were 69 strong, with 27 establishments.

That same year, Fr. Moreau organized a group of Auxiliary Priests to conduct missions in the diocese. The formal association between the Brothers of Saint Joseph and the Auxiliary Priests was inevitable, and on March 1, 1837 the Fundamental Act, officially joining the brothers and Auxiliary Priests, was signed. At the time, there were about 50 brothers and 10 priests comprising the community.

With a rule to follow, along with the Constitutions that would define what was to become the Congregation of Holy Cross, Fr. Moreau established a solid formation program for the brothers while accepting numerous invitations to establish foundations around his diocese and beyond. As his community grew in number and in solidarity to the rule, so too did the establishments in which the brothers served. The demands for the services of the brothers and priests were so great that from 1845 through 1850, Fr. Moreau had to decline any new requests.

In 1857 the Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross received papal approval, and for the first time, all members professed perpetual vows under the Constitutions.

In the years following 1857, the Holy Cross brothers continued their vital role in education, with many brothers recognizing and fulfilling a need for ministry outside of the classroom, assuming different roles to support the growing com-
Fr. Moreau’s vision of this community of brothers and priests was unique for his time in that he envisioned these men of faith working collaboratively — each responding fully to his unique vocation and lending his unique talents to the Church and to Holy Cross — outside of the common practice of religious brothers serving explicitly as assistants to priests. Holy Cross was, in Fr. Moreau’s eyes, “a religious family where complementarities are called into play so that the unity of the People of God in the diversity of the gifts of the Spirit might be made evident. Holy Cross appears thus as a figure of the Church.” (“Brothers and Priests in Holy Cross,” by Rev. Gérard Dionne, C.S.C., 1994) Fr. Moreau’s vision of the relationship between priests and brothers was not one easily understood or appreciated by members of his community and tensions existed between the two vocations. These pressures surfaced in different ways throughout the years, from questions of financial responsibility to the election of leadership. But while these tensions existed, they did not deter the missionary focus of the community. Holy Cross brothers and priests worked together in most new ventures, from the first mission to Algeria in 1840, to the United States in 1841, to Canada in 1847, to Bengal in 1852. In the 1920s, brothers from the United States and Canada began to be assigned to Bengal in increasing numbers to build and staff a network of schools in the country.

Although their unity produced many great fruits, the tensions between the brothers and priests grew to where the only feasible resolution seemed to be the creation of separate provinces for priests and brothers. In 1945 the Congregation of Holy Cross approved the separation, with the Vatican giving its blessing in 1946. Although operating under distinct provinces, collaboration was still a goal for each group.

**Significant Dates**

Prepared by Brother Paul Bednarczyk, C.S.C.

**Moreau Province of Brothers**

| Jan. | 6 | Feast of St. André Bessette |
| Feb. | 20 | Anniversary of the death of Blessed Basil Moreau (1873) |
| Feb. | 11 | Anniversary of the birth of Basil Moreau (1799) |
| Feb. | 17 | Anniversary of death of Fr. Jacques-François Dujarié (1838) |
| Mar. | 1 | Signing of the Fundamental Act which joined the Brothers of St. Joseph to the Auxiliary Priests of Holy Cross (1837) |
| Mar. | 19 | Feast of St. Joseph |
| May | 30 | Laying of the cornerstone of the Church at Notre-Dame de Sainte-Croix (1842) |
| May | 13 | Approval of the Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross (1857) |
| May | 19 | Brief of Praise from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide for the Congregation of Holy Cross (1856) |
| May | 23 | Anniversary of the beatification of Br. André (1982) |
| June | 12 | Br. André declared “Venerable” by Pope Paul VI (1978) |
| June | 15 | The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus |
| June | 17 | Consecration of the Conventual Church at Sainte-Croix (1857) |
| July | 13 | Introduction of the cause of beatification of Fr. Moreau (1945) |
| July | 15 | Arrival of the first postulant for the Brothers of St. Joseph in Ruillé-sur-Loire (1820) |
| July | 25 | Feast of St. James (patronal feast of Father Dujarié) |
| Aug. | 9 | Anniversary of the birth of André Bessette (1845) |
| Aug. | 12 | Basil Moreau is ordained a priest (1821) |
| Aug. | 15 | Father Moreau professes vows with four other priests (1840) |
| Aug. | 31 | Fr. Moreau accepts the government of the Brothers of St. Joseph from Fr. Dujarié; Moreau and four priests adopt the name Auxiliary Priests and lay the foundation of the new Congregation (1835) |
| Sept. | 1 | Pact of Fidelity signed by the Brothers of St. Joseph (1831) |
| Sept. | 15 | Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows |
| Oct. | 17 | Anniversary of the canonization of St. André Bessette (2010) |
| Oct. | 19 | The first “oratory” or place of prayer is blessed in Montreal (1904) |
| Oct. | 22 | Arrival of Br. André Mottais at Ruillé-sur-Loire (1820) |
| Nov. | 7 | Beatification cause of Br. André is opened on the diocesan level (1940) |
| Nov. | 9 | Decree introducing the cause for beatification of Br. André is Introduced by Pope John XXIII (1960) |
| Dec. | 9 | Anniversary of the birth of Jacques-François Dujarié (1767) |
| Dec. | 26 | Jacques-François Dujarié is ordained a priest (1795) |
Under the new structure, the majority of brothers in the United States continued to focus on their special legacy in education, assuming responsibility for many secondary schools and St. Edward’s University. Some brothers, however, remained with the priests as co-adjutor brothers, available to assist as the priests’ provinces determined. The United States Province of Priests and Brothers is one such province.

For those brothers who were part of the new brothers’ province, the years between 1946 and 1967 were times of significant growth. From 1946 through 1958, the brothers established 21 new educational institutions in the United States and overseas. In 1951 the brothers accepted administration of a school on the Amazon, in Santarem, Brazil, and in 1957 accepted administration of a school in Ghana, West Africa. In 1959 they took over the direction of a school in Uganda. These were their first autonomous ventures overseas, leading to the eventual creation of the Districts of Brazil, West Africa, and East Africa.

Their growing numbers and their geographic diversity also prompted a division in their structure so that in 1958 the one province of brothers became three: the Midwest Province, the South-West Province, and the Eastern Province. In 1988, the brothers in Bangladesh became the St. Joseph Province.

These changes were also met with a diversification in the works of the brothers, from publishing to social service ministries, resulting in the need for different education and certifications.

Because of the reputation of the quality of their educational institutions, their commitment to the formation of each student, and their personal holiness, the brothers fielded a number of requests and invitations from across the United States to establish more institutions.

However as a result of changes, in part from Vatican II, the brothers were beginning to feel the effects of the “vocation crisis” among new recruits and existing members.

In response to this downward trend, the brothers began a careful assessment of their existing commitments and an even more prudent approach to evaluating and accepting new ministerial opportunities. For the many schools founded by and administered by the brothers, efforts began in 1973 to transition the leadership to lay boards in anticipation of reduced numbers of brothers available to teach and lead. Withdrawing brothers from these establishments and other ministries would become an all too common occurrence in the years following simply because the manpower wasn’t available.

Today in the United States, there exists only two Holy Cross brothers’ provinces: the Midwest Province and the Moreau Province (the Moreau Province was recently created as a result of the merging of the former South-West Province of Brothers and the former Eastern Province of Brothers). Although their numbers continue to reduce in the United States, the presence of Holy Cross brothers in Bangladesh, Brazil, Ghana, East Africa and India remains a hopeful indication to the integrity and importance of this vocation.

There can be no doubt that throughout the history of the Congregation of Holy Cross, brothers have made monumental contributions to each of the establishments the Congregation of Holy Cross maintains today, and as much for those foundations that, because of time, place or circumstance, no longer exist. Whether as educators or as laborers, the selfless work of these humble men could and should fill volumes.

The vocation of the religious brother has not seen its end. For a young man who dares to question, “What is religious life?” he may find through his discernment the call to a life of service, a life for the Church, a life in community, outside of the call to ordained ministry. The vocation of a brother is distinct and noble, and one need only look to the example of thousands of Holy Cross brothers to understand the great significance of this call. ■
A Hospitable Brother

_Hospitality_, how one welcomes guests, familiar or not, implies an open heart, a willingness to put oneself aside to receive others, and to treat them with respect, generosity and love.

A more profound definition, and one that describes Br. Herman Zaccarelli, C.S.C., would add “Christ,” as in to welcome as Christ would welcome, to give and love as Christ did, to put oneself aside for the benefit of others, as demonstrated to us by Christ’s gift of His life.

In his early years, Br. Herman witnessed hospitality in the home of his Italian immigrant family who, limited in what they had to offer, nonetheless opened their hearts and doors to others. It was in this environment of generosity that Br. Herman began to cultivate his own understanding and practice of hospitality which prompted, in part, discerning a call to religious life. While still in elementary school, Br. Herman made his first inquiry into religious life, responding to an advertisement about religious brothers in a Catholic publication. It would be but a few years later that hospitality and his vocation would blend seamlessly into what was to become his life’s work.

After graduating from high school, Br. Herman took a job in the growing hospitality industry in Washington, D.C. By more than just coincidence, while walking the campus of Catholic University of America, Br. Herman encountered a Holy Cross deacon, Rev. Mr. Dan O’Neill, C.S.C. At one point, their conversation turned to Br. Herman’s earlier inquiry into religious life, and Deacon O’Neill suggested he visit Holy Cross College in Washington. Within the year, Br. Herman entered the Holy Cross community with the desire to become a brother.

His first assignment while at the Novitiate in North Dartmouth, Mass., was as food services director at the Holy Cross Seminary. Feeling inadequate for the task, he received permission to receive training in institutional administration and completed his studies in 1955, the year he also made his Final Profession of Vows.

In the years following 1955, Br. Herman’s expertise in the food service industry grew as did his desire to increase his knowledge and to share both his love of God and his insights on the industry. In 1960, he founded the Food Research and Education Center for Religious Institutions, and directed that organization for 12 years. A significant part of his responsibility was creating food management training courses which were distributed throughout the United States and internationally.

His proficiency in developing and publishing training materials lead him to Cahners Publishing Company in 1973 at which he served as Director of Educational Research and Development and Acquisitions Editor. After two years with Cahners, Br. Herman accepted an invitation to teach in the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management for the University of Minnesota, Crookston campus. While there, he taught courses in Hospitality Marketing, Management, Menu
Planning and Food Purchasing.

In the span of just 23 years, Br. Herman’s reputation within higher education and the hospitality industry was noteworthy, so much so that in 1978 he was asked to establish the Restaurant, Hotel and Institutional Management Institute at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind. He invested 10 years at Purdue developing the Institute and the foundation upon which it would flourish. For all the success he had in the hospitality field, there was much more yet to come.

After his tenure at Purdue, Br. Herman spent two years at Saint Mary’s College of Minnesota, Winona Campus, serving as Director of its Center for Business and Entrepreneurial Management. From Saint Mary’s, he went to the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco where he assisted the Academy’s president in its efforts toward accreditation and in establishing a Continuing Education Program.

At the age of 60, when many are considering retirement, Br. Herman entertained no such thoughts. In 1991 he accepted a position at King’s College in Wilkes-Barre, Penn., as Director of the college’s Educational Conference Center where he marketed college facilities for business and civic use, developed educational and training programs for educational conferences. As a member of the Holy Cross community at King’s, he also served as a Resident Counselor to 40 undergraduate students.

Br. Herman worked at King’s College through 1998. At the age of 68, he did what few his age would even consider. He decided it was time to pursue an undergraduate degree in Educational Administration which he completed in 2001. As soon as he completed his bachelor’s degree, he began studies for a master’s degree in Institutional Management which he received in 2004.

What does one do with such credentials at the age of 72? Teach at the college level of course, which he did through 2011—imparting and passing on to others all the knowledge he’s gained through years of learning and teaching, combined with his 62 years of religious life.

In the course of Br. Herman’s vowed life as a Holy Cross religious and as an expert in the hospitality industry, he has written seven books (the most recent published in 2011) and penned over 90 articles published in association, trade publications and professional journals. The diversity of his expertise ranges from recipes to food service contracts, from leadership training to the working poor.

Br. Herman’s legacy cannot be marked simply by days, weeks and years in one assignment or another, nor in words printed and degrees earned. It is rightly viewed as the fulfillment of a religious vocation in which the vows made to serve God and his people and to witness the love and hospitality of Christ is made manifest each and every moment, with each and every life encountered. This is Br. Herman’s gift, this is his legacy at the age of 80. Surely, as he continues his life in Holy Cross, more will be forthcoming.


If you know of someone discerning a call to religious life and who may be interested in becoming a Holy Cross brother or priest, please refer them to the United States Province’s Office of Vocations.

Online at: holycrossvocations.org

Email: vocation@holycrossusa.org

Call: (574) 631-6385
You might say that my life, and how the Holy Spirit prompted me to enter the Congregation of Holy Cross is somewhat unique. Upon graduation from Mount Saint Joseph’s High School in Baltimore, I began working for the Social Security Administration. My parish and family life, I would say, played a tremendous part in my entrance into religious life as a brother. That uniqueness which I referred to deals with the fact that I had no previous contact with any Holy Cross religious, priest or brother. I was taught by Xavierian Brothers and we belonged to Saint Joseph’s Monastery Parish, which was conducted by the Passionists. I guess my relationship with the religious who did enter my life in various ways happened to be instrumental in my desire to become a religious brother. I began writing away to various communities throughout the country, finding their information, at that time in magazines. The interesting fact is that the religious community which I had chosen had accepted me, and their letter of acceptance arrived the same day as my orders from the U.S. Navy to report for active duty! Obviously, Uncle Sam won that bout.

My interest in religious life, while in the Navy, didn’t wane. I continued to search for the “right fit” for me and the community. It was during this time that I investigated the Congregation of Holy Cross. The nearest community was the House of Theology and the Foreign Missions headquarters in Washington, D.C., it was there that I had an interview. I was accepted, and in a matter of months I was off to North Easton, Mass., and Holy Cross Seminary on the campus of Stonehill College. On occasion, someone would ask “Why a brother, and not a priest?” I guess my usual answer is that I didn’t feel called to the priesthood, as I didn’t have the capacity for languages (Latin was needed in those days!), and perhaps didn’t feel smart enough for the priesthood. Even though our mission may be the same, my belief was that I would be of service where needed — service to the Holy Cross Community, and service to those people to whom we minister. Where charity and love prevail ... so, I guess that was my initial vision of the role of brother within Holy Cross. As far as my role within Holy Cross is concerned, I don’t believe there is much difference between the mission that both priests and brothers share in community ... the main and obvious difference is that of Ordination and the Sacraments.

What does one expect to happen upon entering religious life? Do you change? Are you asked to do the impossible? In the Congregation of Holy Cross, the priests and brothers take the same religious vows, we follow the same Constitutions, we share in the common life. It is here where some difference may come into play. For example, my own experience has been most fruitful. I entered Holy Cross, almost sight unseen and found upon arrival a warm and friendly band of men willing to share their lives with mine. So, I spent six months as a postulant in North Easton in 1959. In August it was off to the Novitiate in Bennington, Vt. First vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience were pronounced a year later on August 16, 1961. I stayed in Bennington to assist with the farm work. A year later I was at the Provincial House in Bridgeport, Conn., with several assignments; then off to Camp Sebaik in North Sebago, Maine, where I spent seven summers handling the business of running a camp for young men. Instead of returning to Bridgeport, I was assigned to Holy Cross Retreat House, back in North Easton. I spent four years there, and two of those years also included the obedience of Director of Vocations for Brothers. Then in 1967 at the end of the summer, instead of returning to the Retreat House, I was assigned to the Collegio di Santa Croce in Rome. My work there was again in the business field as well as some additional work at the General Administration. After a year plus, I returned to the States and Holy Cross Seminary building; I was head of maintenance for part of a year; then off to Bennington once again to be on the staff there. From there, after being out of high school for 14 years, I was asked if I would consider going to college. So once again, I was searching for the “right fit.” I ended up in one of our own schools, King’s College in Wilkes-Barre, Penn. I spent four years...
there working in the theatre and obtaining my B.A. in Theatre Arts. Upon graduation, I was asked to remain at King’s to be the Designer and Technical Director for the Theatre Department, teaching some classes in both Theatre and Speech.

After two years, I was informed that in order to remain in this type of capacity at the college, I needed an advanced degree. Well, once again I searched for a graduate school with the “right fit!” It turned out to be Temple University in Philadelphia. Ironically, the play we did at the end of my time at King’s was “Philadelphia, Here I Come!” I spent three years at Temple culminating in a M.F.A. (Master of Fine Arts) in Scene & Lighting Design and Technical Theatre. Again, the Holy Spirit had taken me under His wings, as I did receive an invitation from King’s College to return there and pick up where I left off! Of course, being in theatre is exciting, yet somewhat demanding. But being able to teach, design and help others learn and appreciate the arts is truly rewarding! So, I’ve been back at King’s since 1979 in the Theatre Department. In addition, I’ve been a Resident Counselor in the residence halls, Hall Director for a couple years, Director of Orientation a few times, Assistant Dean of Students filling in for someone on sabbatical, Theatre Chairperson, and have served on several committees within the college. I’ve also been involved in several activities outside the college, yet linked to the college. Every step of the way, from Baltimore to Wilkes-Barre, I’ve been given many opportunities to be of service to others. I can honestly say that in all that I’ve been asked to do and have done, the religious and lay communities have been most supportive. I’ve certainly been blessed in many ways, and continue to enjoy these friendships.

Being a religious brother doesn’t mean that you dramatically (no pun intended) change as a person, but it is in living the Vowed Life and in the interior life where the greatest change may take place. Living in community has its challenges, as each person has their own individual, God given characteristics. This variety of unique talents forms the mosaic of religious life in Community.

But I firmly believe in the fact that it is in how one carries out ones daily life that we can best receive the rewards and graces of our religious life. One quick story: I received a phone call one day from a graduate who said that he would like to come in and talk to me. He was in New York City, which is about two hours from Wilkes-Barre. So we set up a date, and low and behold, he arrived by bus to this fair city. We met, walked the city and campus a bit, had lunch, and walked and talked some more, heading back to the bus station for the return trip to New York City. The reason for his coming all the distance? He told me, “I don’t believe we said thanks for all that you’d done for us while we were in the residence hall on your floor!” What a shock! To travel to say thanks for all that you’d done for us while we were in the residence hall on your floor! What a shock! To travel to say thanks in person! What a marvelous feeling, and it does make one pause and stop and think ... how am I affecting the lives of those around me, in the theatre, in the residence hall, in the dining hall, as I walk across campus. At the same time, there is a role reversal, in that what I also receive from those who support me in the various ministries in my life.

There are numerous ways that God speaks to us. The big question is “Are we listening?” and if so, how do we respond? Yes, no, or maybe! By listening, I don’t mean there is a vocal call ... yet there may be, by the people who cross our paths in our daily lives. What are they saying to us, sometimes verbally, but also through their participation in our lives? We’ve certainly been blessed by many wonderful people: our parents, our brothers and sisters, our neighbors, our classmates, our teammates, those who sit next to us on the bus, subway, trolley, the dining hall, the chapel, or at the gym! God does move in mysterious ways! Our God is an awesome God! We just have to affirm that within our own lives. Jesus, what do you want me to do with my life? How, Jesus, how? The brother in the Congregation of Holy Cross has many possibilities on many levels. From my own life, I made the decision and took the first step, and what followed/follows is in some ways, a minor miracle. As Tiny Tim says in Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol, “God bless us everyone!”

Br. James Miller, C.S.C. is a Professor of Theatre Arts at King’s College, Wilkes-Barre, Penn.
A Profile on Brother John J. Platte, C.S.C.

A Brother’s Work is a Prayer

“Our mission is the Lord’s and so is the strength for it. We turn to him in prayer that he will clasp us more firmly to himself and use our hands and wits to do the work that only he can do. Then our work itself becomes a prayer: a service that speaks to the Lord who works through us.” (Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross, 2:20).

The words from the Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross embody the living witness of Br. John Platte, C.S.C., who in humility and with an uncharacteristic dedication, worked tirelessly for 47 consecutive years in one assignment in service to his community — that’s more than three quarters of his 60 years in religious life centered on one particular charge!

In a culture where loyalty and longevity are devalued, where faithfulness to a cause is built upon sand, and a focus toward personal gain and upward movement are common, Br. John exemplifies the Christian call for steadfastness and selfless service. Before he recognized his specific vocation to religious life, Br. John acknowledged his life was not his own but was to be dedicated to the work of God. The details as to how his vocation would unfold would be revealed later. But the seeds of his call were first planted through the Benedictines at Conception Abbey in Missouri that Br. John’s future was determined. First, he came to the realization that he wanted to live a life of prayer in service to others and to God as a religious brother in an active, apostolic community. Second, it was suggested to him that he consider the Congregation of Holy Cross at Notre Dame, a community he was unfamiliar with at the time, but would soon come to know and love.

Br. John entered the Sacred Heart novitiate of Holy Cross in South Bend in 1951. He made his First Profession of vows in 1952 and Perpetual Profession of vows in 1955 at Notre Dame. The vows he made were the same as those of a priest of Holy Cross, but the ministry is distinctly different.

After his First Profession of vows in 1952, Br. John was assigned to Holy Cross College in Washington, D.C., which at that time was the house of theology for the Indiana Province. Br. John’s assignment was to assist in the accounting office. Recognizing his conscientiousness, attention to detail and to the quality of his work, he was assigned as Secretary to the Provincial and Administrative Assistant to the Provincial Administration in 1953, remaining in that position for the next 47 years. In that time he reported to six different Provincials and served as a member of several Provincial Councils. He was engaged with virtually all members of the Holy Cross community and consistently represented Holy Cross with the care, hospitality, and prayerful support – true characteristics of his nature and of his vocation.

Br. John retired from his position in December 2000, but his work was not yet finished. In 2001 he accepted a part-time position as Facility Coordinator at the Coleman-Morse Center on the Notre Dame campus where he remained until health issues forced his departure. Now recovered, Br. John remains open, eager and interested to be of service to his community in whatever way he can.

While waiting for the next door to open, for the next opportunity to use his hands and wits to do the Lord’s work, he is focused on prayer: communal prayer and his private prayer. The discipline and joy of prayer instilled in him by his parents retains a cherished place in his daily journey.

When asked, “What is a religious brother?” his response is immediate as though the vocation is always on his heart and mind … “He is a man of prayer. A man dedicated to God and to his vows. A man who makes himself at service to his community, to the Church and its people. A man whose example will lead others to Christ. ‘Brother’ really isn’t a title – it’s a relationship.”

“Then our work itself becomes prayer.” For Br. John, the line between work and prayer is almost non-existent. He has been true to the call of dedicating his life to the Lord. In making that his singular focus, his work of 47 plus years in service to his community is not work at all; it is the fulfillment of his vocation. It is prayer. It is “a service that speaks to the Lord who works through us.”

Br. John Platte, C.S.C., is living among the Holy Cross community at Moreau Seminary, Notre Dame, Ind.
As a religious brother or nun in an apostolic or cloistered community? A religious priest? A diocesan priest? Guidance from others, prayer, life experience (negative and positive), the heart’s desire, a persistent feeling of being called in one direction ... these are part of the discernment process. Finding our vocation is like finding our instrument in a symphony orchestra, our unique way of “playing” God’s love in the world.

Does the discernment process end once the decision has been made? Absolutely not. If the discernment was flawed, you may have chosen the state of life for the wrong reasons, or one for which you were not temperamentally suited. One may at some point come to the conviction in conscience that he or she has reached a dead end in terms of growth in holiness and must leave the current commitment. But this feeling of having to move on needs just as much – if not more – discernment as one went through in the first choosing of a way of life. It could very well be a temptation, or to stay or leave or change. Ultimately we must fall back on faith. If we knew exactly what God wanted or what would make us happy, there would be no risk, no cost, and, in effect, no love.

If I had one piece of advice to give to anyone whom God has struck with a lightning bolt and told exactly what to do with his or her life, nor can I say that ever happened to me. But I have learned that surrender must always be a part of the choices we make, whether it be choosing a state of life, a career or profession, or to stay or leave or change. Ultimately we must fall back on faith. If we knew exactly what God wanted or what would make us most happy, there would be no risk, no cost, and, in effect, no love.

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“One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek: To dwell in the Lord’s house all the days of my life, to gaze on the Lord’s beauty, to visit His temple.”  
(Psalm 27:4)

Throughout the life of 85-year-old Br. Clarence Breitenbach, C.S.C., the words of the psalmist have been a resounding and recurring call. At times more prominent than others, but nonetheless a constant prayer.

Br. Clarence is one of six children raised in a close knit and faith-filled family, growing up on a farm in rural Indiana. By no means wealthy, his parents gave the family the best gifts of all—a strong work ethic, and an even stronger faith. It was this combination of gifts that prompted Br. Clarence to discern religious life that he would eventually come to share with the Congregation of Holy Cross and with the Church.

After completing his high school education in 1945, Br. Clarence was inducted into the Army and served in Europe for 18 months. Throughout his military service, Br. Clarence’s faith remained strong and he engaged in the Sacraments as often as they were available. Upon being discharged, Br. Clarence returned to northern Indiana and obtained a job in a factory in Valparaiso. It was during this time Br. Clarence responded to the call to serve God as a religious brother in a community of priests and brothers. It was important to Br. Clarence to be a member of a community in which the Sacraments and community prayer were readily present.

Br. Clarence first investigated the Sacred Heart community which had a seminary not far from his home, obtaining from them information on their vocation and formation program. But God directed him elsewhere. Just after visiting the Sacred Heart community, Br. Clarence visited his parish priest. Unbeknownst to Br. Clarence, a priest from the Congregation of Holy Cross happened to be visiting the parish at the same time, and suggested Br. Clarence consider the Holy Cross community at Notre Dame.

His first visit to the Holy Cross community was enough to confirm his call, and in 1950 he joined Holy Cross as a postulant. What convinced Br. Clarence were the apostolic works he witnessed in the brothers he met, and their love of religious life. Br. Clarence knew this was where God wanted him to be.

On August 15, 1951, after a year in formation, Br. Clarence received the religious habit at Sacred Heart Church at Notre Dame. He, along with a group of 12 brother postulants and seminarians, began their novitiate year in South Bend, Ind., but completed the year in Jordan, Minn., because the South Bend novitiate was too small to accommodate the large number of novices.

Br. Clarence made his First Profession of vows on August 16, 1952 and his Final Vows August 16, 1955. He remained at the novitiate for 15 years in charge of the care and maintenance of the buildings and property, and determining work assignments for the novices. What drew him to Holy Cross, the apostolic works and the life of prayer in community, were affirmed each and every day throughout his time in Jordan.

Br. Clarence returned to Notre Dame after the novitiate in Minnesota was sold in 1966, and was put in charge of the maintenance of Moreau Seminary and Provincial Administration/Provincial House. His helper, Br. Roderick Grix, C.S.C., not only shared the work responsibility, but was to become a valued friend and colleague in the care of the buildings and in religious life as well.

After 10 years of faithful service to the Holy Cross community at Moreau Seminary, Br. Clarence moved to Holy Cross House, the residence for elderly and infirmed religious, where again he was placed in charge of maintenance and again found a vibrant life of prayer so dear to his heart.

Br. Clarence remained in charge of maintenance at Holy Cross House for 23

Br. Clarence, 6th from the left, with the inaugural ND Faculty Hockey team. Hockey Coach Lefty Smith, 3rd from the left, and Football Coach Ara Parseghian, 11th in line, were among his teammates.
years before he passed the reigns to his successor. He was 73 years old at the time and while far from reducing his work with Holy Cross, he was ready to pass the responsibility and pressures onto those ready to assume his role.

Br. Clarence considers his life in Holy Cross inspired by and continually blessed by God. By his own admission, Br. Clarence was given assignments for which he had no formal training or experience, but through a God-given ability, he intuitively understood systems and processes, boilers and mechanical operations, and could successfully care for the buildings under his charge. His intuition and craftsmanship were a gift that even allowed him to fabricate a simplified “zamboni” for use on the modest ice rink novices enjoyed for hockey at the Jordan novitiate.

When asked what counsel he might offer a young man discerning the life of a religious brother, his advice is simple. “If you’re a man who doesn’t mind doing the little things and the big things, doing them well, and doing them all for the love of God ... consider being a brother,” says Br. Clarence. “A vocation to religious life is not just a job, it’s a way of life that requires faithfulness. Trust in God in all things, and he will not lead you astray.”

At 85, Br. Clarence continues his humble work for his Holy Cross community. With the spirit, energy and determination of someone half his age, he can be found cutting and hauling fallen trees, raking leaves, clearing brush, and doing a host of maintenance tasks each contributing to the beauty of his surroundings.

The “Lord’s house” in which Br. Clarence has been privileged to reside in his 60 years of religious life has been strengthened by his daily work and prayer, and he feels blessed to have even a small room in this great house.

Br. Clarence Breitenbach, C.S.C., now lives at Holy Cross House, the Community’s medical care facility in Notre Dame, Ind.

For 175 years, the Congregation of Holy Cross has with missionary zeal met the spiritual and educational needs of people suffering from the upheavals of the French Revolution, the Catholic pioneers of the newly formed United States of America, and the field hands and factory workers of the Peruvian sugar farms.

On March 1, 2012, the United States Province of Priests and Brothers, joyfully celebrated with their Holy Cross brothers in 17 other Provinces, Vicariates, and Districts around the world the 175th Anniversary of the signing of the Fundamental Act. With this merger Blessed Basil Moreau formed a single association of priests and brothers whose mission was to fan out first through France, and then the world, to minister and educate. (Mergers are not new to Holy Cross. Knowing this biographical information about Holy Cross provides a historical and contextual backdrop to the United States Province’s union last July of the former Indiana and Eastern Provinces).

Maybe you already know, or maybe you don’t, where the Congregation gets its name and what the C.S.C. stands for after all vowed religious’ names ... Congregatio a Sancta Cruce (C.S.C.) is of course Latin; in English, it literally means “Congregation of Holy Cross.” Why “Holy Cross?” In French it is Sainte Croix, which also happens to be the name of the small French town outside Le Mans, where Blessed Basil Moreau first formed his community. This little known fact is important to the identity of the Congregation, its charism and its tradition.

Moreau’s religious community comprised of priests, brothers and sisters was a revolutionary concept at this time, to say the least. He modeled it after the Holy Family. Father Moreau called on his new community to find hope in the Cross of self-emptying love, to stand by others as the Mother of Sorrows stood by her son dying on the Cross, and to work together zealously as educators in faith. Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, was established as the special patroness for the entire Congregation.

While the sisters later became their own independent congregation, today there are three groups of sisters – the Marianites of Holy Cross, the Sisters of Holy Cross, and the Sisters of the Holy Cross – who all trace their spiritual heritage and tradition back to Blessed Moreau.

Celebrating 175 Years

Today 175 years later, the priests and brothers of Holy Cross continue to make Blessed Moreau’s vision a reality fulfilling their mission with zeal in their schools, parishes and missions around the world. These holy men teach by example as Blessed Moreau called them to do so many years ago, living side by side with those they serve in order to show how the Cross can be borne as a gift, Ave Crux, Spes Unica (Hail the Cross our Only Hope)!
As I look back on my family’s connection to the Congregation of Holy Cross, I realize that it goes back a significantly long way—many years before my entering the community in 1988. My uncle, Brother Fulgence Dougherty, C.S.C., first entered the community over 70 years ago. It is amazing for me to reflect on the fact that when he came to Holy Cross back in 1942 that there were people around Notre Dame who would have known or have been alive at the same time as our Founder Blessed Basil Moreau, and even more so with our first Holy Cross saint, Brother André Bessette, C.S.C. All of these little facts remind me how young our Holy Cross community truly is. The fact that I can still talk with folks who overlapped with those who knew our community giants is amazing.

Personally, I have known the brothers of Holy Cross since the day of my birth. Growing up in Buchanan, Mich. (in the shadow of the Golden Dome), every three to six years this mysterious relative would visit us with exotic gifts and coins from a place called Bangladesh. The day I was born—the same for my five older siblings—a telegraph was sent to the Holy Cross Community in Dhaka alerting them (and my Uncle) of our birth. When Uncle Jimmy (this is what we called him) visited, he was treated as a celebrity and his presence was always a reminder to my father to speak to us kids of Brother André. My dad would try to explain to us how religious life worked: “Uncle Jimmy was my brother from birth,” he would say. “André was Uncle Jimmy’s brother from vows.” It was difficult concept as kids to understand.

As my father stumbled around trying to explain religious life, he had another weapon in his arsenal—our home parish of St. Anthony’s in Buchanan. Many of the greatest blessings of our parish was the presence of Holy Cross priests from the University of Notre Dame who assisted with Sunday Masses. It seemed like the diocesan priests from the Kalamazoo Diocese came and went, as they do, but for my growing up years the constant was Holy Cross, in particular Fathers Len Banas, C.S.C., Tom McNally, C.S.C., and John VanWolvlear, C.S.C. There were many others who also helped out as needed.

Fr. Len was the most regular. I think he helped out for more than 13 straight years. My father tried to use Fr. Len’s position to explain the structures of religious life (Admittedly, my father found this much more interesting than us kids). He told us that Fr. Len was Fr. Hesburgh’s boss since during some of his tenure at St. Anthony’s he was the Religious Superior at Notre Dame. Being so near Notre Dame we knew who Fr. Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., was and had even visited him during one of my uncle’s visit. My uncle had, on numerous occasions, pointed out Fr. Ted’s room in Corby Hall located right above the dumpster which was emptied each morning at 5 a.m. (Admittedly, we kids found that part very intriguing). So, my father tried to explain how this important guy who was the President of Notre Dame lived above a dumpster and had Fr. Banas as his boss. I think his attempt to explain the inner workings of religious life was lacking, but it did get us thinking, and in some strange way figures into my own vocation story.

Part of my father’s commitment and devotion to Holy Cross and Brother André concerned our summer vacations. For a family with eight kids, summer vacations were special, and they had to be done within a very strict budget. Often we would head to campgrounds at or near Lake Michigan because the price was right and they were close. But on two occasions, I remember wonderful extended trips to Montreal, Quebec. My father felt that it was very important for us to know this wonderful man who inspired his older brother, my Fr. John with his “Uncle Jimmy,” Br. Fulgence Dougherty, C.S.C., and Fr. John’s sisters, Mary Nixon and Sarah Bailey.
Uncle Jimmy, a man called Brother André, “the Miracle Man of Montreal.”

Because my father served as Superintendent of Schools in Buchanan, we tended to hit the road much later in the summer than most families. My dad had to make sure that all the teachers had been hired and all the school buildings were ready to open on the first day of school. Most all of my friends had taken their vacations already, to destinations like Disney World, New York City, and Washington, D.C. Since all my friends knew that we left much later in the summer, around the mid part of August, I remember being asked where we were headed. I felt a little awkward saying Montreal, Canada. One friend asked what was there to see (he had gone to Wisconsin Dells), and I mumbled something about my uncle and some big church. Little did I know that this trip would be something that would mark my life and vocation. The impact was so strong that I was the one who asked about a return trip.

I was seven when we first went to Quebec. I was awestruck by all those people traversing the stairs of Saint Joseph Oratory on their knees and by all those crutches and canes, I realized that these people had been healed through the intercession of this wonderful and holy man, Brother André Bessette, C.S.C. In my days in CCD we once studied the Crutches, canes and leg supports left behind and stacked from the floor to the ceiling in the basement chapels fascinated me on my first visit and intrigued me on my second. Here, too, I found myself thinking and praying with these implements that were so foreign to a healthy and active young man. My thoughts were more with the people after they had been healed and the joy they must have experienced. Did they cast aside their canes and crutches and run about as never before? I can only imagine their joy and celebration. I kept wondering: where are these people? Are they alive still? Did they actually meet this small man named André? Was it André who actually healed them or was it that strange St. Joseph oil I had heard about?

I tried to relate my experience of Br. André with my experiences of Br. Fulgence (my Uncle Jimmy) and they seemed so different. André stayed very close to his home and never ventured far (although I do remember learning that he did visit Notre Dame once.) My uncle left home in South Dakota and never really returned. He travelled far and wide, serving a great distance from his home and loved ones, visiting infrequently at best. Brother André, although a small man, seemed to be a giant in Montreal. For one often in ill health, lacking in formal education, for one whose job essentially was to mind the main entrance to a high school, he accomplished tremendous, miraculous things. Uncle Jimmy was in great health and well educated and served the community in a variety of positions of leadership and importance. Yet these two men did share a common desire to serve the Lord in the Congregation of Holy Cross. They both offered to the Lord and the Congregation all that they had. Both sought to usher in the Kingdom. Whatever the Community asked of them they did and they did their best even if they did not feel up to the task. These two Holy Cross brothers were models of community life for me as a child and now as a Holy Cross priest.

As I look at my own vocation in Holy Cross, I realize that it goes back to these wonderful and holy men that I have written about ... including my dad who discussed a priestly vocation with all of his sons. But, I do think one of these giants stands out and that of course is my Uncle Jimmy. I doubt that I would be in Holy Cross if it were not for him and his example of religious life. As a “younger” Holy Cross religious, I hope that I can live out my vocation with the same zeal and conviction displayed by my uncle and our St. André Bessette.
Moreau Day, celebrating the Congregation of Holy Cross founder, Blessed Basil Moreau, was held on January 20th. Colleges and universities of the United States Province marked this occasion with Masses and by recognizing outstanding lay collaborators with the annual Spirit of Holy Cross Awards:

**Stonehill College:** Maura Tyrrell, Ph.D., Francis J. Hurley, C.S.C., Endowed Chair and Professor of Biology; **The University of Portland:** Bill Reed, Events Director; **The University of Notre Dame:** Joseph A. Russo, Director of Financial Strategies; **the Holy Cross Community at King’s College:** Marion Woods and Elizabeth Marley long-time Community dining room assistants.


**The University of Notre Dame**

Rev. William M. Lies, C.S.C., was named Vice President for Mission Engagement & Church Affairs at Notre Dame. Fr. Lies was the executive director of the Center for Social Concerns. Fr. Lies will coordinate and strengthen the many ways Notre Dame serves the Catholic Church.

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’s Office of Campus Ministry. Fr. King is also a trustee and fellow of the University.

President Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., joined 350 Notre Dame students, faculty and staff attending the annual March for Life on January 23rd in Washington, D.C.

**University of Portland**

In January, Rev. Gerard J. Olinger, C.S.C., was appointed Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Portland. The appointment was made by University president Rev. E. William Beauchamp, C.S.C.

**King’s College**

King’s College was named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the sixth consecutive year based on exemplary service efforts during the 2010-11 academic year. King’s has been recognized on the Honor Roll each year since its 2006 launch.

**Stonehill College**

As part of Stonehill’s alternative Spring Break program, students volunteered at two Holy Cross apostolates. Some worked at André House (Phoenix), a social justice ministry for the homeless and the unemployed. Another group travelled to Perú to volunteer at Colegio Fe y Alegría (a school serving about 1,800 students with pre-kinder, special education, and technical job training) and the “Yancana Huasy” project (which provides services to children with physical and mental handicaps).

**Holy Cross Family Ministries**

2012 marks the beginning of a special year for Family Rosary and Family Theater Productions, each founded by Holy Cross priests and Servant of God Patrick Peyton. Family Rosary is celebrating 70 years of bringing families together to pray the Rosary, while Family Theater Productions utilizes mass media and Hollywood celebrities to entertain, educate and inspire families.

**Saint André Bessette Church**

On January 6th, the Downtown Chapel in Portland officially unveiled its new name and identity, St. André Bessette Church. The parish provides hospitality and basic needs to the most marginalized members of the Portland community.

**District of Chile**

Rev. Michael M. DeLaney, C.S.C., was reappointed by Provincial Rev. David T. Tyson, C.S.C., as District Superior during the District Chapter in January. Fr. DeLaney has served as Superior for the past three years and his reappointment will be for another three years.

Rev. Rodrigo Valenzuela Rios, C.S.C. will be ordained April 21 by Archbishop Ricardo Ezzati of Santiago, Chile. Fr. Rodrigo teaches theology at Saint George’s College in Santiago, and serves as a campus minister there.

**District of East Africa**

In Kampala, Uganda, the District of East Africa welcomed a new District Superior. Rev. Patrick Neary, C.S.C., a native of LaPorte, Ind., was elected District Superior in December 2011. Fr. Pat had been serving as Director of McCauley Formation House in Nairobi. Before serving at McCauley Formation House, Fr. Pat served as Superior of Moreau Seminary (Notre Dame, Ind.) for six years.

**District of Perú**

Provincial Fr. Tyson appointed Rev. Aníbal Andrés Niño Loarte, C.S.C., District Superior during the District Chapter in February. His term will also be for three years.

**Nuevo León, México**

In March, Provincial Fr. Tyson received the Final Vows of Mr. Jorge Armando Morales Trejo, C.S.C.
Join Our Mission, Come Walk With Us

Eight months ahead of schedule, the Footsteps Campaign has accomplished a monumental and historic milestone of surpassing its Phase I goal of $6.5 million, by raising $16 million! But we must still raise at least $15 million in the coming years to meet our projected needs for:

Religious Formation, Education, and Advanced Studies: $12 million
Holy Cross House, Retirement, Assisted Living, and Wellness: $10.5 million
International Missions: $8.4 million

We invite you to join our mission and come walk with us on our journey as we work with zeal to make God known, loved and served in our education, parish, and mission settings around the world.

Make a pledge today by going online to pledge.holycrossusa.org or calling 1.877.631.1539 for more information.

We thank you for your continued prayers and support.
The Congregation of Holy Cross invites you to join us in this year of thanksgiving, celebration, and prayer.